



A

## PREFATORY ADDRESS,

TO THE

*Reverend*, the SYNODS of *New-York* and *Philadelphia*; and to all the Religious SOCIETIES under their respective Care and Charge.

*Reverend, Honoured, and Beloved* Fathers and Brethren!

**T**HE divided State of the Presbyterian Churches, in this Part of the World, where divine Providence has cast our Lot, has opened a melancholy Prospect to my View for some considerable Space of Time! Which I did not think proper to communicate to others for a Season; not knowing what were the Sentiments of my *Brethren* upon either Side of the Question, because I thought, however expedient, honourable and advantageous to the Redeemer's Kingdom, a *Reunion* might be, yet it was not practicable, unless the *Body* of both SYNODS was inclin'd thereto.

BUT hearing of a Number of both SYNODS more desirous of Peace and Union of late, and being excited by some Reverend Members of the *Synod of New-York*, and one of the *Synod of Philadelphia*, to move in this Affair: I did at the last Session of the Synod of *New-York*, in pursuance of my own Judgement and Inclination, and in compliance with the aforefaid Excitements, together with some of my *Brethren*, make a *Motion* to the *Synod*, for *Proposals of Peace and Union*, which after some Reasoning upon the Head, was comply'd with, and Messengers appointed to make *Overtures of Peace and Union* of both Synods into one, which was done accordingly, and are now under Consideration.

AND being inform'd, that the *Proposals of Peace and Union*, occasioned some Uneasiness in several Societies, I thought it my Duty, to endeavour to remove the Grounds thereof, and promote the glorious and truly evangelical Design of *Peace*, as well as I

could, by committing my Thoughts on that Subject to Writing, and exposing them to publick View!

My Motives to endeavour in earnest to promote Peace and Union are these,

Nor a Change of *Sentiment*, about the late Revival of Religion, No! I do now declare solemnly before the World, that I have seen no Cause to alter my *Opinion* in Relation to it, and therefore I do now *believe* its Reality, as much as formerly; and if after this open and express Declaration, any will unjustly Censure me with the Contrary, perhaps because I cannot be so narrow as themselves, I shall take no farther Notice of it, than to pity their unreasonable Prejudice, and appeal from their unrighteous Judgements, to a higher and more impartial Tribunal; to a God that knows all the Thoughts and Designs of Men!

I cannot come into a *Union* with any *Body* of Men, whereto Acknowledgements contradictory to what I have now declared, are required, as *Terms of Communion*: No! I would rather chuse a *Prison*, or any kind of *Sufferings*: Nor is what I have said in the following *Treatise*, concerning the *Matters of doubtful Speculation*, in the least Degree inconsistent herewith; because those Expressions do not respect the *Nature, Necessity, or Value* of a Work of *Conversion* in general, or its Reality and Certainty considered in itself; but only the Uncertainty of the *Appearances* of such a *Work* in others, to us; or the Uncertainty of our *Judgement* concerning them.

Now between those two Things, the *Difference* is as wide as between *Heaven* and *Earth*, between divine *Revelation* and human *Conjecture*; if there be any who cannot perceive the *Difference*, they are to be pitied as Objects of Compassion, as *Non Compos*! And if they do perceive it, and will not acknowledge it, they discover by their Want of *Conscience*, a bad *Cause*, which needs such intincere sophistical *Arts* to support it; and deserve *Reproof*: Such I would accost in the Language of *Job* to *Zophar*, *Will you speak wickedly for GOD, and talk deceitfully for him?*

To cry up the *Certainty* of our *Opinion*, about any Instances of *Conversion*, in others in our Day, so as to make it a *Badge of Distinction*, between, or Engine of *Division* among the *Professors* of Christianity, is (in its direct Tendency) to abuse God's *Work* to the Dishonour of his Name, and the *Injury* of his *Kingdom*, instead of exalting God it is to exalt our selves and our Opinion, (tho' probably the Honour of God is seriously intended,) which is always (respecting such *secret Matters*) *precarious* and often *partial*.

Tho' I value the late *Work* of God highly, yet in the mean Time, I think it is sinful to make my Opinion of it, a *Term of Communion* to others; for tho' I am as fully persuaded as ever of its Reality, yet in the mean Time, I believe that my Opinion, and the Opinion of all others about such Matters, is fallible and uncertain: Nor can I see in the sacred Scriptures, any Warrant for imposing my *Opinion*, or the Opinion of others, respecting the *in-*

*visible Grace* of GOD in particular Persons, as a *Term of Communion*, either Ministerial or Christian.

NOR have I been Moved to this Important *Enterprize*, by any Thing that concerns myself, either by *Grief* for any suppos'd *Misconduct* of Mine, in Time past, or any *Expectation* of *Credit*, *Comfort* or *Benefit*, that may result from such a *Peace* and *Union* in Time to come, so far as they Respect me!

BUT MEERLY by the Consideration, of the positive Command of GOD, to *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*, to *pursue Peace*, and to *keep the Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace*.

TOGETHER with a Prospect of the *Honour* that I conceive will redound to GOD's *Name* as well as *Manifold Benefits*, *Credit*, and *Comfort* to the Societies of our Denomination, for a long Time to come, in Case such a Re-union be obtained, upon a Scriptural Foundation: Generations yet unborn, are like to reap valuable Advantages by it, and praise GOD, for it with joyful Lips! I have been likewise encourag'd in this, by considering calmly, and as impartially as I could, the *Nature* of the *Controversy*, that has subsisted among us, which appears to me, to be only about *Circumstantials*!

PERMIT me, my *Reverend Fathers* and *Brethren*, in all *humility*, and with due *deference* to the *Judgment* of others, to express my *Sentiments*, upon this *Head*, with a peaceful Intention.

It seems to me, that thro' the *heat* of *Debate*, the principal *Matters* Controverted, were either not so very clearly and distinctly apprehended, or not so sufficiently and happily attended to, by the *Parties* in Controversy, as could be *wished*!

FOR as upon one Hand the *nature* and *necessity* of *Conversion* to GOD, as is represented in the *Scriptures* of Truth, and in our *Confession of Faith* according to them, was acknowledg'd, and only the *Opinion* of some concerning the *Reality*, or Number of some late *instances* of *Conversion*, (or respecting both together) disputed, and contradicted.

So upon the other Hand, the *nature* and *necessity* of *Order* and *Government* in the *Church* of CHRIST, as they are represented in the *Holy Scripture*, and in our *Confession of Faith*, according to them, were also Acknowledged, and only some prudential *Acts* and *Rules*, not express'd in the sacred *Scriptures*, or our *Directory*, for *Worship* and *Government*, disputed and oppos'd.

THE *Substance* of the Points disputed were freely acknowledg'd by the *Reverend Brethren* upon both Sides of the Question, *viz.* the *nature* and *necessity* of *Conversion* to GOD as it is held forth in the *Scriptures*, and in our *Confession of Faith*, and the *nature* and *necessity* of *Church Discipline*, (in all essentials) as represented in the *Holy Scriptures*, and in our *Directory*; so that the *Controversy* in my Apprehension, turns entirely upon *Circumstantials*. And any *Action* that was Mutually complain'd of, was grounded upon, and issu'd from a Difference of *Opinion*, about  
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the Circumstantials aforesaid, or as the inspir'd Apostle phrases them, Matters of *doubtful Disputation!*

Now as it appears to me, that the *Matters controverted* were *Circumstantial*, so I cannot but believe, that the *Reverend Brethren* upon both Sides of the Question, had sincere and good *designs*, in the different Parts they bore in the late *Controversy*: While some were earnestly contending, for the Credit of the late extraordinary Religious *appearances*, with *design* that they might spread far and wide! Others were strenuously Contending, for the *Order and Government* of CHRIST's Kingdom, lest they should Suffer, and be quite unhing'd, in that uncommon *situation* of, and *ferment* that obtain'd among the *Churches!*

BUT tho' the Things controverted, consider'd calmly and in a true distinct Light, were small; yet the Heat of *Debate* about them, run very high; this together with evil Surmisings, severe Censurings, and rash Judgings of each other, encourag'd and enflam'd, by *Misrepresentations*, carried to and fro, by the unwearied Industry of *Tale-bearers* and *Tattlers*, who are generally busy on such Occasions, increas'd mutual Prejudices and Suspicions, to a Melancholy *Crisis*, and so occasioned the unhappy *Rupture* of the *Churches Union*, which has subsisted among Us for some Years!

REVEREND *Fathers*, and *Dear Brethren*, the earnest desire of my *Heart* after *Peace*, and *Union* of the *Churches* in this Part of the World, has induced me to Compose the following Sheets, (*festinante calamo*) somewhat hastily, and humbly to offer them to your *Consideration*, as well as to submit them to your *Correction*.

I can honestly declare, that I *Design* to offend no one, of either Side of the Question; but to *Essay* the compromising of the Matters of Difference, and promote *Peace* and *Union* in the best Manner I can!

I trust my *Brethren*, that you will candidly interpret, and kindly accept, this humble *Attempt*, for the *Peace* of *Jerusalem!*

If there be any *Passages* in the following Performance, not suitably express'd, I hope your *Candour* will suggest this in my excuse, that the *Province*, which I have thro' a *Zeal* for God, and not any Notion of my own *Capacity*, ventur'd upon, is exceeding Difficult: It is hard to say any Thing, closely upon a Point in Controversy, without giving Offence to Persons of one, or both Sides of the Question!

So far as I know, I have not been influenced in the least *Degree*, by any regard to my own *Reputation*, or any partial *Byass* whatsoever, in the following *Composure*, and if I am mistaken in any *Sentiment* there express'd I am willing to be convinced of it by Arguments but not by the persecuting Methods of Threatnings, and upon Conviction, to alter my Opinion, and acknowledge my Mistake!

THE following *Essay*, after its *Composure*, I have not had the Opportunity to consult with any of my *Brethren*, (in the Ministry) upon; and therefore if any *fault* be found with it, it should not

in *Justice* be charg'd upon them, no I am freely willing to bear all the *Blame myself*, in so good, so important a Cause, as that of the *Peace of CHRIST'S Kingdom*, I have said nothing of myself, or of others, in the following Pages, but what appear'd to me necessary, to promote the valuable *Design in View*.

WHATEVER may be the issue of this *Essay*, which I cheerfully commit to the *Disposal* of the GOD of *Peace and Love*, yet this I must declare in the mean Time, that I greatly rejoyce in this Opportunity, I have before I Die, of expressing the very *Sentiments* of my *Heart*, upon so Amiable and Important an Occasion: Were I to go before the great *Judge* of all the Earth To-morrow, I should be glad to finish this immediately before it!

NOTHING appears to me, more Beautiful and Glorious, than *Peace and Love*, and *Union* among the Professors of the RELIGION, of the *Meeke and Humble JESUS*.

AND therefore I am griev'd in my Heart, for the narrow Notions, of some Pious, and in other respects valuable Men; who are fondly desiring, or vainly attempting, to promote the good of the *Church of CHRIST*, either by multiplying, or continuing her unhappy, dishonourable, and dangerous *Divisions*!

THO' I trust their *Zeal* is Sincere, and their designs Pious, for which they deserve Esteem, and Commendation; yet as to their *Divisive* contracted *Measures*, I would say as *Jacob* of *Simon and Levi*, Instruments of Cruelty (instead of Kindness which they intend) are in their Habitation to the poor wounded broken Church of GOD: *O my Soul! come not into their Secret! mine Honour be not thou United!*

No on the contrary! thro' GOD's assistance, I will pray for the *Peace of Jerusalem*, and say, *Peace be within thy Walls*, and *Prosperity be within thy Palaces for my Brethren and Companion's Sake*, I will say *Peace be within thee; because of the House of the LORD our GOD*, I will seek thy Good. I am resolv'd whatever others say, or do, to Labour for the *Peace and Prosperity* of *Zion*, and *Jerusalem*, while I Live, and to Sigh for it, with my dying *Breath*!

Two Things I would desire of *Readers* in General, *viz.* That they would divest themselves of *Prejudice*, if they have any; and give what I offer for Peace, in the Name of my *Master*, the *Prince of Peace*, a fair hearing, weighing candidly and impartially, with a humble Mind, the *Grounds* thereof, for GOD's sake, the *Churches* sake, and *their own*: And that they would Remember me, before the *Throne* of Grace, who am the greatest of Sinners, and far less than the least of all Saints, and not worthy of the Character of an *Ambassador* of CHRIST that *I may obtain Mercy of GOD to be faithful to the Death*.

AND of you particularly my *Reverend Fathers*, and *Dear Brethren*, I earnestly beg a Remembrance in your Prayers; you know Sirs, better than I can express, how becoming and glorious it is, for the *Ambassadors* of the *Prince of Peace*, to seek *Peace*  
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and *ensue it*, with unshaken *Magnimity*, unbroken *Patience*, and unwearied *Industry*, notwithstanding any *Difficulties*, that may be cast in their Way, by devout Men of *narrow Souls* and *hot Imaginations*. But I must conclude this *Address* with respectful *Salutations*, to all of you, and Cordial *wishes* that every one of you, thro' the rich pure blessing of God, may be of eminent *Service*, in promoting the precious Interests, of the *Kingdom* of our Dear Lord *JESUS CHRIST*, in your Day and Generation : And may obtain all needful Good in this Life, and that which is to come, and to all the People of your respective Charges, I wish from my Heart, *Grace*, *Mercy*, and *PEACE*, from GOD the Father, and from our Lord *JESUS CHRIST*.

*Reverend, Honoured and beloved Fathers and Brethren,*

I remain,

your affectionate Friend,

unworthy Brother,

Son, and Servant.

G. TENNENT.

*Philadelphia, June*  
29th. 1749.

PSALMS cxxii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

*Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem: They shall Prosper that Love thee. Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity be within thy Palaces. For my Brethrens and Companions sake, I will now say Peace be within thee. Because of the House of the Lord our GOD, I will seek thy good.*

**T**HE Weal of the visible Church, or Kingdom of God among Men, must needs be very dear to every gracious Heart. What the Prophet *Ysaiah* and the *Psalmist* say of themselves, is common to them all. *For Jerusalems sake I will not hold my Peace, and for Zion's sake I will not be silent, until the Righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth. If I forget the O Jerusalem, let my right Hand forget her cunning: Let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem to my chief Joy.*

BUT tho' the People of God are agreed about the *Object* of their chief Care and Regard, about the *End* they aim at; yet they are sometimes of very different Sentiments as to some of the *Measures* they concert and pursue to obtain that valuable End.

THIS Diversity perhaps is owing to their different natural Tempers, different Capacities, different Methods of Education, different Opportunities of Conversation, different advances in divine Knowledge and Grace; and it may be in some Instances owing to the insensible corrupt *Byas* of Prejudice.

Now among the different *Measures* which good Men propose for promoting the aforesaid *End*, namely, the *Weal* of God's visible Church and Kingdom on Earth, methinks those are most likely to be serviceable, which have the express stamp of divine Authority, and agree with all the other Parts of divine Revelation, for God's *Wisdom* is infinitely superior to Mans, and what comes from him, must needs agree with itself, seeing it proceeds from the same Cause, and has the same Design.

OF this Kind is the *Duty* which I am now to discourse upon, namely, *seeking the Peace of Jerusalem*. When we only seek a *Peace* bottom'd upon the express acknowledgment of all *essential* and necessary *Articles*, in *Doctrine*, *Worship*, and *Discipline*, contain'd in the sacred *Scriptures*, and in our excellent *Westminster Confession of Faith*, *Catechisms*, and *Directory for Worship and Government*

Government agreeable to them, and no sinful Acknowledgments are required. I say such a *Peace* is agreeable to the whole *System* of *Truth* and *Duty* which we are required to believe and perform by the KING of the Church, our Lord JESUS CHRIST, in his sacred Word, whose peculiar Royalty it is alone to appoint Terms of Communion, both Christian and Ministerial; and entirely consistent with that *Liberty* wherewith he has made us free: A Plan which is a noble *medium* between the two extreams of anti-scriptural *rigour* upon the one Hand, and anti-scriptural *laxness* upon the other; such a *Peace* being consistent with *Truth* and *Righteousness*, must needs be excellent and important. *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, &c.*

THIS *Psalms*, as almost all interpreters conclude, \* was wrote by the *Psalmist*, when the Ark of GOD was bro't by *David* to *Jerusalem*, and plac'd in the Tabernacle, to be publickly Sung there by the People of *Israel*, at the Seasons of their Annual and Solemn Festivals; that so the People might be induced to fall in Love with *Jerusalem*, and especially with the Solemnities of Religious Worship there celebrated!

HENCE the People are here introduced, as Congratulating each other, on occasion of the Opportunity that presented of going to the House of GOD; *I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the House of the Lord; our Feet shall stand within thy Gates O Jerusalem*, one is here represented as comforting himself and his fellow Travellers upon the Road, during the fatigues of their Journey to *Jerusalem*, with the Expectation of their Arrival there, and their being present at the Solemnities of publick Worship, (in which they stood) which would more than compensate all their Pains! The *Israelites* were wont to sing this Verse upon the Road, while during the Feast of *Pentecost*, they brought the first Fruits to the Temple, as *Vatabulus*, *Muis*, *Gejerus* and *Selden* assure us.

GRACIOUS Persons can't but love the Place where Gods Honour dwells, and his Tabernacles are amiable to them: One Thing they especially desire with great Intensity, namely, to see the *Beauty* of the LORD, and to enquire in his *Temple*. And agreeable to the estimate and precedent of GOD himself, they cannot but love the *GATES* of *ZION* more than all the dwellings of *Jacob*, i. e. prefer publick Worship to private, because God is thereby more glorified, and, for the general, more peculiarly and eminently present. The dear *Immanuel* walks in the midst of the golden Candlesticks, clad with awful and serene Majesty, and cloath'd with unparrelle'd, inimitable and inexpressible Beauty and Lustre! Enrob'd with a Garment down to the Foot, and girt about the Paps with a golden Girdle; his Head and his Hair are white like Wool, as white as Snow; and his Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, and his Feet like unto fine Brass, as if they burned in a Furnace; and his Voice

as

\* Arias Montanus, Vatabulus, Muis, Castalio, Hieron, Musculus.

as the Sound of many Waters ; he has in his right Hand seven STARS ; out of his Mouth goes a sharp two-edged Sword, and his Countenance is as the Sun shining in his Strength. In the Assemblies of the Church are the Olive Branches, as the Prophet *Zechury* represents it, which thro the golden *Pipes* empty the golden Oyl out of themselves. From the boundless unexhausted fullness of CHRIST the anointed, *we receive Grace for Grace*, from CHRIST the Olive Tree, by the Spirit the Olive Branch, all the golden Oyl of Grace is communicated to Believers, which keeps their Lamps burning by continued supplies of divine Influence, without which they would soon languish and expire !

FARTHER, the People are introduced in this Psalm, as celebrating the Praises of *Jerusalem*, and wishing her Peace and Prosperity. *Jerusalem is a City that is compact together*, not only in respect of the beautiful Order and Connection of the Houses, which were not scattered here and there as in Vilages, but closely joined together ; but especially upon the account of the well constituted ORDER and UNITY, of its Inhabitants, and therefore like to be permanent \* *compact together*, partly in its Buildings saith *Pool* in his Anotations, which are not *dispers'd* as they are in *villages*, nor divided into *two Cities*, as it was before, but united and enlarg'd : ( *1 Chron. xi. 7. 8.* ) and principally in its Government and Religion, which was distinct and opposite, before *David* took the *Fort of Zion* from the *Jebustis*. It was a *Type* of the *Gospel Church* saith *Henry*, which is *compact together* in *Holy Love* and *Christian Communion*, so that it is all one *City*.

THITHER the Tribes go up to the Testimony of *Isreal*, to give Thanks to the Name of the LORD ; for there are set Thrones of Judgment, the Thrones of the House of *David* ; *Jerusalem* was the Place of general Rendevous or Concourse, for all the scattered Tribes of *Israel* to meet in, to receive Instructions from GOD, and ascribe Glory to him.

THERE was the Testimony of *Israel*, i. e. by a metonymy the ARK which is called the Testimony of *Israel*, because of the Tables of the Covenant kept in it, which are called the Testimony ( *Exod. xxv. 16.* ) and very reasonably the Testimony of *Israel*, because it was given by GOD, to *Israel* for their good.

THERE was the Thrones of Judgment, the Supream Courts of Justice for Ecclesiastical and Civil Affairs, the great *Sanhedrim* or *Senate* of the Nation, consisting of 72, the Royal Seat allotted to *David* and his Descendants.

AFTER the aforesaid Commendation of *Jerusalem*, he proceeds to the Words of our Text, *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*, &c. which contains a positive command, together with the Manner how it should be perform'd, precrib'd, and an Excitement thereto anex'd. And 2d. the Psalmists Resolution in reference thereto, with the grounds thereof.

And

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1st.

\* *Arias Montanus, Vatabulus, Muis, Castalio, Hierom, Musculus.*

1st. WE have a COMMAND, *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem* pray, beg, intreat, plead for, beseech, namely from God, say *Grotius, Pagnine, Mariana*, upon the Place, *i. e.* use the utmost Importunity and unwearied Vehemence, *Peace* so the *Syriack* and *Arabick* Versions and also the Versions of *Piscator* and *Arias Montanus*, says *Pool* in his *Synopsis*. For *Peace*, so *Munster* and *Chemnitius*, seek its Peace and Felicity, because upon that hangs the Peace of the whole Kingdom, saith *Munster*.

PEACE doubtless includes the Union of her Inhabitants, their Protection from Dangers and Enemies, their universal Wellfare, and Enjoyment of all the Good they need. We should earnestly pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, and that therein we may have Peace. Peace is the Gift of God, and for it he will be enquired of. Such as can do nothing else for the Peace of Jerusalem, can pray for it, which is something more than shewing their goodwill, for it's the appointed way of obtaining Mercy: The Peace and Wellfare of the Gospel Church in our Land, is to be earnestly desired and pray'd for by every one of us.

Now the Manner of praying for Jerusalem, is prescrib'd thus, *Peace be within thy Walls, i. e.* to all the Inhabitants within thy Walls, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free: *Peace* be in all thy Dwellings, *Peace* be in all thy Fortifications and Armies, let them never be attack'd, or if they are, let them never be taken; so *Musculus, Pagnine, Hieron.*

AND Prosperity within thy Palaces, *i. e.* let abundance of Peace and Felicity be in the Houses, Courts and Towers of the Great, both of a civil and sacred Character: He makes particular mention of these, not for the Sake of Ostentation, but because their Safety eminently extended to inferiors, as many learned Interpreters justly observe. \* In a Word we are directed to pray for all Good to the Inhabitants in general, and for the Princes and Rulers in particular, who manage the Helm of the Church and State, and conduct the Affairs of the Publick, both religious and civil.

Now we are encouraged to pray in the Manner aforesaid, for the Peace of Jerusalem, by a promise of Prosperity, *they shall Prosper that love thee*: Those that sincerely love, and heartily pray and strive for the Peace and Weal of Jerusalem, shall prosper; that God whom they hereby glorify, will bless them, and make at least their Souls prosper; however Men may censure them, God will approve of their conduct, and favour them with his gracious Presence; to this effect *Arias Montanus*, and *Gegerus* interpret the Words.

This Encouragement is exactly agreeable to that which the Prince of Peace vouchsafes, *Mat. v. 9. Blessid are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the Children of God.* The World blesteth the boisterous and unquiet, who blow up the Coals of  
War,

\* *Gegerus, Symachus, Chemnitius, Munster, Pagnine, Vatabulus, Muis, Piscator, Henry, Pool in Locum.*

War, Sedition and Division, but they are blessed indeed, in the Judgment of our Saviour, and by his Royal Authority, who study to be quiet, seeking Peace and pursuing it, and are so far from sowing the Seeds of Discord, or blowing the Coals of Contention, that it is their great Study, their earnest Desire, and unwearied Labour, to make Peace between God and Man, between Man and himself, and between Man and his Neighbour, doing this in obedience to God, and from a principle of love to him and his Kingdom; for those that do so shall approve themselves to God as his Children, who is *the God of Peace*, and shall hereby evidence the same to themselves and others, *they shall be called the Children of God*. To be a *Peace-maker*, is to have a peaceable Disposition and Practice; as to make a lye, is to be addicted to lying; so to make Peace, is to have a strong and hearty Affection to Peace; to love, desire, and delight in Peace, to be in it as our Element, and to study to be quiet; to endeavour to preserve the Peace where it is, that it be not broken, and to recover it where it is broken, both by making and hearkning to proposals of Peace; where there are debates and divisions among Brethren and Neighbours, doing all we can, consistent with Truth and Holiness, to accommodate them and repair Breaches; Such Persons are blessed of God however they may be censured by Men, *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee*. Here observe that a *peaceable Temper and Behaviour* is an Evidence of sincere love to *Jerusalem*, or to the *Church of GOD*.

But,

2d. We have the *Psalmist's* religious Resolution, with the Grounds thereof, *for my Brethren and Companions sake, I will now say Peace be within thee, i. e.* whatever others speak or do, I am determined to shew myself the real Friend of *Jerusalem*, by praying and striving for her Peace and Wellfare, *I will now say Peace be within thee*; I will pray for thy Peace, I will consult thy Peace, I will plead for thy Peace. \* I will seek thy Good, I will do all within the compass of my Power to promote thy Wellfare, I will second my Prayers by earnest and incessant endeavours: Here observe, my Brethren, that the Peace and Wellfare of *Jerusalem*, have a near and dear Relation to each other, a close and inseparable Connection; so that he who truly and consistently seeks one, must also seek the other, and he that opposes the one does virtually and consequentially (tho' in a misguided Zeal not designedly) oppose the other: They are beautiful and inseparable Companions, *I will say Peace be within thee*, I will seek thy Good; *Truth, Peace, Holiness, and Zion's increase* should be sought in *Harmony*, in their mutual Dependence and Connection: It may here farther be observed, that wishing *Peace* was a common Salutation among the *Hebrews*, importing all good and prosperity.

BUT, Sirs, it is a dreadful Thing to separate what God has joined

\* So the Tigurine and Arabick Versions, and that of Castalio, vid. Pol. Synop. in Loc.

joined, and to set up one part of Religion in Opposition to the other, or oppose the Means to the End. And is it not a lamentable Contradiction to pretend to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, and in the mean Time to labour with all our might by unreasonable complaints, by indecent tumultuous Threats and Reflections, to hinder the Answer of our own Prayers? Would it not be more self-consistent not to pretend to pray at all for the Peace or Prosperity of Jerusalem, and so strike that Command altogether out of our Bibles, least it should cross our peevish, tho' well meant, humours and murmurs?

Now the Grounds of the aforesaid Resolution of the *Psalmist* are these two, *viz.* 1st The real Regard he had to all his *fellow Citizens*, to all the *Israelites*, whom, tho' his Subjects and Inferiors, he owns as his *Brethren and Companions* in the principal Privileges enjoyed at Jerusalem, for my Brethren and Companions sake, I will now say Peace be within thee, *i. e.* its the BENEFIT, the COMMUNION, and EDIFICATION of the SAINTS of GOD, whom I Love and Esteem as my Brethren; and who have frequently been endear'd to me, as Companions in Religious Worship; that is my CHIEF MOTIVE, in seeking the Peace of Jerusalem, and no INTEREST or CREDIT of my OWN, nothing that concerns me personally. And 2d. Another Ground of his pious Resolution, was the Regard he had to the publick Ordinances of the divine Worship, which are celebrated with greatest Beauty when the Sons and Daughters of Zion maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and dwell in Harmony. Because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy Good.

I intend not to speak distinctly upon all that is contained in these Verses, which I have chose for the Subject of our present Meditations; I would therefore only observe this Proposition from them all, *viz.*

That it is a very important Duty, enjoined upon all by divine Authority, to pray for the Peace and Prosperity of Jerusalem. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces; for my Brethren and Companions Sake I will now say Peace be within thee.

IN discoursing upon which, let us enquire,

I. What is to be understood by Jerusalem.

II. What by the Peace of it.

III. What by praying for the Peace of Jerusalem.

IV. How we should pray for the Peace and Prosperity thereof, and why.

NOW by JERUSALEM we are to understand the visible Church. This Title is given to it in several Passages of the Old Testament, some of which have been already mentioned in the Introduction to this Discourse: And in the New-Testament it is called the Jerusalem that is from above, which is free and the Mother of us all.

This

This *Jerusalem* may be said to be from above, because the *Charter of Privileges* whereby she is enrich'd, and *Laws* whereby she should be govern'd are from above, from Heaven. This Gospel Church is free from the *Yoke of the Ceremonial Law*, and much more from the *Bondage of human Inventions*, in Doctrine, Worship or Discipline, impos'd as Terms of Communion. She is instrumentally the Mother of Believers, in respect of Conversion, Growth and Nourishment, by the Word faithfully preach'd; the Sacraments duly dispens'd, and Discipline prudently and faithfully administer'd, thro' the blessing of God upon them. The visible Church is also called the *heavenly Jerusalem*, (Heb. xii. 22) *But ye are come unto mount Zion, and to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*; now it is so term'd, because its *original*, nature and *design* are all heavenly.

THE visible Church is call'd *Jerusalem*, because of the ORDER, UNION, and *Strength* of that City, and because of the Temple of God therein, to which as a Centre of Unity, the far distant and dispers'd Tribes of *Israel* resorted to Worship God. And are not ORDER and UNION necessary to the Well-Being of the visible Kingdom of CHRIST? Yes surely. And hence is that divine Injunction, (1 Cor. xiv. 40) *Let all Things be done decently and in order*. And hence the Apostles Joy and Gladness, in observing the Order of the Church at *Coloss*, (Colos. ii. 5.) *Joying and beholding your Order, and the Steadfastness of your Faith in CHRIST*, i. e. your good Constitution and regular Behaviour agreeable to the Discipline appointed by *Jesus Christ*, which has direct tendency to, and happy Influence upon your Perseverance in Truth and Holiness.

THE Original Word for *Order* (TAXIN,) i. e. good Order (*Eutaxian*) saith *Menochius*, signifies that all Things were done among them Right and in Order agreeable to Church Discipline well concerted; Moreover that the Manner and Behaviour of every one were regular and orderly, (2 *Thes.* iii. 6.) *now we Command you Brethren, in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, that ye withdraw your selves, from every Brother that walks disorderly, and not after the Tradition ye receiv'd of Us*; \* agreeable to

\* Observe with what solemn *Ephasis*, all that fear GOD in general and the *Ministers* of CHRIST in particular, are enjoyn'd to check, and endeavour to bring to a just Sense of their Sins, those that walk *disorderly*, by withdrawing from, and shunning their fellowship (if gentler Methods avail not) to *Erasmus* and *Piscator*.

This was a lesser kind of Excommunication, like that 1 Cor. v. 11. say *Augustine*, *Chrysostom*, *Aquinas*, *Cajetan*.

But who are those the Apostle would have treated in this Manner, why such as walk *disorderly*, contrary to the Order, Institution or Doctrine delivered to them; they are such as the same Apostle speaks of in his first Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, v. Chap. and 14. ver. *Now we exhort you Brethren, warn them that are UNRULY*; this is the same Word in the Original, it signifies such as disturb the publick Peace, as

to which, is the solemn Exhortation of the same Apostle, in his first Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, 4th Chap. and 1st Verse; *Furthermore we beseech you Brethren, and Exhort you by the Lord JESUS, that as ye have receiv'd of us how ye ought to walk, and to please GOD, so ye wou'd abound more and more.*

MOREOVER it signifies, their Consent to, and Concord in the Foundation Doctrines, and Duties of Religion; for it alludes to a Band or Company of Soldiers, well instructed in the Art of War, and in good Order, gather'd together into a close compact Body; agreeable to that beautiful and memorable Expression in our Context, of *JERUSALEM's* being a *CITY compacted together.* *As many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them and Mercy, and on the Israel of GOD,* (*Gala. vi. 16.*) The Word Rule CANOON, signifies a Way made according to Rule, evidently right, and strictly exact, says *Beza*, and the original Word *Saichain*, signifies to go on in a certain Order, and not to transgress the right Line prescrib'd by Divine authority; says the same learned Author: The Word *Be* is not in the Original, which rus thus, Peace upon them, and Mercy; these Blessings are represented as present, because certainly future, according to the Usage of the Holy Scripture, which sometimes represents Things that will surely come to pass, either as present or past already; thus because *CHRIST* will certainly come to judge the World, he is therefore represented as upon his way, (*Rev. i. 7.*) *Behold he cometh with the Clouds.* And because *CHRIST* was certainly to be slain in the fulness of Time for the Sins of Men, he is therefore spoke of as the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*, to signify that he should be as certainly slain in the appointed Time, as if he were already slain; as many as walk according to this Rule, Peace shall surely be upon them and all God's spiritual *Israel*, whether Jews or Gentiles. *PEACE*, *i. e.* all Good and Happiness, thus Grace and Peace are join'd, (*1 Cor. i. 3.*) *Grace unto you, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

are *unquiet, idle, and curious inquirers* into others Affairs; who do not keep their own *Place* and *Order*, doing the proper Duties thereof; but disturb others in their *Spheres*, it is a *Metaphor* taken from the *Soldiers* that leave their *Ranks*, and strole about the Country in a contus'd irregular Manner; so *Estius, Symachus, Hamond.*

In particular Men may be said to be Disorderly, these Ways.

1st. *viz.* In *Natural* respects, when they observe not the Directions of *Reason*, in the performance of the Duties of *Natural* Relation.

2d. In *Civil* respects, either when they live without a calling, or neglect the proper *Business* of it, and intrude into other People's.

3d. In *Spiritual* respects, when they Neglect or Transgress the Rules and Order of their walking in a Church State (which are of a Divine prescription) either with respect to their *Pastors*, or *one another.*

The Original Word saith *Erasmus*, also intends those, that are untractable and *obstinate*, who refuse to obey the Order of *CHRIST's* Church, and so disturb the publick Peace.

Now all such are to be faithfully warn'd and admonish'd, of their *Sin* and *Danger*, and discountenanced in their *tumultuous Proceedings.*

Christ. The same form of Salutation is repeated elsewhere, (2 Cor. i. 2. Ephes. i. 2. Rom. i. 2.) In 2 Tim. i. 2. Grace Mercy and Peace are joined. I would add only one Scripture more to illustrate this Point, which is (Mat. x. 13.) *And if the House be worthy let your Peace come upon it, i. e. that safety and felicity you wish for in your Salutation; for the Greeks in Imitation of the Hebrews, designed to express by the Word Peace, all that was good and desirable, as Grotius, Piscator, and Caspaliu justly observe.*

To what has been said, I may add these Scriptures following, (1 Cor. xvi. 1.) *as I have given Order to the Churches of Galatia.* (Tit. i. 5) *For this Cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the Things that are wanting.* (1 Cor. xi. 34.) *And the rest I will set in Order when I come.* (1 Cor. xv. 23.) *But every Man in his own Order.* A cloud of learned Witnesses explain the WORD ORDER for Substance as I have done. \*

*JOYING and beholding your Order, and the Steadfastness of your Faith in Christ.* The original Word, (*Steroma*) has great Emphasis in it, it imports firmness, solidity, encrease of Strength, and Confirmation. There is a beautiful hebraism in the original (*Steroma tes pisteos, pro ten sterian pistin*) a stable, immoveable and firm Faith. † Faith when of the right Kind, in the observance of that ecclesiastical Order which Jehovah has instituted, is firm as the Firmament itself, and stable as the Heavens: There seems to be an Allusion in the Word to the heavenly Bodies, which keep their constant Stations, and observe their regular Courses thro' immeasurable Tracts of Ether, for a long Succession of Ages inviolably, without the least swerving or suspension of Motion, except in some extraordinary Instances, when Omnipotence interpos'd, then indeed the great Lights of Heaven forgot to run their wonted Courses!

AMAZING was the believing boldness of *Joshua*, in his Prayer upon this Occasion! Who in the Sight of *Israel*, with an air of Majesty, Authority and Empire, arrested the Eye of Heaven in his Race, and held the falling Day: And in like Manner enjoin'd the lesser Luminary to stop its swift career, and by a febler Light assist his Victory and Triumph! *Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon in the Vale of Ajalon.* *Gibeon* was the Place of Action, the Seat of War, the Scene of Battle, and the Vale of *Ajalon* was near to it.

AND as amazing was the Success of this eminent Instance, of fiducial Recumbence upon the Divine Power and Promise, for the Sun stood still, and the Moon stay'd, until he had aveng'd himself

C

\* *Grotius, Simachus, Menochius, Beza, Hamond, Davenant, Gomarus, Erasmus,* and others.

† *Pasor, Estius, Menochius, Gomarus, Davenant, Grotius, Erasmus,* agreeable to which saith *Pool* in his *Synop.* are the *Ligurine* and *Pag-sine* versions, and those also of *Piscator* and *Beza*.

himself upon their Enemies. (*Jos. 10.*) O the Stupendous prevalence of *believing Prayer!* that thus in a Moment can controul, the establish'd Laws of Nature! and stop the Motions of the heavenly Bodies! This may bring to our wellcome Remembrance, that famous Scripture, (*Isa. xlv. 11.*) *Concerning the Work of my Hands command ye me.* Herein the Almighty, by a Condescension truly astonishing and inexpressible, puts equal Honour upon, and gives equal encouragement to believing Prayer! *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, they shall Prosper that love thee.*

BUT JERUSALEM had not only excellent ORDER, but likewise a firm UNION among its Inhabitants, both which stand and fall together. And thus the visible Church is under Regulations of a divine Original, *for God is a God of Order, he is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace, in all the Churches of the Saints,* (*1 Cor. xiv. 33.*) The Word *Confusion*, (*acatastasis*) signifies dissention, tumult, turbulent, faction, vexing, disturbance, or a confus'd state, wherein Order is unhing'd and overthrown. But God is not the Author of *Confusion*, but of *Peace*, and therefore of *Order*, which is the Contrary of *Confusion*, and the cause and antecedent of *Peace*; to this purpose speak many learned Writers, \* God himself is Order and Harmony, both in his Nature and in his Laws, which are but a Representation of his Nature, so far as it is imitable by intelligent Beings. Now vital and practical Religion is but a Conformity to both, the Copy and Original or Prototype, and therefore it is of Necessity in its Nature and Genius, the very reverse or contrary to *discord, confusion and division.*

AND as the Church is united to CHRIST as ITS Head by Faith, so by Love to each other, like the natural *Body*, to which it is compared in Scripture, which is not only united to the Head, but each Member thereof to the other; which Union is the Foundation of their Sympathy with, and Care for each other, as well as of their mutual Nourishment, Growth, Strength, Comfort and Beauty, every of which is injured, if not quite destroy'd, by a Breach of Union. Just so it is with the visible Church or Kingdom of Christ. But on the Contrary, a firm Union makes it comfortable to itself, profitable to its Friends, and terrible to its Enemies, as *an Army with Banners*; so that we may say of it as *Balam*, under a divine Impulse, said of *Israel*, when he saw the several Tribes, who were united in one great Body, regularly encamp'd under their respective *Standards*, with their Colours flying, *how goodly are thy Tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles O Israel?* (*Num. xxiv. 5.*) In this glorious situation the visible Church strikes a dread, a panick, into the Hearts of all her Foes, like *an Army with Banners*, like regular veteran Troops, kept under good Discipline, marshal'd in good Order,

\* *Arius Montanus* the vulgar Latin, *Tremelius ex syr*, and *Bezas*, versions, *Cajetan*, *Piscator*, *Erasmus*, *Pasor*, *Parabulus*, *Symachus*.

Order, and drawn up in *Battalia*, with their proper military Ensigns, Arms and Officers, ready to repel with Valour, Conduct, and Success any Assailants.

PRAY observe, my Brethren, that the great God positively Commands us to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, (Ephes. iv, 3) Every Word of this blessed Precept is big with *Emphasis*, (*Spudazontes terein, ten enoteta tou pneumatos, en to fundesmos tes eirenes*) The Word translated *keep*, (*spudazontes*) signifies our earnest endeavour to preserve a Thing with great study, solicitude and labour. This Precept is truly Evangelical; the Law requires absolute Perfection upon pain of Death, but CHRIST urges our intense and diligent Endeavour after Obedience.

BUT what is it that we should keep with so great Care and Pains? Why the *UNITY of the Spirit*, (*ten enoteta tou pneumatos*) *the Oneness of the Spirit*; it is that *Oneness* which he had spoken of in the second and third Chapters of this Book, *viz.* of the *Body of Christ*, compos'd of different sorts of People, united to one Head, *Ch rist Jesus*, at least in Appearance and Profession.

THE Apostle calls the *UNITY of the visible Church*, the *Unity of the Spirit*, not only because there is a real spiritual and saving Union, between some of the visible Church to CHRIST form'd by the Holy Spirit, from which the rest are (Synecdochically) denominated; but also because the external Union of the whole Church, is not Bodily, but Spiritual, namely of *Minds* agreeing among themselves.

MOREOVER as the *visible Church* is not the natural Body of CHRIST, and yet has a religious Relation to him, it may therefore be call'd his spiritual or mystical Body visible, or in Profession at least; therefore the Union must be spiritual also, of the same Kind with the Body to which it belongs.

BESIDES God, who is a *Spirit*, is the *Author* of this external Union of professing Christians into Church Fellowship, or of their being outwardly in Covenant with him, which has a *spiritual* and *noble tendency* to engage them to be the Lords; to affect their Spirits and turn them from Sin to God; in which respect this external religious Relation to the Father of Spirits, may be truly called the *Unity of the Spirit*: So that here a two-fold Unity of the Spirit is enjoyn'd, *viz.* *internal*, of the Mind, in Sentiment and of the Will in Affection; and *external* in a joint partaking of outward, but spiritual, Ordinances of Worship.

The Word *Bond* (*fundesmos*) signifies, that which connects one Thing with another, or that which joins one Thing to another.

Now the *Bond* here enjoined is *Peace*. (*eirene para to eis en eiren, a concellendo in unum, says Pastor*) The etymology of the Word *Peace* signifies to connect or join different Things into one; and this truly is the tendency of *Peace*; it removes Prejudices, asswages Relentments, conciliates and unites Mens Minds, and

thus it preserves the Unity of the Church of God, which is broken by angry Contentions and Debates.

PEACE cannot be kept without mutual *forbearance* in lesser Things, which Mankind are apt to entertain very different Sentiments of: But *forbearance* has no Place among the *fierce* and *furious*, but only among the *humble* and *meek*. Unity cannot be preserved where *Pride* and *Envy* reign which are its irreconcilable Enemies †

Now if the Command of GOD obliges us to prevent as much as in us lyes, in the Use of all lawful Means, a Breach of the external Union of the Church of GOD, then by a necessary Consequence, the same Command of GOD, obliges us to use all lawful Means to recover this Union, when it is broke: These two Things have an inseparable Connection, he therefore that denies one, denies both consequentially, and so opposes the commanding Authority of Almighty GOD.

THE Apostle urges the aforesaid UNITY, enjoin'd in the Verses immediately following, by these ARGUMENTS, *viz.*

THAT there is but *one Body* mystical, the visible Church, the Type whereof was the *Jewish* Tabernacle, and in the room thereof afterwards one *Temple*. We are *one Body*, says *Tertullian*, from a conscientious Regard to the Unity of Religion and Discipline, and Hope of the Covenant. \* Seeing the Church is but one *Body*, because of it's external, visible and stated Conjunction in religious Offices, it is therefore the Duty of those who are Members of it, to endeavour to preserve it's *Unity*; to this effect speak *Zanchy*, *Esnius*, *Camero* and *Grotius*.

AND *one* divine Spirit, which governs and quickens the Church, and unites it into one *Body*, which cannot disagree with itself, (1 Cor. xii. 4.) so *Zanchy* and *Grotius*: Or the Word *Spirit*, as *Beza* thinks, may be taken for the human *Mind*, those that join in Church-fellowship, agree in *Mind*, and *Spirit* among themselves, as if they were but one Spirit, which cannot disagree with itself. What is more monstrous than for a Man to rise up against himself, as *Tirinus* and *Zanchy* observe.

ONE *Hope* of your *Calling*, we expect one and the same eternal Salvation, the *Object* of *Hope*; the Apostle by a *Metonymy* calls *Hope*, because of their Relation to each other; now seeing we all expect the same eternal Felicity, why should we disagree and divide in our way to it? The *Hope* to which we are called cannot be divided; thus *Menochius*, *Zanchy*, *Symachus*.

ONE *Lord* of the Church by the Father's Appointment, *viz.* JESUS CHRIST, who is the Redeemer, Saviour, Head and Governor of the Church; who neither will nor can be divided, whom nevertheless such Labour (virtually) to divide and tear, who  
promote

† Grot. Zanchy, Beza, Erasmus, Simachus, Menochius, Vatabulus.

\* Corpus sumus, de conscientia religionis, et discipline unitate, et spei Foderis. Tertull. in apologet.

promote *Schisms* Contentions and Confusions in the visible Church, so *Zanchy, Grotius, Vorstius, Erasmus, Menochius.*

ONE Faith, one Rule of Faith, contained in the Scriptures, which we all follow, or one Doctrine of Salvation, which we all believe, which was always one, and therefore the Faith of the whole Church visible; to this Effect, *Erasmus, Zanchy, Grotius, Menochius, Tirinus.*

ONE Baptism, one Mode of professing this Faith, *viz.* by Baptism, as *Alting* observes; as all have the same Faith, so all have the same Symbol of Faith, *Baptism*, which was always one, even before CHRIST's coming in the Flesh, it was the same as to the Thing signified, and now one also not only in that Respect, but likewise as to the external Sign, so *Grotius* and *Zanchy*, and I think justly.

ONE GOD and Father of all, who is above all, in respect of absolute and universal Empire, essential and transcendent Excellency, and thro' all, who by his Providence permeates, upholds, and rules all, and more especially the Members of his visible Kingdom, and in you all, uniting you to himself at least visibly, as one Father of all by JESUS CHRIST; this last Clause respects GOD the Father personally, the other two Persons being before-mentioned, thus *Erasmus, Hieronimus, Grotius, Pool*, and others.

OBSERVE how the blessed Apostle labours this important and momentuous Point, *viz.* the external UNION of the Church visible; he is not satisfied with mentioning the express Command of GOD enjoining all to labour for it, by the highest Authority, No! but knowing the strong natural Aversion of Mankind against it, he urges our Compliance, by a beautiful Train of pertinent and nervous Reasonings, sumarily represented, with amiable Elegance, and Energy of Address, to gain our naturally reluctant Consent, to our Honour, our Duty, and our Interest!

GOD knows there is great Need of the aforesaid Precept, and all the poignant Arguments whereby it is enforced, and of our attending thereto with all our Powers; for the Breaches of Union among the visible Members of CHRIST's Body, are as common as they are dishonourable and fatal! The Ignorance, the Pride, the Humour and Prejudice of Men's Hearts, dispose them strongly to run into innumerable Sects, Parties, and Factions; and that under religious Pretexes of greater Purity, &c. and doubtless in diverse Instances with pious Intentions, as if CHRIST must be divided, as if his Kingdom was like to be strengthened by crumbling it into little Parties, and setting them by the Ears to tear one another to Pieces about Circumstantial, while thro' the unhappy Influence of angry Debate, the chief Things of Religion, are for a Time, too much neglected, and the common Enemy laughs in his Sleeve at both!

SATAN has more Sense than that comes to, he knows by long Experience, that the Way for him to command, is to divide, and therefore he encourages Division, with all his Might. he secretly  
blows

blows up People's *Pride, Prejudice and Resentment*, against each other, that so he may bring them to open Ruptures, as well as fix them in that unhappy State, if possible beyond a Retrieve: Then the Name of GOD is dishonoured, his People rendered contemptible, and Brethren by Profession and Principle in Fundamentals, as sinfully as miserably engaged to vex and hurt one another instead of promoting their own, each others, and the publick good, and all this under religious Pretexes of *Zeal for GOD*, which makes such Conduct sit the easier on Men's Minds; O Sirs! Is not the Christian Church divided enough already, without any new Additions? Consider how the *Jews, Turks, Pagans and Deists* are strengthened in their Prejudices against Christianity altogether, by the scandalous Contentions and Divisions of the Professors of it! And yet more and more new Sects are starting up now and then! thro' the Agency of Men of hot Tempers, and narrow Minds, Lord have Mercy upon us! What shall be the End of these Things? It is shocking to think of the Divisions that are now in *Scotland!* O! the needless sinful *Schisms* of the visible Church, deserve to be bewailed if possible with Tears of Blood! It would look more like the Spirit of Christianity, to endeavour by peaceable, calm and condescending Methods, to unite if possible, the main Bodies of the Protestants (who hold the same Foundation Principles) into one, than to tear afresh the seamless Coat of CHRIST into more Pieces and Shreds.

BUT on the contrary, *how pleasant is it for Brethren to dwell together in Unity?* As the Psalmist informs us, *Pf. cxxxiii. 1.* Here observe, that this Psalm was compos'd upon the happy Occasion of the Conclusion of the Civil Wars, between the two Houses of *Saul and David*, in which having felt the sad Effects of Discord and Division, both the King and People were more sensible of the Blessing of Peace and Union.

BEHOLD *how good, and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity. It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even Aaron's Beard, that went down to the Shirts of his Garments, as the Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zyon, for there the Lord commanded the Blessing even Life forevermore.*

THE Concord and Unity of Brethren, who profess the same essential Principles, in mutual Love and Endearment, and in the social united Observance of all the Ordinances of religious Worship, is good, pleasant and profitable.

It is good in itself, because agreeable to the positive *Command of GOD*, and the Dictates of right *Reason*, yea it is very good, it is more excellent, amiable, noble, and ornamental, than we can conceive or express, and indeed it is not only good in itself, but it is good to us.

For,

It is *pleasant* like the holy aromatick anointing *Oyl*, which was pour'd on *Aaron's Head*, when he was consecrated to his high

high and honourable Office of *Priesthood*, and that with such a liberal Effusion, that *it ran down his Beard*, and even to the *Skirts of his Garment*, filling the House with a balsamick Odour, a diffusive delightful Fragrancy; this costly precious Unguent and Perfume which rejoice the Heart, was not conceal'd in, or confin'd to a Box, but pour'd forth with a generous Profusion, and rich Abundance. So nothing can be more agreable to a truly pious Mind, than Union and Harmony, in Truth, in Purity, in Love!

Moreover,

It is *profitable*, as the *Dew* to the *Earth*, it is as the *Dew of Hermon*, and the *Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion*, *i. e.* profitable both to Civil and Religious Societies, as the *Dew* is from *Heaven*, so is religious Concord and Unity. As *Dew* is *mild* and *gentle* in its Descent, not like the *Rain* which is sometimes impetuous *stormy* and violent; so is Love, Concord and Unity all Harmony, Gentleness and Sweetness; whereas Contention, and Division are harsh, discordant, furious!

MOREOVER, the *Dew* cools the sultry *Air*, refreshes the parch'd *Glebe*, and promotes its fruitfulness. So *Peace* and *Unity* cool our angry Resentments, gently refresh our labouring Bosoms, and open a field of Usefulness before us.

As the *Dew* makes the face of Nature Smile, and put on a verdent Vestment, so *Concord* and *Unity* diffuse a universal Sweetness, evangelical Gaiety, and generous Beneficence; and under its Protection and Influence the smallest Things grow great and are established; whereas by Discord and Disunion, together with the fatal Fruits thereof, their Springs of Solace and Sweetness are deeply ting'd with *Mara's* Waters, their Beauty stain'd, and their Strength broken.

FARTHER, Concord, Brotherly Love and Unity, are profitable, because of the *Blessing of God*. Such as dwell together in *Unity* and live in *Love*, the Lord commands upon them the *Blessing*, even *Life for evermore*, *i. e.* the Almighty Wills that they be happy, who so live. Where there is true Concord, there is the Blessing of God, a happy affluence of all good, it shall be well with them here and forever hereafter; for God will give them all the Mercies they need in this Life, together with the Remission of their Sins, and everlasting Blessedness in a future World. There, there the Lord commands the *Blessing*, even *Life forevermore*, *they that dwell in Love, dwell in God, and God in them, for God is Love*. As the Perfection of *Love* is the Blessedness of Heaven, so the Truth and Exercise of *Love*, is the foretaste and earnest of that Blessedness upon the Earth: And as it is said of the *Dew*, that *it tarrieth not for Man, nor waiteth for the Sons of Men*, (Mica. v. 7.) so neither should our *Love* to our poor Brethren, tarry for their love to us, but generously prevent and incite theirs.

I Have dwelt the longer upon the *Order* and *Unity* of the visible Church, in which it resembles the earthly *Jerusalem*, not only

only because of the great Moment and Importance of these Points, but also because I fear, that they are either not fully understood, or not duly considered and suitably esteemed by divers that profess Christianity. But to proceed,

JERUSALEM was a strong City; it had not only Order and Unity, but what is the consequence of both, Strength; for according to the common but just Proverb, *unita vis fortior*, Forces united are stronger. But besides Unity and Order, Jerusalem had impregnable Fortresses for Defence against her Enemies. And is not the visible Church built upon a Rock, against which the Gates of Hell shall not prevail; the Munition of Rocks is her Defence, and under the Wing of Jehovah she may safely trust.

JERUSALEM was exceeding Beautiful in respect of its agreeable Situation and magnificent Structures, particularly the Temple, which was the Wonder of the World, beautiful for Situation, *the Joy of the whole Earth is Mount Zion, on the Sides of the North, the City of the great King.* (Ps. xlviii. 2.) And hence she was call'd even by Strangers, *the perfection of Beauty,* (Lam. ii. 5.) And is not the visible Church upon this Account, compar'd to her. (Cant. vi. 4) *Thou art Beautiful O my Love as Tirza, comely as Jerusalem.*

THE Church because of its superiour Meekness and amiableness, is likewise compar'd to a Lilly and a Dove, *as a Lilly among Thorns, so is my Love among the Daughters; O my Dove, that art in the Clefts of the Rock, in the secret Places of the Stairs, let me see thy Countenance, let me hear thy Voice, for sweet is thy Voice and thy Countenance is comely;* the Dove when attack'd by Birds of prey, has no Refuge but its Wings, by which it hastens to the Clefts of the Rock for security, nor does the Lilly when it is shaded and scratch'd by obdurate, unrelenting Thorns, dare to scratch again!

AND for the same Reason, the visible Church is compared to an Olive-Tree, (Hol. xiv. 7.) *His Branches shall spread, and his Beauty shall be as the Olive Tree, and his smell as Lebanon. She is likewise said to look forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun.* Amiable as the fresh rosy Blushes of the opening Morn, the rising Day, beautiful as the Moon, the Queen of Heaven, when unobscured by envious Clouds, she ascends the summit of the Horizon, banishes its gloom and darkness by her Silver Beams, and turns the Night into Day; or like the Sun, that glorious Orb of Light and Lamp of Heaven, when he appears in his meridian Splendor and Majesty! And hence every sincere Member of the visible Church is said to be *all glorious within,* for the Beauty of Heaven, the Wonder of Angels, the Brightness of his Fathers Glory, *makes them comely with his comeliness which he puts upon them.*

IN Jerusalem was likewise the Temple, the KING'S Palace, or chief Place of Residence, which made it renown'd above other Cities. And is not the visible Church the Habitation of the blessed

bleſſed God, the KING of KINGS and LORD of LORDS, *the Lord dwelleth in Zion, in Salem is his Tabernacle, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, he hath choſen Zion for his Habitation; this is my reſt forever, here will I dwell, for I have deſired it; I will abundantly bleſs her Proviſion and ſatisfy her Poor with Bread. I will alſo clothe her Prieſts with Salvation, and her Saints ſhall ſhout aloud for Joy,* Pſ ix. 11. And cxxxii.

HERE let it be obſerved, that the CHURCH of CHRIST is either inviſible or viſible.

THE *inviſible Church* conſiſts only of thoſe that are ſincerely pious, whether in Heaven or upon Earth, ſcattered up and down in many Places, and Nations, and under a variety of Profeſſions; this is the Catholick or univerſal Church which we profeſs to believe, in that excellent *Summary of Chriſtian Principles, the Apoſtles Creed*, they are called the inviſible Church, becauſe we are not able certainly to determine who they are in particular, their Principles of Action not being open to human Obſervance.

SUCH of this *inviſible Church* as are on Earth, conſidered complexly, are called the *Church militant*, or Church-waring, becauſe in this Life they have many Miſeries to endure, and many Enemies to conflict with, *viz.* the *Devil*, the *World*, and the *Fleſh*; which afford conſtant Cauſe for Watchfulneſs and Humility; and frequent Occaſions for Mourning and Combat; for in many Things we offend all; on this Account the bleſſed Apoſtle *Paul* affectionately bewails his indwelling Corruption, the bitter Root of all actual Diſorders, *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* Now the bleſſed God has furniſhed his People for the Combat, with compleat Spiritual Armour, he provides a *Helmet*, *Breaſt-plate*, *Sword*, *Shoe*, and *Shield*; and urges them to put on this Armour, to ſtand to their Arms, to fight, to quit themſelves like Men, and be ſtrong.

SUCH of the *inviſible Church* as are in Heaven, are call'd the *Church triumphant*, becauſe having fought the good Fight of Faith, finiſh'd their Courſe and obtained compleat Victory over all their Enemies, they do in Heaven celebrate perpetually, the Triumphs of the Victory they have obtained, through divine Grace and Power, over every of their fatal Foes; and are there fully and finally deliver'd from the Reach of their Rage, as well as compleatly conform'd to the Purity of the divine Nature, and made Partakers of the divine Love, in a Degree to us at preſent inconceivable, and inexpressible!

BUT the *viſible Church* conſiſts of all thoſe that are baptiz'd, and profeſs Faith in the fundamental, or *eſſential* and neceſſary Truths of the Goſpel, which have moſt direct Influence upon the Heart and Life.

THIS is a mixed Body of Good and Bad, which none can ſeparate from each other in this Life, nor ſhould any attempt ſuch an impracticable Task. Our Lord, ſo far as I can yet learn, has not given Authority to any Miniſters, or Churches, to ſuſpend

from, or cast out of their Communion, any who have a competent Measure of divine Knowledge, profess Faith in the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, Subjection to the Government of the Church of CHRIST, and live a regular Life. The following *Similitudes*, to which CHRIST compares the *visible Church*, sufficiently confirm this.

THE first *Similitude* that I would mention is related by the Evangelist, *Matthew* xiii. from the 24th, to the 30th Verse, and runs thus, *The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a Man that sowed good Seed in his Field, but while Men slept, his Enemy came and sowed Tares among the Wheat, and went away, but when the Blade was sprung up, and brought forth Fruit, then appeared the Tares also, so the Servants of the Householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good Seed in thy Field, from whence then hath it Tares? He said unto them, an Enemy hath done this, the Servants then said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up, but he said nay; least while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them; let them both grow together until the Harvest, and in the Time of the Harvest, I will say to the Reapers, gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in Bundles to burn them, but gather the Wheat into my Barn.*

THE Explication our Saviour gives of the Parable now mentioned is this, *He that soweth the good Seed, is the Son of Man, the Field is the World, the good Seed are the Children of the Kingdom, but the Tares are the Children of the wicked One; the Enemy that sow'd them is the Devil, the Harvest is the End of the World, and the Reapers are the Angels.*

NOTHING can be more plain and exprefs to the Point in Hand, than this *Parable* of our Saviour, together with his own Explication of it; if it be considered,

I. THAT by the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Subject-Matter of this Discourse, the visible Church is to be understood, which is compared in the Verses immediately following, on account of its speedy Growth and Progress, in the early Times of Christianity, to a *Grain of Mustard-Seed*, soon becoming a Tree, and to *Leaven* hid in three Measures of Meal, till the whole was leavened.

IT is called a *Kingdom*, because in it as in temporal Kingdoms, there is a *King* to rule over it, namely JESUS CHRIST, *Persons* to be ruled over, *Laws* of Government, as well as a Necessity of *Obedience* to them, and *Subjection* to the *Prince* of the *Kings* of the Earth, the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*.

IT is called the *Kingdom of Heaven*, because the Original of the *Constitution* of the visible Church, was from Heaven and the *Tendency* thereof is Heavenly, and the final *Issue* to all that sincerely and believingly obey the *Laws* of this Kingdom, is Heaven or Salvation: And hence the King of it is said to be *the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him.* GOD the Father has

*The visible Church called the Kingdom of Heaven.* 19

has set his beloved Son upon his holy Hill of Zion, (Ps. ii. 6.) i. e. constituted him King over the *visible Church*, of which Zion is the Beginning, Foundation and Mother, as is evident from the Character given it, *Holy Hill*, it was called *Holy*, because of the *Temple* built there, which was a Figure of the Church of CHRIST. (Isa. lx. 14. Heb. xii. 22. Rev. xiv. 1.) GOD is said to send the Rod of his Strength out of Zion, (Ps. cx. 2.) i. e. his everlasting Gospel and the Power of his Spirit working with it; of the same Tendency is that notable Saying of the Prophet *Isaiab* (ii. 3.) For out of Zion shall go forth a Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem: The Mountain of Zion had two Hills, upon one of which was placed the Castle of David, and upon the other the Temple, under a twofold Magistracy, viz. Political and Ecclesiastical, the Church lives and is protected; which is called GOD's holy Mountain, or Mountain of his Holiness in many Places of Scripture, or Sanctuary, elsewhere we read of the Mountain of Holiness. (Jer. xxxi. 20.) and People of Holiness, (Dan. ix. 24.) This Mountain was call'd *holy*, not inherently but relatively, because of the Ark translated there, and on Account of the Temple's being built there. (2 Sam. vi. 17. 1 Chron. xvi. 1.) What I have offered by way Explication upon Ps. ii. 6. is agreeable to the Sentiments of many learned Interpreters.\*

THE visible Church is justly called the *Kingdom of Heaven* in Scripture, tho' there are many Hypocrites in it; because CHRIST governs it as a KING, and there is a remnant in it, that are willingly subject to his governing Authority, who is the Lord from Heaven, from whom as the better part it is denominated, this Church is the *Kingdom of Heaven* upon Earth.

2. THE Design of this Parable is twofold, 1st. To shew that the State of the visible Church is a mix'd State in this World; it consists, as our Lord informs us, of *Wheat* and *Tares*, the Children of the Kingdom, and the Children of the wicked one, good and bad. And 2d. That the Servants of the Church, the *Ministers* and other *Church Officers*, must not attempt to separate the *bad* from the *good*, who are in the visible Church, who have such a resemblance of *Wheat*, of Piety in their outward Appearance, that they cannot be rooted out, without the Hazard of a mistake, and in consequence of it, rooting up the *Wheat* with them, as Mr. Pool observes.

The Case is here fairly stated, and an explicit Answer given thereto by our Lord *Jesus Christ*. The *zealous Servants* who were very desirous and forward to have a *perfect Church* upon Earth, and to this purpose to have the *Tares* rooted out of it, enquire of their Master, what was his Will and Pleasure in this Case? *Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up*; observe it was not the openly Prophane or avowed Hereticks, that divulge their Sentiments, for these may be known, and according to the

\* Gegerus, Piscator, Ainsworth, Vatabulus, Pagnin, Musculus Pool, Henry,

express Order of God elsewhere related, are to be cast out of the Church, or out of Communion with it, No! But it was the close Hypocrites, who were Doctrinally sound in main Points of Truth, and outwardly regular in Conduct, that the Servants wanted to be tampering with, and cast out; and it seems they imagined that they were sufficiently qualified for that awful Province of searching the Hearts of others, and judging of their invisible Grace! O lamentable Vanity! But *Christ* was not of their Opinion, their Master was not of their Mind, he stop'd their well meant but dangerous Career, by a plain, authoritative and well grounded NEGATIVE to their Question, NAY, *least while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them, i. e. you are not qualified for, you are not equal to that task you are so ready to engage in, and so fond to undertake, viz. of judging and determining about the States of Mens Souls, from their inward, spiritual and invisible Experiences, and making your Sentiments about them Terms of Communion; and therefore let them grow together until the Harvest, that is, to the End of the World, as our Lord himself explains it, i. e. let the good and bad continue in the Bosom and Fellowship of the visible Church till the End of Time, the General Judgment, the Consumation of all Things, and then the Angels shall make a full and final Separation between them in that Day, namely, of the general Judgment, when the Lord of Hosts makes up his Feavels, then, and not before, ye shall certainly discern between the Righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.* (Mal. iii. 17, 18.)

OBSERVE, my Brethren, that our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Wisdom of the Father, and the King of the Church, who knows best how to promote the good thereof, and who only is vested with rightful Authority to prescribe Laws thereto, whatever some good Men fondly imagine, or whatever pious Purposes they have of purifying the Church by Methods of their own devising notwithstanding; positively commands his Servants to let the Tares and Wheat grow together until the Harvest. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy, who art thou that judgest another? (Jam. iv, 12.) Upon which the reverend and learned Mr. Pool glosseth thus, "One absolute, supream, universal and spiritual Lawgiver, who can simply and directly bind Mens Consciences, and make Laws for their Souls, (Pro. viii 15, 16. Isa. xxxiii, 22. Act. iv. 19.) By this he intimates, that they did invade God's Right, who took upon them a legislative power in prescribing to other Mens Consciences, and making their own Will the Rule of the others Duty. Who is able to save and destroy both temporally and eternally, (Deut. xxxii, 39. 1 Sam. i. 6. and Isa. xliii. 13.) whereas other Law-givers cannot save or destroy Mens Souls, nor so much as their Lives, without God's concurrence Who art thou that judgest another, what a sorry Creature, a Man, a Worm, that thou shouldst lift up thy self into God's Place, and

“ and make thyself a Judge of one not subject to thee, the Servant of another Master. (*Rom. xiv. 4.*) It is a fond Thing for thee to take upon thee the Power of a Judge, when thou hast no Power of saving or destroying, rewarding or punishing.” Thus Mr. Pool.

AND shall we, Sirs, under pious pretexes of purifying the Church, in our own way, openly rebel against the Authority of our King and Sovereign, prefer our *Wisdom*, I might justly say *folly*, to his infinite *Understanding*, and reflect upon his *Fidelity* and *Care* for his *Churches good*, as if he had not given a sufficient *System of Laws* for its good Government and Advantage, without our Additions. God forbid!

SIRS, all Methods of purifying the Church of *Christ*, by measures of human Contrivance, notwithstanding of their fair Face, and the good design of their zealous formers, are mischeivous to it; they rob us of the Liberty *wherewith Christ has made us free*, puff up foolish Mortals with Pride of Attainments they have not; set them in chase of the Knowledge of other Peoples Hearts, which they cannot attain, to the neglect of their own, which they may in some Degree attain, and rend the *Body of Christ in pieces*, by *debates, envyings, wraths, stripes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults*, (*2 Cor xii. 20.*) And therefore let us inviolably observe the express command of our Master, *let them grow together till the Harvest.*

I shall beg leave to cite a Paragraph of Mr. Henry's Annotations on the Parable I have mentioned, which I think is very excellent. “ *Note*, It is not possible for any Man infallibly to distinguish between *Tares* and *Wheat*, but he may be mistaken, and therefore such is the *Wisdom* and *Grace of Christ*, that he will rather permit the *Tares*, than any way endanger the *Wheat*. 'Tis certain scandalous Offenders are to be censured, and we are to withdraw from them: Those that are openly the Children of the wicked one, are not to be admitted to special Ordinances; yet 'tis possible there may be a Discipline either so mistaken in its Rules, or so over nice in the Application of them, as may prove vexatious to many that are truly godly and conscientious: Great Caution must be used in inflicting and continuing Church censures, lest the *Wheat* be troden down if not pluck'd up; the *Wisdom from above*, as it is pure so it is *peaceable*; and those that oppose themselves, must not be cut of, but instructed and with *MEEKNESS*. (*2 Tim. ii. 25.*) The *Tares* if continued under the Means of Grace, may become good Corn, therefore have Patience with them.

“ *Note*, The overhasty and inconsiderate Zeal of *Christ's Servants*, before they have consulted with their *Master*, is sometimes ready, with the Hazard of the Church, to root out all that they presume to be *Tares*, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up.”

Of the same Sentiments are many other learned Interpreters.\*

IF it be said that CHR<sup>H</sup>ST in his Explication of the aforesaid Parable, signifies that the *Field* is the *World*.

I *Answer*, with Mr. *Henry*, that the Word *World* there signifies the visible Church, scattered all the World over, not confin'd to one Nation: In the *Parable* it's call'd *Christ's Field*, for all Things are delivered to him of the Father, and to imagine that the *World* in this Passage of Scripture, is not to be taken in the aforesaid limited Sense, is to suppose that Christ himself speaks besides the Point he had undertaken to speak upon, which is absurd, and therefore that cannot be true which it flows from.

IF it again be suggested, that the gathering up of the *Tares* mentioned in the aforesaid Parable, intends, a putting of them to *Death*, and so is not applicable to confirm that for which it is aduc'd.

I *Answer*, that to charge such a Blood thirsty Disposition upon the *Servants* of CHRIST in general, without clear Ground and Necessity from the Text, is very uncharitable, and therefore sinful. Now there is no Necessity to take the Words so, for there are other Ways of putting People out of the visible Church without killing of them: And as such a *gloss* is uncharitable, so it is irrational and absurd, because it supposes a Disposition in the *Servants* of CHRIST to put Members of the visible Church to *Death* meerly for their want of Grace unexpressed by Speech and Action; for the *Parable* treats of *Tares* that do so nearly resemble the *Wheat*, that they cannot be certainly distinguished from it by the most pious and intelligent: Now to kill People meerly for the want of saving Grace, unevinc'd by any Instance of criminal Conduct prejudicial to Society, is such a *monster* of Barbarity and Nonsense, that the very worst Persecutors that have ever appeared upon the Stage of the World, since the Foundations of it were laid, have not (so far as I know) been guilty of it; and to suppose the *Ministers* of *Christ's Religion*, in general, to be more  
cruel

\* *Viz.* Lucas, Brugensis, Munsterus, Simachus, Grotius, Zegerus, Heronimus, Beza. The Word *Tares* (*xixapia*) signifies a kind of burnt *Wheat*, which can't be pull'd up without pulling up the *Wheat* along with it, it is a kind of *Cockel* or *Darnel*, which springs from *Wheat* corrupted, or other kinds of Grain corrupted, which is very like to *Wheat*, springs up before the Harvest, and is very difficult to be distinguish'd from *Wheat*; thus *Scultetus*, *Brederadius*, *Theophrastus*, *Rembertus*, *Dodoneus*, *Pomponius*, and *Sabinus*; the same is call'd by *Virgil*, *infelix Lolium*; *Mathew* alone uses this Word; and always in the plural Number (*xixania*, quasi *Sitoizania*, quod idzane insident sito, et cum eo cresscit.) the original Word translated *Tare* implies its sitting upon the *Wheat*, and growing together with it, as *Gualterius* and *Shmidius* observe, and therefore a two-fold kind of *Wheat* is intended, viz. that which is noble, and that which is degenerated, and sordid, by which we are to understand good and bad Christians, both distinct from other Men, and distinct among themselves. Thus Doctor *Lightfoot*.

cruel and nonsensical then all the rest of Mankind, is no great Compliment either to it or them.

BESIDES such a gloss is contrary to the Words of the *Parable*; it is not living absolutely in the World that *Christ* speaks of, but living respectively in a State of external *Union* in the visible Church, let them *both grow together till the Harvest*: And it is contrary to the *Design* and *Explication* of the *Parable*.

THE *Design* of the *Parable* is to shew that the visible Church or Kingdom of CHRIST, which is joined together by an external *Bond* of *Union*, is compos'd of good and bad, and will remain mixed till the End of Time; and that we ought to let it remain so, ought to let them grow together, because we are not capable to make a judicial actual *Distinction* between Saints and Hypocrites, without doing Injury to the former. The Thing in view is the unlawfulness of breaking the *Churches* outward *Union*, because of our Judgment about *internals*; which is contradicted by the aforesaid *gloss*; for tho' it acknowledges the sinfulness of *killing* People merely because we judge they want invisible Grace; yet it allows of a Breach of the *Churches* *Union* upon that slender Foundation, which opposes CHRIST's Sentiment and the Reason of it, which is this, the Danger of doing wrong thro' our incapacity, which does not only conclude against the highest Degrees of wrong, but every Degree of it, and all Methods of Management tending thereto; because all wrong is of the same general Kind, all unreasonable and contrary to the Law of Nature. As *Church fellowship* is a valuable Privilege, so of consequence to be deprived of it, without just Cause, is unjust, as really as to be unjustly deprived of Life, tho' not in so great a Degree; and therefore all Attempts that are like to involve us in either of these Evils, should be carefully avoided.

NOR is the aforesaid gloss agreeable to our Lords *Interpretation* of the *Parable*, which informs us, *that the Angels shall gather out of his Kingdom all Things that Offend, and them which do Iniquity, and shall cast them into a Furnace of Fire, i. e.* the Angels, as Instruments of divine Justice, shall separate the wicked from the good, with whom in this Life some of them have associated in Church Fellowship, and cast them into a Place of Misery. But will they destroy the Life they have, or annihilate their Existence? No. Our Saviour assures us, *that there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth*, But to proceed; The

2d. SIMILITUDE which I would discourse of, is that mentioned by *John the Baptist*, (*Mat. iii. 12.*) whereby the visible Church of CHRIST is compared to a FLOOR, upon which is *Chaff* and *Wheat*, *whose Fan is in his Hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner, but he will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire.*

Here observe the following Particulars.

1 THAT the visible Church is Christ's Floor, (*Isa. xxi. 10.*) the Temple, a Type of it was built upon a threshing Floor.

2. THAT

2. THAT in this *Floor* there is a mixture of *Chaff* and *Wheat*; good and bad, in the same outward Communion.

3. THAT there is a *Day* coming, when there shall be a full and final *Separation* made between the *Chaff* and *Wheat*, viz. the *Day* of Judgment, then there will be a visible Distinction between the Good and Bad, in respect of their Doctrines, their Works, their Persons, (1 Cor. iii. 13--15. Matt. xxv. 32.) *Before him shall be gathered all Nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats.*

4. THAT the Lord JESUS CHRIST is only capable, to make a true a just and final *Separation*, or Distinction among Men universally according to their *States* and *Actions*; being the Wisdom of his Father, and all Eye, and that he alone has Authority to occupy this important Province, and execute this difficult Trust; seeing all Judgment is committed to him, and to him only, by his Father; and hence we are told, that his *FAN* in his Hand, which is threefold, says *Brugenfis*, viz. a *FAN* of *Doctrone*, of the *Cross*, and of *Judgment*.

A *FAN* of *Doctrone*, whereby some internal Distinction is made between good and bad, while the Nature and Characters of true Christianity, are scripturally and cautiously open'd, while the Promises and Threatnings are distinctly and pertinently propos'd and pronounc'd.

A *FAN* of the *Cross*, or of Sufferings upon a religious Account, whereby sometimes much *Chaff* is blown away from the *Wheat*.

A *FAN* of *Judgment*, whereby CHRIST searches the *Heart and Reins* of all the *Children of Men*, and distinguishes the most subtle Hypocrite from the truly Pious, and will openly separate them all from each other, in the great *Day* of his coming, in vertue of a supreme judicial Authority, assign'd him by his Father, as a Reward of his Abasement; this is his peculiar *Prerogative* and incommunicable *Royalty*, which it is great *Sacrilege* for any to assume. This *FAN* of Judgment, which is principally intended in the aforesaid Words, for till the Time of the last Judgment the *Floor* of the visible *Church* shall not be thoroughly purg'd, I say, this *Fan* of Judgment is in CHRIST's Hand alone, exclusive of all Competitors to his *Crown* and *Dignity*!

As this *Similitude* plainly represents the mixed State of the visible *Church* of CHRIST, namely, that it consists of real *Saints* and close *Hypocrites*, so it shews with equal Evidence, that it is CHRIST alone that is qualified with competent Capacity, and vested with rightful Authority, to make a judicial universal *Separation* between them: And of Consequence, that it is an unjust *Presumption* and criminal *Invasion* of his royal *Prerogative*, for any of the *Children of Adam* to assume and attempt it, whatever be their civil or religious Character or their superior Endowments notwithstanding. But to proceed; a

3d. *SIMILITUDE*, which is very remarkable and instructive, concerning the *Nature* and *State* of the visible *Church* of CHRIST

on Earth, we have in the 13th Chapter of *Matthew*, the 47th, 48th, and 49th Verses, *Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Net, that was cast into the Sea, and gathered of every Kind, which when it was full, they drew to Shore, and set down and gathered the good into Vessels; and cast the Bad away; so shall it be in the End of the World, the Angels shall come forth, and sever the Wicked from among the Just, and shall cast them into the Furnace of Fire.*

THE Kingdom of Heaven, or the Church visible, (say *Malvenda*, *Burgenfis*, *Grotius*, *Beza*, *Gegerus*, *Piscator*, and others) is compar'd to a Net, (*Sagine*) a DRAG-NET, as *Ulpian* and *Varro* explain the Word; the Nature of which is to draw along with it whatever it meets with, and this is indeed confirm'd by the following Words of the Parable, *and gathered of every Kind, i. e. of Fishes*, because the Parable treats of fishing, yet no doubt other Things are apt to come into a *Drag-net*, it is apt to sweep along with it, not a little Trash and Rubbish. By this *Similitude* our Lord informs his Disciples,

1st. THAT there will be a Mixture of good and bad, in the visible Church, in this World; a Mixture of *Saints* and *Hypocrites*, least they should be troubled when they saw not that Purity in the Church which they desired. And,

2d. THAT this Mixture should continue to the End of Time, till the Mystery of GOD is finished, till the Net that is now cast into the Sea, be full, till the Church the Kingdom of CHRIST, that is now in the World be compleated, and the Gospel thereof has fulfilled, has answered the End for which it was sent.

3d. THAT during the Space of the Net's filling, and before it be drawn to shore; the *Fishermen* themselves know not what is in it, nor do those of them that are discreet, and well informed, attempt to make any Separation of the bad Fish from the good, while the Net is in the Sea, or while it is a drawing to the Shore; No! For the sake of the good Fish that they hope are in it; they draw it in with hard Labour, great Care, Tenderness and Caution; lest the Fish should be frightned, and either violently break thro' the Net, or wantonly jump over it, and so run wild again in the Ocean.

4th. THAT at the End of the World, when the Net is drawn ashore, then and indeed not till then, there will be a certain Discovery of the Distinction between the Good and Bad, and a visible Separation made between them, *the Good will be gathered into Vessels, and the Bad cast away.*

AT the End of the World, says our Lord, *the Angels shall come forth, and sever the Wicked from among the Just*; ay, the Angels of Heaven having Authority and Instructions from him, to whom all Things are naked and open, who knows all Men, and with Complacency those that are his; shall effect thoroughly what some pious, well-meaning tho' misguided Angels of the Churches, have attempted in vain, without either Commission or

Capacity; for such a tremendous Province! as that of making a Separation between *Saints* and *Hypocrites*; to this Purpose, *Tertullian* excellently observes, in his *Apology*, that “He who  
 “ has once appointed the eternal Judgment, at the End of the  
 “ World, does not precipitate or hasten that Distinction or Sepa-  
 “ ration, which is to be the Condition of the Judgment, before  
 “ the End of the World.\*

HAVING endeavoured to represent the mixed State of the *Church* visible, by considering three Scriptural *Similitudes*, that treat of it; I would now proceed to Discourse a little upon the *Terms* of *Admission* into it, and *Exclusion* from it

BAPTISM is certainly the *Door* of Entrance into the visible *Church*, or Kingdom of CHRIST, and hence those that were baptized were said to be *added to the Church*, (Acts ii)

Now this initiatory Ordinance, is, according to the Judgment of the main Body of the Protestant Churches, (agreeable to the holy Scriptures) and particularly of our OWN, to be dispens'd not upon the Foundation of *Persons* having *Grace*, or upon the Church's Judgment, concerning their inward *gracious Experiences*, No! But upon the *Profession* of their *Faith*, and outward *Covenant-Relation* to GOD. The Words of our Confession of Faith are these, “Not only those that do actually profess Faith in, and Obedience unto CHRIST, but also the Infants of one or both believing Parents, are to be baptiz'd, (See *Mark* xvi. 15. 16. *Acts* viii. 37, 38. *Acts* ii. 41. *Gen.* xvii. 7, 9. *Gal.* iii. 9. 14. *Col.* ii. 11, 12.)” and upon this Head it is farther added, “THAT by the right Use of this Ordinance, the Grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited, and conferred by the *Holy Ghost* to such, (whether of Age or Infants) that Grace belongeth unto, according to the Council of GOD's Will, in his appointed Time (*Gal.* iii. 27.) For as many of you as have been baptized unto CHRIST have put on CHRIST, *Tit.* iii. 5. He saved us by the Washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. *Ephes.* v. 25, 26. As CHRIST loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of Water by the Word. *Acts* ii. 38. Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost, *Con.* chap. 28. *Sct.* 4, 6.

As all the aforesaid Places of Scripture, speak of the Efficacy of *Baptism*, when accompanied by the Holy Spirit, so some of them of the *Mode* of Administration by *Washing*, hence they term it *Lutron Lavacrum* a *Laver*, in Allusion to these Places of Scripture, the ancient Fathers of the three first Centuries, generally if not universally call'd *Baptism-Regeneration*, *Renovation*, the *Laver*, &c.

NOR

\* Qui semel eternum judicium destinavit, post seculi finem, non precipitat discretiorem, que sit conditio judicii, ante seculi finem. *Tertullianus*.

NOR does our Church pretend to any Right or Authority, of excluding any from the *Lord's Supper*, upon the precarious Foundation of their Judgment, concerning Men's inward *Experiences* of a Work of invisible Grace, No; the Compilers of our *Confession* had more Judgment, than to advance such an indefensible Notion; see the Answer to the 173d Question, in the *Larger Catechism*, "May any who profess the Faith, and desire to come to the *Lord's Supper*, be kept from it?"

"ANSWER, Such as are found to be ignorant, or scandalous, notwithstanding their Profession of Faith, and Desire to come to the *Lord's Supper*, may and ought to be kept from that Sacrament by the Power that CHRIST hath left in his Church, untill they receive Instruction, and manifest Reformation."

IT is pleasant to see, the amiable *Modesty*, the necessary *Caution*, and good *Judgment* of our Church, in declining to assume the BENCH, and make her uncertain Opinion of Men's spiritual *Experiences*, the Term of their *Admission* either to the initiatory or confirming *Seals* of the *New Covenant*, No; She well understood and remembered, that antient scriptural, rational and equitable *Maxim*, that (*Ecclesia non judicat de internis*) the Church has no business to judge of Internals, or make her *Opinion* of Men's spiritual *Experiences*, the Ground of her judicial Proceedings towards them.

I may add to what has been said, that our Church declares, "that Grace is exhibited, in or by the Sacraments, rightly used, 1 Pet. iii. 21. *The like Figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us.*" Conf. chap. 27. Sect. 3.\*

As to the *Terms* of a total *Exclusion* from Church-Fellowship, viz. *Excommunication*, they are *Heresy* in Doctrine, and *Immorality* in Life. Tit. iii. 10. *A Man that is a Heretick after the first and second Admonition, reject.* Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17. *Moreover if thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault, between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gain'd thy Brother, but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Word may be established, and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church, i. e. to the Church-*

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\* GIVE me leave, my Brethren, to cite here, the Opinions of some very great and good *Divines* of the Protestant Churches.

DOCTOR Burges (de bapt. regenerat elect infans) asserts Baptism to be the moral Instrument of initial Regeneration, and for this Opinion cites not only the antient Fathers, and the Church of England, but likewise Calvin, Chamier, Bucer, Musculus, Junius, Zanchy, Vossius, Jewel, Whitaker, Amesius, and Davenant.

DOCTOR Ward, in (vindic. gr. sacramentis) teaches, that Sacraments do convey Grace as moral instrumental Causes, to those that do not put a Bar in the Way.

VOETIUS saith, that elect Infants, that have federal Holiness have at the same Time the Grace of Regeneration, Destr. elect.

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Representative, the Officers of the Church, *but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen Man and a Publican* 2 Cor. vi. 7. The Apostle speaking of the incestuous Corinthian, says, *sufficient to such a Man, is the Punishment which was inflicted of many, so that contrary wise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, least perhaps, such a one should be swallowed up with over much Sorrow.*

How excellent and rational is this Order, this Command of our dear Lord Jesus Christ? How much does a conscientious observance of it tend to preserve the Peace and Unity of Christ's Kingdom, or Church visible? But when the very reverse hereof takes Place, when instead of going to our Brother, who is supposed to *Trespass* and telling him privately of it, from a due respect to his Credit and Character, we go among our acquaintances and *blaze* it abroad, and set it perhaps in no advantageous light: Does not such ungenerous *backbitting* and *tattling*, tend to disturb the Peace of the Church of CHRIST, break its Union and turn all into a Flame? What can be the Cause of such unkind, unjust Proceeding, so directly contrary to the express and positive command of the KING of the Church? Is it *Ignorance* or is it *forgetfulness* of this Command and Institution, or is it *Pride* and *Stuborness*, that will not suffer us to stoop, to submit to the Kingly Authority of the great REDEEMER? And do we by such a kind of Conduct, conform to the *Law of Nature* and *Nations*, which requires that Persons be heard before they be condemned, or do by others as we would have them *do by us*? The Resolution of these Questions, let our own Consciences determine.

BUT as to the *Notion* of excommunicating Persons, either by separating from them at first, or by continuing contentedly in a State of Separation, without the Use of Means to get it remov'd, when there is any probability of Success, (which are indeed substantially the same) on the account of different Opinions in *Circumstantials* in Doctrine, and acting accordingly; or on account of our *Judgment* or *Perswasion* of their being *graceless* or without Christian Experience; altho' there are scandalous *Presidents* for the former of these, in the violent Ferments and Animosities that

WENDILINE doth not only affirm that the Sacraments of Confirmation may organically begin Faith, but adds, that this is the orthodox Opinion, he means the generally or universally receiv'd Opinion of the Calvinist Churches. Exer. 81. pag. 1311 and 12.

BEZA proposes these two Rules or Maxims, viz. 1. That the Supper is instituted for Disciples, and that all such as profess Christ are Disciples.

MR. Thomas Hooker, is of the same Sentiment with Beza before-mentioned. See *Survey*, pag. 41. 42.

OF the same Sentiment likewise are Messrs. Blake, Humphry, Timson, all which have wrote in defence of it.

MR. Stoddard, of New-England, joins his Suffrage to those just mentioned, and has wrote in vindication of it, a Book, entitled, *An Appeal to the Learned.*

that arose even in the early Times of Christianity, between the *Eastern and Western Churches*, which came to that *pitch*, that they excommunicated one another, and that for no greater Matter than the Observation of *Easter* upon different Days! Much like this was the Ferment and Prejudices that arose between the *Jewish* and *Gentile* Christians, and their uncharitable Conduct towards each other, which were still of an earlier Date. *Presidents* that demand our *pity* and *caution*, but deserve not our *Imitation*! but of the latter I know no Example in Scripture or History; and far less is there any Foundation in the *Holy Scriptures*, or in our excellent *Confession of Faith*, for such unaccountable Proceedings! No! Our CHURCH is so far from such an unreasonable, uncharitable and Church dividing *Principle*, that she does not make her Opinion of Peoples *secret* spiritual Experiences the Ground of a far less *censure*, viz. of *suspending* them from the *Lords Supper* for a Time: Nor does she make a Difference in circumstantial Points, (so far as I know) a sufficient Ground for any Censure at all.

You know, my Reverend and Beloved Fathers and Brethren, it is our bounden Duty to beware of all *superstitious* human *Inventions*, in *Doctrine*, *Worship* and *Discipline*, however piously they are design'd and zealously they are defended notwithstanding. We are commanded by *supream* Authority to *stand fast in the Liberty wherewith* Christ has made us free, *lest we be entangled in a Yoke of Bondage*. The Lord *Jesus* is the only KING and Head of his Church; he alone is her *Law-giver*, who is able to *save* and to *destroy*; he only has Authority to make *Terms of Communion* for his visible Kingdom, and to those we must adhere inviolably.

He has given us a perfect self-consistent *System of Laws*, which need no Addition of new ones of our Contrivance to compleat their Number, No. A faithful observance of those which *Christ* has given us, will fully answer the valuable End propos'd.

OUR dear *Redeemer* is faithful in all his *House*, as *Moses*, for he is Wisdom, Goodness and Love itself; he has never freed his Churches from the Ceremonial Institutions of a divine *Original*, to *gall* the *Necks* of his Disciples with a heavier *Yoke* of human Inventions, No. his *Yoke* is peculiarly easy, and his *Burden* light in the present *Evangelick* Day.

Now Sirs, as we should disdain to *couch* like *Issachar* under the Burden of unreasonable impositions of others in Matters of LIBERTY; so common Justice requires, that we should equally abhor imposing our Notions about *Circumstantials* upon them; let us ever Remember and observe, the *golden Rule* of *Righteousness*, which Our Lord has given Us, viz. *to do by others as we would have them do by us*. But I proceed to the,

*Second*, General Head propos'd which was to enquire; *What is to be understood by the PEACE of JERUSALEM*.

To this End observe, that *Peace* is threefold, viz. with *God*, with *ourselves*, and with our *Neighbour*.

*Peace with God*, consists in actual Reconciliation to him, thro' a sincere and unreserved Acceptance of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Peace-maker, in all his Offices and Relations, fully, freely and forever; as well as thro' an intire Dependance upon his Merit, as the only deserving Cause of our Acceptance with God: Which is preceded in the Adult, with a *distressing Sense* of our awful natural *Enmity* against God, our extream *undonefs* thereby, and our utter Impotency, either to make Satisfaction to divine Justice for our Offences, or cure the meral Maladies of our Minds.

AND is follow'd with an implacable *hatred* against *Sin*, the great make bate between God and us\*; a high *Veneration* for *Jesus Christ*, the Peace-maker; an honourable *esteem* of, and cordial *complacence* in the Gospel PLAN of Peace, together with a *friendly Disposition* and *Behaviour* habitually towards the *Author of Peace*, the blessed God, his *Honour* and *Kingdom*, and towards all such whom we conceive to be his People, (when freed from the Power of unreasonable Prejudices and violent Temptations) whatever Denomination they bear, and tho' they differ from us in lesser Things.

THIS *Peace*, as well as that with ourselves, and our Neighbour, proceeds from *GOD the Father*, as the Projector of it, in the Depths of his unsearchable *Wisdom*; and hence the Author to the *Hebrews* speaks of him in this endearing strain, *Now the God of Peace that brought from the Dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant.*

THIS *Peace* proceeds also from *God the Son*, as the *Purchaser* of it, by the invaluable Treasures of his precious Blood; and hence in the Epistle of *Paul* to the *Colossians*, he is said to have *made Peace thro' the Blood of his Cross.*

THIS *Peace* proceeds likewise from *God the Holy Ghost*, as the *applier* of it, by the efficacious influence of his *Operations*, without which we would not accept the *Mediator*, nor could our natural *Enmity* be broke.

*PEACE* with ourselves, consists in a calmness, sweetness and holy security of Mind, following after Reconciliation to God by *Faith*, and flowing from Communion with him in *Love*, † attended with a habitual, unreluctant, unreserved, undisguis'd, uniform Subjection to his Government, both by his *Precepts* and *Providences*; and neither shuns the Tryal of God's Word, nor is, for the general, *puffed up*. This *Peace* is an invaluable Jewel, the blessed *Legacy* which the blessed *Jesus* left to his Disciples; the agreeable rest of the Soul, and the Life of Life; hereby we are sweetly supported under every present pressure, and sufficiently fortify'd

\* *Pax Dei, est bellum, contra satanam.* Peace with God is War against the Devil.

† Union to God in Christ by Faith, is the Ground of Communion in the divine Love.

fortify'd against every uneasy fear of future Misery and Danger. This makes the Soul serene under the most gloomy and formidable aspects of Providence; stable and unshaken amidst all the Revolutions of Nature, and shifting Scenes of Time.

PEACE with our Neighbour is threefold, viz. *OEconomical, Political, Ecclesiastical.*

PEACE *OEconomical*, or quiet in the Family, is a comfortable Privilege, (Psal. cvii. 41.) *He setteth the Poor on high from Affliction, and maketh him Families like a Flock; the Righteous shall see it and rejoyce, and all Iniquity shall stop her Mouth.* Among the surprizing Changes which a sovereign Providence brings to pass sometimes among the Affairs of the Children of Men, this that the *Psalmist* mentions in this Psalm, is very remarkable. That while the Almighty abases the Great and Honourable, pours Contempt on Princes that abuse their Authority, and slight his Mercy, while he dethrones them from their Grandeur and Dignity, reduces them to distressing straits, and Causes them to wander in the Wilderness where there is no Way; baffles their Councils, and breaks their Pride and Pomp. He in the mean Time exalts the Humble, he setteth the Poor on high, he raises them from the Dust of meaness and obscurity, to Places of Trust and Honour. And that which adds equal Security, Beauty and Ease to their *Elevation*, is the number and quietness of their Children and Families, *he makes their Families like a Flock; a Flock of Sheep*; numerous indeed; but meek, peaceful, useful, sociable, in this resembling the true and living Members of the Church of Christ, who are clothed with this instructive amiable Character. (John x) When ones Family is quiet and calm, it is a noble *Asylum*, a little Sanctuary to retreat to from Tempests abroad, a great Satisfaction and Support in Life, that sooths all our Sorrows, sweetens all our Labours and Anxieties, and lulls every Grief to rest. But the Contrary is no little Addition to our other Calamities; it storms us from our proper Place of Refuge and Retreat; puts Vinegar and Nitre into our Wounds, and adds double weight to all our Woes!

PEACE *Political*, or quiet in the State, (of the right Kind) is a freedom from War, with National Enemies, upon a safe and honourable Foundation, and a *Union* and Harmony among ourselves, respecting Matters of a civil Nature.

THEN we no more hear the confus'd noise of the *Warrior*, or see *Garments roll'd in Blood*, a rueful, pitious spectacle, that cannot but excite, in generous Bosoms, the softest Sympathy's of Sorrow, the tenderest Sentiments of Humanity!

How amiable, desirable and valuable a Benefit must *political Peace* (of the right Kind) be; it opens a pleasing scene of *Plenty* before us, and frees us from innumerable *Anxieties*, (Psal. clxvii. 14.) *He maketh Peace in thy Borders and filleth thee with the finest of the Wheat.*

It must needs be an entertaining Prospect to devout *Noah*,  
after

after he had been so long expos'd to a constant Scene of extraordinary *Terror*, by a more shocking *Inundation* than any of the Sons of Men had ever seen before; so long immur'd in a floating Cattle of immense and unweildly bulk, which had neither *Helm* nor *Compass* to check its random Motions, amidst a vast abyss of Waters, upon the foaming angry Main, together with so prodigious and troublesome a Family, no less than a World of *Animals* in its capacious Bosom; Creatures of every Kind and Form, amiable and hideous, mild and malignant: I say it must needs be agreeable to him to feel this vast Machine *rest* from its wild wandrings, upon the lofty summit of *Ararat*! To hear no more grating noisy *Murmurs* of descending *Torrents*, or awful *Shrieks* of expiring Mortals, abandon'd to the depths of Woe, frightned at the dismal Symptoms of Natures *Catastrophe*; and their own approaching *Fate*; upon his opening of the Ark to behold the asswaging Waters, and the mild, returning, faithful *Dove*, returning not on a lingering *Wing*, but with a rapid *Flight*, carrying the amiable Emblem of *Peace*, an *Olive Leaf* in her Mouth, an agreeable Symptom of the *Resurrection* of entom'd Nature, a sure Sign of her emerging above her watry Pressures, into her original Form, Beauty and Use. (at least in some Degree) Give me leave, my dear Brethren, to make this brief Reflection, *en passant*, O happy, thrice happy, are all those who finding no more *rest* in this weary World, this mazy *Labyrinth* of Labour and of Woe, do fly with an eager wing by *Faith* to CHRIST, the Sanctuary, the Ark of the oppressed, the Rest of the weary, the Balm of the wounded: This glorious *God-Man*, our venerable *Immanuel*, will save those that Trust in him, from the awful *torrents* of divine Resentment, and from sinking in the Sea of Jehovah's *anger*. He is, as the Prophet *Isaiab* expresses it, *a hiding Place from the Wind, and a covert from the Tempest, as Rivers of Water in a dry Place, and as the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land.* But I proceed,

*PEACE Ecclesiastical*, or *Peace* in the Church, is oppos'd both to *Schism* from within, in its own Body, and *Persecution* from without, from open Enemies. This *Peace*, with *Truth* and *Righteousness*, is one of the most important Mercies upon Earth. Now the *Peace* of *Jerusalem*, which we should pray for, includes all the Kinds of *Peace* I have mentioned: When we use this Petition in our Prayers, we beg or supplicate that the Members of the visible Church may have *Peace* with GOD, *Peace* in their own *Consciences*; *Peace* in their private *Families*; *Peace* be *within thy Walls*; and likewise that there may be *Peace* in the *State*, *Prosperity* in her *Palaces*; and particularly that their may be *Peace* in the Church, *Peace* in *Jerusalem*, that she may be as a *City compact together*.

Now seeing that the *Peace* of the Church, is especially intended, let us fix our Meditations upon this momentuous *Subject*, for a little while, and enquire, what is intended by the *PEACE* of *JERUSALEM*? IN

IN answer to this Enquiry, let it be observ'd, that *Peace* generally supposes *Debate* and *Contention* preceeding, which alas, to the great Scandal of Christianity, is too natural and common among the Professors of it; the principal Causes of which, are unkind *treatment* of one another, different *Sentiments* in smaller Matters, of curious Speculation, which have little Influence upon Practice; the remainders of *Corruption* in all Men, which the grand Enemy of the Churches Peace inflames, by raising *false Reports*, and especially when they keep at a Distance from each other, and aggravating true; and by ascribing every Thing said and done, to a bad Design; as well as by working upon the Ignorance and Narrowness of some Mens *Minds*, the peculiar *beat* of their Tempers, and warmth of their Imaginations.

Now as *Peace* generally supposes *Contention* and *Debate*, and sometimes in consequence thereof, an open *Breach* of *Union*, so under this View, it *implies* these Things following, *viz*,

1. A *Cessation* of *Arms*, a laying aside for a Time hostile *attacks*, (tending to the Prejudice of each others *Characters*) which is the first step to *Peace*; this gives room to think and reflect; this gives leisure to parley and deliberate coolly upon the tendencies and issues of Things.

2. PEACE after *Contention* and *Debates*, implies, *Proposals* of *Accommodation*, which among contending Parties that seriously desire *Peace* should be mutual, condescending and Scriptural;

1. THEY should be *mutual*, because in *Controversies* that rise to a high Degree of Warmth, and continue for a considerable space of Time, there is generally *faults* on both Sides, those that are most in the right, are in some Things in the wrong, at least in their corrupt way of Managing, what is *materially* right; but alas it is as Difficult for us to be convinced of our *Mistakes*, as it is easy and natural to *Mistake*!

THE Causes hereof, are our native *Ignorance*, *Pride*, *Prejudice*, and immoderate *Self-Love*; hence we have the Eyes of *Argus*, are quick sighted to discern others *faults*, but as to our own, we are as blind as *Moles*, and as deaf as *Adders*, unwilling to see them, (naturally) unwilling to hear of them, unwilling to own them, how plain soever they are pointed out to us, we can more easily discern a *Mote* in our Brothers *Eye*, than a *Beam* in our own.

And tho' we all in Words disclaim the Doctrines of *Infalibility* in Judgment, and *Perfection* in Practice; yet it would seem that many hold both practically; for they look upon it to be a very great *disgrace* to be convinced of any *Mistake* in Opinion, even in lesser Things, and any *misconduct* in Practice consequent thereupon; and therefore to prevent that false *Disgrace*, they will hold fast their pretended *Orthodoxy* in every punctilio with the stoutest obstinacy!

As they have swallow'd perhaps not a few Things by the lump thro' an *implicite Faith*, without impartially examining the *Grounds* of their Perswasion, so it would seem they are resolv'd to hold

the whole of it fast and firm to the Death, against all *Opposition*; altho' it be of *Scripture, Reason, Antiquity, yea and common Sense*; and thus they go thro' thick and thin with undaunted Courage, so that one had as good almost take a *Bear* by the Tooth, or talk to a *Block*, as to such rigid fierce *Bigots*; for while they are spoken to, they are not modestly concluding they may be mistaken as well as other People, and so endeavouring to weigh impartially what is spoken, no, not at all; they constantly take it for granted, that they are certainly Right in all their *Sentiments*, and therefore instead of weighing what is spoken, they are contriving to find out some plausible *pretext, some shadow* to screne and help them to hold fast their favourite infalible Notions.

THO' it is generally acknowledged that *we should grow in Knowledge*, yet some are scar'd at more enlarged Views of the same Things, which they had some dark and confus'd Notions of before, and much more at the Discovery of any Point of Truth even in *Circumstantial*s, which they did not know before, as if it was a Duty to bind ourselves forever in the fordid *shackles* of that ignorance and narrowness of Soul which is common to People in younger Years, when they begin to profess *Religion*, and to be frightned at the Answer of our own *Prayers* for Wisdom and Knowledge, as well as shun the granting of our Requests with as much Care as possible, in order to keep our *Credit* with those of our own *Cast and Stature*: For if it happen that we are by a larger View of Things, constrained to differ, tho' upon the firmest Foundation of *Reason and Revelation*, the *Breadth of a Hair* in after Years, from our first raw and indigested Notions of Things, it is an unpardonable *Iniquity and Scandal*, not to be wiped away. And if that be the Case, that we must hold every Notion we have had, right or wrong, it is certainly best to avoid close thinking upon Things altogether, and examining of them, least thereby we be forc'd to quit some *Notion* we have held before, or in other Words, we must maintain, with the *Papists*, that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion!* Farther.

2. THE *Proposals of Peace* should be *Condescending*; for it is such only that have a tendency to remove Prejudices, and conciliate mutual Love and Respect; every Thing should be given up for Peace, but Truth and Holiness. The more we give up our *Humours, our Pride, our Prejudices, yea our Credit* among the Ignorant of Mankind, if the Case require it, and we do no Injustice to ourselves therein, the more we obey the *Precepts* and Answer the *Design* of the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, which enjoins us to *deny ourselves, to take up the Cross* of our Master, to *mortify our Corruptions*, and let not our *RIGOUR and Stiffness* (in small Things) but our *MODERATION* be known to all Men.

3. THE *Proposals of Peace and Union* should be *Scriptural*, such as the KING of the Church has appointed, and no other; not such as some Devout Men, of narrow Minds and hot Tempers, have contriv'd, with a pious Purpose to maintain Truth and promote the

the Purity of the Church: Let their Piety and Learning be never so great, and their Designs never so good, they have no Authority to impose their *Notions*, about *Circumstantial*s, as *Terms* of Communion.

IN general I may observe, that the *Terms* that should be propos'd, are such as tend to preserve and transmit, pure and uncorrupted, to the latest Posterity, the *essential* and necessary *Truths* of CHRIST on the one Hand, and yet to maintain inviolable the LIBERTY *wherewith* Christ has made us free, upon the other, and not entangle ourselves again with a new *Yoke* of Bondage of human Invention, and thereby open awful Occasion for a continued series of Schisms, Convulsions and Confusions in the Church of God.

Now the scriptural *Terms* of Ecclesiastical Peace and Union, are either *Doctrinal* or *Practical*.

THE *Doctrinal* Term of Peace and Union which our LORD has appointed, is a Confession of *essential* and necessary *Articles*, in Doctrine, Worship and Discipline, contained in the holy Scriptures, agreeable to which are our excellent *Westminster Confession of Faith*, *Catechisms* and *Directory* for Worship and Government.

THESE *Terms* are truly Scriptural, inasmuch as we are enjoin'd in the sacred Oracles, by the same supream Authority, to *reject Hereticks*, or those that obstinately hold *fundamental Errors*, after the *first* and *second* Admonition, and in the mean Time to receive the *Weak*, who hold *circumstantial Errors*, being in other Things found. We are of Consequence, plainly directed to make *essential* and *necessary* *Articles* only, *Terms* of Communion.

And indeed these *terms* are *rational*, *Catholic*, and *peaceable*, they may be defended by Argument, and no other that I know of, they are a noble *Medium* between two dangerous *Extreams* of unjustifiable *severity* upon the one Hand, and *Criminal laxness*, on the other, the former of which encroaches upon our *Liberty*, and the latter is *Prejudicial* to *Truth*, both which ought to be ever Dear to us! If any other Method besides what is before mentioned be taken, either *fundamental Truths* will be betray'd, or good Men rejected, whom we are commanded to receive, and who when receiv'd, are like to be of service to CHRIST's Kingdom.

NOR should it be lightly pass'd over, that we shou'd not receive the *Weak*, to *doubtful disputations*, *i. e.* we shou'd not distress and ensnare them, with *Debates* about Things of small Moment, which are comparatively doubtful and uncertain, not only obscure in their own Nature, but such as there is no absolute promise of the Holy Unction to lead all good Men to the Knowledge of; and seeing the Case is so it is no Argument either of good *Judgment* or great *Humility*, to be very peremptory and confident about such Things, because the *confidence* is disproportion'd to its *foundation*, the foundation is obscure and uncertain what good and great Men differ about, and the confidence

is so peremptory and certain as if they were not liable to Mistake, but were exempted peculiarly from the common Frailties and Weaknesses of human Nature; will a discreet Man raise a Superstructure larger than its *Basis*, or will our Passions and Prejudices alter the Nature of Things? \*

THE *abuse* of these *Terms* cannot take away the regular Use of them, no more than the abuse of other good Things can reasonably deprive us of the comfort of them.

AND tho' the Number of *essential* and necessary *Articles* has not hitherto been determined, by any *Church* that I know of, yet every Person, and of Consequence every *Church*, as such, must certainly have a right to determine for themselves, what they reckon to be such. But to proceed,

THE *Practical Term* of Peace and Union in Churches where there are complaints of *Misconduct*, are either an Express verbal acknowledgement of them in Things of a *Moral* nature, or a *Reformation* from them.

No doubt in *Churches* form'd and united, an explicit open verbal Acknowledgment, should be required, especially for gross Instances of immoral Conduct, which the Light of Nature teaches the Sinfulness of.

BUT when the *Church* is either in its *Infancy* not fully form'd, or in a *broken* and *divided State*, and when there is a *Reformation* from the Evils complain'd of, and urging a *verbal Acknowledgement* tends to open wider the bleeding Wounds of the Church, to tear her in pieces; and consequently to destroy her; it should not be insisted on even in respect of gross *Immorality*; because the Design of *Discipline* is answered by Reformation in such Cases, and much less should it be even propos'd at all, in *Matters* which are (comparatively speaking) of a *doubtful* Nature, and have long since happened; to say that there should be no *Moderation* us'd in the *Discipline* of the *Church*, (*no epeceia juris*) no Variation of it's *Exercise*, under different Circumstances and Aspect, in such a Manner as tends to preserve the *Church* from Ruin, is to say in *effect* that it is unreasonable and indefensible, and consequently to impute to JESUS CHRIST the *Author* of it, either want of *Wisdom*, or want of *Love*, in forming the *Plan* or *Model* of it's Institution, both which are false, and blasphemous, and of Consequence that from which such Consequences naturally and easily flow; to apply the same *Medicine* to the Body in all the Variety of it's *Maladies* in the same Manner, and in the same Degree, would tend to kill instead of a Cure, and thus it is in Ecclesiastical Matters. But

3. PEACE does not only imply a *Cessation* of *Arms*, and *Proposals* of *Accommodation*, but likewise our sincere *Acceptance* of them, after due *Deliberation* upon their Nature and Importance, and with full *Resolution* thro' divine Grace to adhere thereto,

4. IT

\* Stabit opus milius, si bene fixa Basis. The Superstructure will stand the firmer, that the Foundation be well laid.

4. It implies real *Reconciliation* upon this Acceptance; when the Terms of Peace propos'd are mutually come into, we should then bury in perpetual *Oblivion* past *Offences*, as tho' they had never been, and return to a State of sincere *Friendship*, with the same Readiness, as tho' there never had been any *Breach*; if our *Brother offends us*, as our Lord observes, *not only seven times, but seventy times seven; we should forgive him*, and Sirs, the greater the Offences have been, the more noble and Godlike is the Forgiveness!

5. PEACE implies a Union by *Love* (at least) to those we are reconciled to. *Love* is the Band of Souls, (*gluten animarum*) the *Cement of Societies*, without which they cannot continue or subsist comfortably, or profitably in a State of *Union*.

LOVE is the *Substance of the Law*, the *Scope of the Gospel*, the *Glory of Christianity*; by this we imitate the blessed GOD, in one of his most amiable *Attributes*, which he himself reckons his *Glory* (*Ex 34*) By this we promote the *Religion* of the meek and peaceable *Jesus*, more effectually than by all our angry Contentions and *Debates*, about lesser Things; by this we adorn our Profession and Character, in the Eyes of all Mankind, who are not blinded and byass'd by the Force of *Passion* and *Prejudice*; and the more numerous, and as we suppose heinous, the Offences have been that we pass over, the more eminent, the more noble, the more Christ-like is our *Love*; because it is the more free and unmerited, the more strong and efficacious.

6. PEACE implies the Performance of *friendly Offices*, to each other, after *Reconciliation* to and *Union* with our Brethren. O how stately and glorious does it look, not only to pass by Offences, and love with our Hearts, those who have done us Injury, but to delight to do them all the kind Offices in our Power, and contend with them who shall *love* most, and exceed each other in *Courtesy* and *Gentleness*, in Acts of *Benignity* and *Endearment*! This! this! my dear, reverend, honoured and beloved Brethren! is the Religion of the holy JESUS, it breathes Sweetness and Mercy, it smells of the fragrant Spices of Heaven: O it imitates the gracious Dealings of the blessed GOD, with his poor sinful froward Creatures, in which, are stupenduous Stoops of condescending humble Majesty, mixed with astonishing, incomprehensible, inexpressible, and unparallel'd Displays of the strongest, purest Affection, the richest Benignity, and tenderest Mercy and Love! O, the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of the *Love* of CHRIST which passeth Knowledge! Let us imitate it, dear Sirs! that we may be filled with the Fulness of GOD; *let us walk in Love as Christ also has loved us and hath given himself for us, an Offering, and a Sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour.* I proceed to the

THIRD general Head propos'd, which was to shew, What is included in praying for the *Peace of Jerusalem*? And

1. It includes our high *esteem* of *Peace*, as a very important *Mercy*. This will appear by considering that *Peace* is more excellent in itself, then all the *Triumphs* of the most lawful *War*, \* because it contains a more necessary difficult and noble *Victory*, namely, over ourselves : It is true undaunted *Valour*, and Heroick (martial) *Bravery*, in the high Places of the Field, in defence of our *King* and *Country*, and all that is naturally dear to us, when conducted with good *Judgment*, executed with intrepid *Magnanimity*, and crown'd with desirable *Success*, is truly amiable, commendable and rewardable ; it merits the *lawrels* of *Honour* and distinguish'd *Recompence*, yet this *Self-conquest* is still more *difficult*, because of the strong *Propensity* in our degenerate *Nature* to *resentment*, † and more *necessary* for a peaceful *Temper* is one *Branch* of that *Change*, without which we cannot see *God*, so as to enjoy him hereafter ; and therefore it is more *Noble*. ‡

FARTHER *Peace* is a help to the quiet *Enjoyment* of ourselves, a great *Comfort* in *Life*.

THIS assists our *Progress* in *Religion*, which is not a little hindred by angry *Contentions*, for by these the blessed *Spirit* the peaceful heavenly *Dove* is drove *Reluctant* from our *Bosoms* !

NOR does *Peace* tend less to promote our *servicableness* to others ; certainly those that are *Angry* with us, are like to get little good by us.

By *Peace* and *Condescension* *God* is *Honoured*, our *Profession* adorned, and the *Unity* of the *Church* preserved. Whereas the *Contrary*, tends to bring *Reproach* upon the *Name*, the *Ways* and *People* of *God*, and manifold *Mischiefs* into religious *Societies*, as well as into our own *Souls*, and *Injury* upon our *Characters*, *Persons* *Estates* and *Families* ; for hereby others are exasperated against us, and therefore will try to do us all the hurt they can. But

2. PRAYING for the *Peace* of *Jerusalem*, includes our earnest *Desire* after *Peace* : And this is indeed the natural and necessary *Consequent* of the former. *Desire* flows from *Esteem*, and is exactly proportioned to the *Degree* of it : Moreover *Prayer* is but *Desire* expressed and offered to *God* in the *Mediators* *Name*. To suppose that *God* *Commands* us to pray for the *Peace* of *Jerusalem*, and yet not desire it, is to imagine that he commands us to flatter him with our *Lips*, while our *Hearts* are far from him, and consequently approves of *Hypocrisy*, the worst of *Evils*, and the

\* Pax una triumphis, inumeris melior.

† The Spirit that is in us lusteth to envy.

‡ I freely acknowledge, that the carrying on of a *lawful War* is consistent with a peaceable *Temper* of *Mind*, and that it requires the exercise of *Self-denial* in a great *Degree*, to prosecute *War* according to the *Laws* of *Justice* and *Humanity*, to moderate our *Resentments* and keep them within proper bounds. Yet *Peace* seems to require a still greater *Degree* of *Self-denial*, in that by it all shadow of *Resentment* must be laid aside entirely. What I have said of *War* by the *Sword*, is applicable to the other kinds of *lawful War*.

the Mockery of himself, which is the most audacious and malignant of Crimes; both which are absurd and blasphemous! absolutely inconsistent with the divine Wisdom and Purity! and yet they are the natural Consequences of the aforesaid Supposition, and therefore demonstrate the falseness and impety of it. What are *Words* without *desire* in intelligent Beings, better than Mockry?

3. PRAYING for the *Peace of Jerusalem* includes affectionate mourning for the want of Peace. The *Church* in general, and every *Believer* in particular, because of their mournful Disposition and Practice in this Valley of Tears, are compared to a *Dove*, a *Turtle-Dove*, (*Psal.* lxxiv. 19.) which is remarkable for its dolorous, solitary, warbling Accents, in the shady silent retreats.\* And surely the bad State of the Church is not the least among the *Sorrows* of those mourning *Doves*,

IN the Book of *Lamentations*, the Prophet *Jeremiah* bewails the melancholy State of the Jewish Church and Nation, with the most moving strains of mournful Eloquence; he paints Zions pitious *Calamities*, and his own painful Passion upon this Occasion, with the softest touches, and strongest Images! and adorns them (but with ease and negligence) with all the Pomp of Grief and Woe, reduc'd to the most deplorable Extremity! A few Passages of which allow me to mention.

*Zion spreadeth forth her Hands, and hath none to comfort her. How hath the Lord covered the Daughter of Zion with a Cloud in his Anger, and cast down from Heaven to Earth the Beauty of Israel. In the Tabernacle of the Daughter of Zion, he poured out his fury like fire. How is the Gold become dim, the most fine Gold changed. The Anger of the Lord hath divided them, he will no more regard them. Thou hast made us as the Refuse in the midst of the People. Mine Eyes do fail, my Bowels are troubled for these Things, I weep, mine Eye, mine Eye, runneth down with Water!*

AND elsewhere the same Prophet taking a view of the melancholly Circumstances of the People of *Israel*, and of the crimson Evils that too much prevail'd among them, such as *slander, falsehood, debate, &c.* indulges the most passionate Lamentation! *wishing that his Head was Waters, and his Eyes a fountain of Tears, that he might weep Night and Day!* And likewise *wishing, that he had in the Wilderness, a lodging Place of way farcing Men, some humble Cottage fitted for lonely Retirement, that he might be at rest from the strife of Tongues, and no more behold the melancholly Scenes that had been presented before him.* (*Jer.* ix.)

NOR was the sweet Singer of *Israel* less affected, with a view of the *violence and strife*, that were in the City of *Jerusalem*, this occasion'd his wishing for the *Wings of a Dove*, that he might Fly away and be at rest, that he might hasten far off into the *Wilderness*, and escape the Windy Storm and Tempest; as the *Dove* when

\* *Nec gemere acria, cessabit Turtur ab ulmo.*

when pursu'd by Birds of prey, flies Swiftly, and into far distant Places of Solitude, and hides herself in the Holes of the *Rock*. (*Pf.* 55.) The *Wings* of a *Dove* best became him, who was of a *Dove* like Disposition, now it is said of the *Dove*, that it exceeds all Birds in the Swiftness of its flight. \*

AND in the 120 *Psalms* 5, 6, 7. *verses*: The *Psalmist* bewails the want of Peace in the following Language: *Wo is me that I Sojourn in Mesekh, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar. My Soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth Peace: I am for Peace but when I speak, they are for War.* Upon which Words Mr *Henry* glosseth thus.

“ THOSE that *David* dwelt with, were such as not only hated him, but hated Peace, and proclaim'd War with it, who might write upon their Weapons of War, *Non sic Sequimur pacem*, but *sic Prosequimur*, perhaps *Saul's* Court was the *Mesekh*, and *Kedar* in which *David* dwelt, and *Saul* was the Man he Means that hated Peace.”

“ See here 1st. The Character of every good Man in *David*, who cou'd truly say, tho' he was a Man of War, I am for Peace, for living peaceably with all Men, and unpeaceably with none, I Peace, so it is in the Original, I love Peace, and pursue Peace, my Disposition is to Peace, and my delight is in it, I pray for Peace, and strive for Peace, will do any Thing, Submit to any Thing, part with any Thing in reason for Peace; *I am for Peace*, I have made it appear that I am so, the Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable.”

2. “ The Character, of the worst of bad Men, in *David's* Enemies, who wou'd pick a Quarrel with those that were most peaceably dispos'd, *When I speak they are for War, and the more forward for War, the more they find me inclin'd to Peace*; he spoke with all the Respect and Kindness that could be, propos'd Methods of Accommodation, spoke Reason, spoke Love, but they wou'd not so much as hear him patiently but cry'd out to Arms to Arms, so fierce and implacable were they, and bent to Mischief. Such were *CHRIST's* Enemies, for his Love they were his Adversaries, and for his good Words and-Works they stoned him: And if we meet with such Enemies, we must not think it strange, or love Peace the less for our seeking it in vain, *be not overcome of Evil*; no not of such Evil as this, even when thus tryed, still try to overcome Evil with good.

4. PRAYING for the Peace of *Jerusalem*. includes delight in the Prospect and Approach of Peace. As desire of Peace is equal to our Esteem of it, so is our Sorrow in its absence, equal to the Degree of our Desire after it; and consequently our Delight and Joy must arise on Occasion of any encouraging Appearance of its access to us, just in Proportion to the Measure of our Sorrow in want of it. If we heartily Pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*,  
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\* Utinam, ut turbineæ celeri impetu columba, cæthereas nubes perarearem, chorus, apud sophochem, in œdipo.

it must needs gladden our Hearts (if rightly informed) to see any Symptoms of the Answer of our Prayers.

WHEN the Prophet delivered a threatening message to King Hefekiah, he comforted himself with the hopes of Peace in his Time. Is. xxxix. 8. *Then said Hefekiah to Isaiah, good is the Word of the Lord which thou hast spoken, for there shall be Peace and Truth in my Days.* (Pro. xii. 20.) *But to the Counsellors of Peace is Joy; especially when any agreeable Prospect opens of a good issue to their Councils. Those that study the Things that make for Peace, and to this End concert healing Methods, and promote healing Attempts, will not only have the Credit, but the Comfort of it: To them there is Joy and Success, perhaps beyond Expectation. (Prov. xiii. 12.) Hope deferr'd maketh the Heart Sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a Tree of Life.*

5. PRAYING for the Peace of Jerusalem, includes unwearied Labour, to obtain and preserve it; and this as naturally flows from desire, when sincere and strong, as desire from Esteem, or as Eating when one is Hungry, and as our endeavours result from our desires, so they are exactly proportion'd to the Measure and Degree of them. The Spouse having an earnest desire after her LORD's Presence, sought him on her Bed, but not finding him there, went about the Streets of the City in quest of him, and was restless till she found him, (*Gant. iii.*)

Now Endeavours after Peace are twofold, viz. *Negative* and *Positive*, or in other Words, our careful avoiding the Hindrances of Peace, and our serious Use of the Means and Helps that have a Tendency to acquire and preserve it.

BUT what are the Hindrances of Peace in general, which should be carefully avoided?

I Answer, They are these following, viz. *unkind Thoughts, Speeches and Actions.*

1. UNKIND hard Thoughts of others, which spring not from superior Penetration, but from *Pride, Envy, narrowness of Mind,* or a *misguided Zeal.* These, these are the fatal, fertile, formidable Sources of all our severe Sentiments of, and unkindness to our poor Brethren. Unkind Thoughts, Sirs, are directly contrary to the Nature of that amiable, evangelick Charity, which the blessed Apostle Paul so highly extols, with the most honourable Encomiums, preferring it to Faith and Hope, and so earnestly recommends to our Imitation and Observance: He assures us, that the true Genius of this God-like glorious Grace, is *to think no Evil, and to hope all Things.* Charity, saith he, *suffereth long, and is kind. Charity envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, \* seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, rejoiceth not in Iniquity, (in bad Reports of our Brethren) but rejoiceth in the Truth, (in their just Vindication) beareth all Things, believeth all Things, endureth all Things.* Now tho' we have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge,

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\* Uses no reproachful Words or Gestures, as Chrysoſtom interprets.

and tho' we have all Faith so that we could remove Mountains, and have no Charity, we are nothing; yea tho' we bestow all our Goods to feed the poor, and give our Bodies to be burn'd, and have not Charity, it profiteth us nothing (1 Cor xiii.) And elsewhere the same Apostle observes, that Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifyeth, (1 Cor viii 1.)

FROM the aforesaid beautiful Description, we may learn, that Charity consists in Candor and Kindness, in Sweetness and Generosity, in Mercy and in Forbearance, in Forgiveness and Disinterestedness in our Conversation towards all Men; it inclines the Person possessed of it, to be a common Good. It does not consist in Sourness, Suspicion and Severity, but in Courtisy, easiness of access, Gentleness and Humanity; it is hard to be provok'd, and easy to forgive; does not want to establish its own Reputation upon the ruin of anothers; is not suspicious, or easily suspicious of Evil in others without evident Reason, but puts a favourable Interpretation upon even the doubtful Speeches and Actions of our Brother; to this Effect speak the following great Divines, Dr. Hammond, Erasmus, Vatabulus, Camero, Grotius, Pareus, Calvin, Symachus, Hescius, Pool, and others.

BUT is Charity blind?

I Answer, No, not quite; But yet it hopes the best of others, as long as it can, with any Reason; and when it is constrained by glaring Evidence, to see Evil in others, its View is attended with Reluctance and Sorrow; and in the mean Time it makes all the Apology it can for them: Thus we do for ourselves, and are we not commanded to love others as we do ourselves? Charity is glad when others are vindicated from false Charges.

BUT tho' Charity be not quite blind, yet it has not the sharp Sight of the Lynx, in spying others Faults, while it is blind to its own; but inclines the possessor of it, to be most inquisitive into his own Conduct, and most severe against the Faults of it. The Nature of Charity, or Love, as Solomon observes, is to cover a multitude of Sins of our Brother. (Pro. x. 12.) To the same Purpose speaks the inspired Apostle Peter, (1 Epistle iv. 8.) And above all Things, have fervent Charity among yourselves; see that ye take Care of this in the first Place, and in the highest Degree: Why? for Charity covers a multitude of Sins, i. e. it conceals, bears, excuses, and forgives many Offences and Injuries of our Brethren, composes and calms Debates, which cause hatred, (1 Cor. xiii. 7. Pro. x. 12.) So Estius, Gerhardus, Symachus, Menochius and Beza justly interpret the Words.

So that from the whole you may see, my Brethren, that that Charity that is easily suspicious, severe, morose, envious, puffed up, censorious against others, rejoicing secretly in hearing of bad Reports of those whom we dislike, is easily provok'd, and hard to forgive, is not the Charity the Apostle speaks of, No. But the very Contrary. It is real hatred (at least in a great Degree) against our Brother, blended with Pride and ill-nature; and there-  
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fore to grow in this, is to grow backwards; I mean, more unlike the Law of God, which is fullfil'd by *Love*; more contrary to the *Spirit and Scope* of the Gospel of CHRIST, which also is *Love*.

WELL but I have a good Intention in those *Suspensions*, and purpose good by them.

I *Answer*, It's very like you have; and this indeed lessens the malignity of your cruel Suspicion, but it does not take it away quite; the blessed God does not need your Wickedness to promote his Cause and Kingdom; you *must not do Evil that good may come*. Your unreasonable Suspensions and evil Surmising of your Brother, are Instances of *hatred* against him: And do you think that an infinitely wise God can command Contradictions, namely, that you should *love* your Brother and *hate* him at the same Time. To suspect him without evident Cause, is unreasonable and cruel, and every cruelty and unkindness is a Degree of hatred; it is such Treatment as you would not like to be shewn to yourselves. Is not that which is without Reason, unreasonable, and that Treatment which you would not have shewn to yourselves, unjust for you to express to others? And do you think that a good and holy God can approve of such a Complication of Perverseness? And is it reasonable to suppose, that he will make it a *mean* to promote his Kingdom, which is *Righteousness and Peace*? Surely No! Such Methods serve only to promote *Pride, Prejudice, Division, Confusion*, and every evil Work!

2. ANOTHER hindrance of Peace that ought to be with equal Care avoided, is *evil Speaking*. This is contrary to the positive Command of God, which obliges us, to *speak Evil of no Man*, (Tit. iii. 2.) It is represented as the Character of the wicked, that they *whet their Tongues like a Sword, and bend their bows to shoot their Arrows, even bitter Words*, (Psal. lxiv. 3.) *But the Words of the Pure, are pleasant Words*, (Pro. xv. 26.) *And the Law of Kindness is in their Lips*, (Pro. xxxi. 26.) Our Lord informs us, (Mat. v. 22.) *That whosoever shall say to his Brother Raca, i. e. vain Man, shall be in danger of the Council, but whosoever shall say thou Fool, shall be in Danger of Hell-Fire.* \*

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Now

\* There is an allusion, in the aforesaid Scripture to the Courts of Judicature among the Jews, which were three: 1st. Of the Triumvirs, or of the three Men, who took Cognizance of small Money Cases, and consequently inflicted smaller Punishments: 2d. Of 23 Men, who manag'd Capital Causes, and inflicted heavier Punishments: 3d. The great *Sanhedrim* consisting of 71 or 72 which determin'd the most weighty Matters, and inflicted four kinds of Punishment, upon Transgressors, *viz. the Halter, the Sword, the Stone and Fire, so Scultetus, Beza, Symachus.*

Our Lord designing to represent, the different Degrees of Punishment, in the future World, and that in Proportion to the different Degrees of Offences in this, uses the aforesaid Similitude, of different Penalties, inflicted by the Jewish Courts; saith *Grotius*.

The dear Redeemer, does not here oppose himself to the Law of *Moses*, which, as *Erasmus* truly observes, he always revered, No! but only

Now there are various kinds of evil Speaking, which are pernicious to the Peace of Society, the chief of which are these two, viz. *Slander* and *rash judging*.

THE first of these, viz. *Slander*, is manifold and exceeding malignant, (Prov. x. 18.) *He that hideth hatred with lying Lips, and he that uttereth Slander, is a Fool.* All Malice is folly and wickedness; it is so when concealed by Flattery and Dissimulation: Lying Lips are bad enough of themselves, but have a peculiar Perverseness in them when made a cloak of Maliciousness; and cannot be hid from God, who is Omniscient, to him the *Darkness is as the Light, and the Midnight as the Morning.*

NOR is it any better when vented in spiteful and mischievous Language

only explains its true meaning, and shews its Spiritual extent, observing that it reaches the Mind, and fixes reasonable Boundaries to its Sentiments, and Passions, which are the proper Sources of Speech and Action.

Our Lord only oppos'd the corrupt and narrow *Glosses* of the *Scribes* upon the *Moral Law*, which confin'd its Obligation, only to overt Acts, of Violence and Murder: But our *Saviour* on the contrary observes, that it also forbids angry Dispositions, and angry Speeches, both more and less reproachful, which proceeds therefrom, and which naturally tend to, and often issue in Violence and Blood.

He is truly a *Murderer*, who has a Murdering Mind, which he certainly has who is angry with, and reproaches his Brother without a Cause; reproach is no farther from Wrath, than beating from reproach, and Murder from beating: There is a dreadful train and connection, between the different Degrees of this Heinous and Perilous Iniquity. Anger that Transgresses, the bounds of Reason and Decency, has no Measure, we know not where it will terminate; our Lord here informs us, that not only greater but smaller Degrees of *rash anger*, either confin'd to the *Heart* or express'd in *Speech*, more or less reviling, are really Sinful, and do expose to eternal Punishment, proportioned in weight, to the Degree thereof.

To which Doctor *Lightfoot*, adds *temporal Punishments* in some Cases by the *Magistrate*, as follows:

“By the Judgment, (saith he) is meant, the Judgment of God, by the Council, and Hell-Fire, not only the Judgment and Vengeance of God, but the Judgments and Punishments, that are inflict'd in the Courts of Men, that are Magistrates who bear not the Sword in vain, so that the Sence is this, I say unto you, that if a Man doth but in his Heart nourish wrath and anger against another, without a just Cause, and lets it grow up into Malice, and thoughts and desires of private Revenge, tho' he be not by it Obnoxious to Courts of Justice, who can only determine upon overt Acts, yet he is accountable to God, and liable to his Judgment, but if Men suffer their Passions to break out, into reviling Terms, such as *Raca*, signifying a vain Person, or thou Fool, speaking this from anger or malice, they are not only liable to the eternal Vengeance of God, but ought to be punish'd by the civil Magistrate; every civil Government is oblig'd to punish such Offences, as being the beginning of *Murder*, previous to it, and indications of Murderous Hearts, Hearts full of that which in the Eyes of God is *Murder*.” 1 John iii. 15. *Whosoever hateth his Brother, is a Murderer, and ye know that no Murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him.*

Language, *he that uttereth Slander is a Fool*, for God will sooner or later bring forth that Righteousness as the Light, which is hereby clouded and eclipsed, and will find an expedient to roll the unjust Reproach away.

Now the general Nature of the Sin of Slander, consists in a *false Accusation* of our Neighbour, which is forbidden by the ninth Command, and is a great Wickedness, considered in every shape and form

IF it is publickly and upon Oath before civil Courts of Judicature, it is called, *bearing false Witness against our Neighbour*, or *Perjury*, which is forbidden by the ninth Command, and is an Evil of horrible malignity! When we call God to Witness what we know to be false, it is one of the basest Blasphemies, the rudest Insults that can be offered to the *Deity*, and one of the greatest *Injuries* to Men that can be committed. He that invokes the Almighty to attest a *Lye*, either imagines that he knows not the *Truth*, and so imputes Ignorance to him; or that he is not displeas'd with it, and so denies his *Purity*; or that he is not able to avenge it, and so contemns his Power and Almightyness. Now is there much difference between denying these Perfections of *Jebovab*, without which he cannot exist, and the Atheistical denial of his Being altogether? No surely.

AND as to Men, *Perjury* is not only a wrong to particular Persons, but it is *Treason* against human Society in general; it saps the very Foundations of publick Peace and Justice, and the private Security of every Mans Property, Honour, Life, and Fortune; yea and cruelly turns the equitable Laws, which were design'd for the Defence of the Inocent, and Punishment of the Guilty, into an Engine of Ruin to the former, and Promotion to the latter! What can be more horrible than this? Justly therefore does *Solomon* observe, that a false Witness against his Neighbour, *is a Maul, and a Sword, and a sharp Arrow.* (Prov. xxv. 18.) This Iniquity entails a *Curse* upon the Person guilty of it, and his Posterity, (Zec. v. 4.) *I will bring the Curse forth, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the House of the Thief, and of him that sweareth falsely by my Name, and it shall remain in the midst of his House, and consume it, with the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof.*

BUT when *Slander* is out of Court, and before a Persons Face, and accompanied with harsh Words, it is term'd *railing*, (*Jude* 9.) We are told, that when *Michael the Archangel*, contended with the Devil about the Body of *Moses*, he did not *bring ag-ainst him a railing Accusation*, he knew he was no *match* for *Satan* at that, which is the Business of his proper Province; it is his constant Practice to *accuse the Brethren*, (Rev. xii. 10.) the good *Angel* only mildly said, *the Lord Rebuke thee.* And as *Railers* and false Accusers are faithful followers of their *Father the Devil, who was a liar and a murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth*; so the Apostle *Peter* assures us, that  
they

*they are as natural Brute Beasts, made to be taken and destroy'd; that they speak Evil of the Things they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own Corruption.* (2 Pet. ii. 10---12.)

MOREOVER, Flattery in Peoples Presence, or unjust Commendation, the Evil contrary to the former, ought with great Care to be avoided. It is a mean sordid Iniquity, as contrary to good Manners as it is to Religion, tho' it pleases ignorant proud Pedants, it puts modest and virtuous Persons to the *blush*, in Company, and is a kind of Persecution. The *Psalmist* represents it to be the Character of the wicked, (Psal. v. 9.) *There is no faithfulness in their Mouth, their Throat is an open Sepulchre*; how so, why? *they Flatter with their Tongue*; and elsewhere he assures us, that *God will cut off all flattering Lips*, (Psal. xii. 3.) Does not the wise Man justly advise us, *not to meddle with him that flattereth with his Lips*, (Pro. xx. 19.) Because a *Flatterer*, as he elsewhere observes, *spreadeth a Net for our Feet*, as artfully as disingenously lays a Trap for us, by soothing our Vanity, working on our weak Side, and so effects our ruin. (Pro. xxix. 5. & xxvi. 28.) But

SLANDR behind ones back is called in Scripture *whispering, backbiting, supplanting, tattling*, all which are cowardly, sneaking and pernicious Iniquities; *Prov. xviii. 8. The Words of a Talebearer as Wounds go into the inermost Parts of the Belly.* (Prov. xxvi. 20.) *Where there is no Wood the Fire goeth out, so where there is no Talebearer, the Strife ceaseth.* (Pro. xvi. 28.) *A forward Man soweth Strife, and a whisperer separateth chief Friends.* But on the contrary we are told, (Ps. xv. 3.) *That the good Man Backbiteth not with his Tongue, nor taketh up Reproach against his Neighbour*: He does not readily receive or greedily believe, bad Stories of them: No! The charitable and generous Temper of his Soul, disposes him to the Contrary. The Apostle ranks *backbiters* and *haters* of God in the same Class, and declares that they are worthy of Death. (Rom. i. 30---32.)

THE Prophet *Jeremiah* complains with keen and poignant Language, of the *Supplanters*, the artful, invidious, underminers of others Characters in his Time, (Jer. ix. 4.) *Take heed every Man of his Neighbour, and trust ye not in any Brother, for every Brother will utterly supplant, and every Neighbour will walk with Slanderers.* *Supplanters* are the most dangerous and successful Enemies, by their sly, smooth, soft, but slanderous Insinuations; they maliciously stab their Neighbours Reputation, and give, under a Cloak of Friendship, the deepest Wounds; and hereby these Enemies of Society, as ungenerously as unjustly lay an *Embargo* upon others *Usefulness*, and cramp the Sinews of their Endeavours to do good to Mankind.

THE *Supplanter*, or *Detractor*, looks with an envious Eye upon the just respect that is paid, to anothers Endowments and Actions, as if it was so much taken from his own Reputation; and therefore he endeavours by all the low Arts of malevolent Subtilty, and sly, selfish Insinuation, to lessen the *Value* of what another

other says or does; he either has not the Capacity to reach the height of others Attainments, or likes not to be at the Pains to this Purpose, and therefore like the Tyrant *Procrustes*, he cruelly cuts of their Legs, to a length with his own; he equally hates either to comply with the Dictates of *Justice*, in rendering Honour to whom Honour is due, or with the Sentiments of *Charity*, in believing every Thing that is good of his Neighbour. O! let such consider what God speaks to them by the Prophet, (Isa. v. 22--24.) *Wo unto them that justify the wicked for Rewards, and take away the Righteousness of the Righteous from him; therefore as the Fire devoureth the Stubble, and the Flame consumeth the Chaff, so their Root shall be as Rottenness, and their Blossom shall go up as Dust.* And notwithstanding of all their dispicable invidious Arts and Efforts, the gracious God shall bring forth the Righteousness of those that fear him, as the Light, and their Judgment as the Noon-Day.

BUSY-BODIES and *Tattlers*, are also very prejudicial to the Peace of Society. Hear how awfully the Apostle speaks of them, (1 Tim. v. 12, 13.) *having Damnation, because they have cast of their first Faith, and withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from House to House, and not only idle but Tattlers also, and Busy-Bodies, (pragmatical medlers with Business that does not belong to them) speaking Evil of the Things they ought not.\**

The

\* The Apostle reproves the following sorts of Persons, in the verse refer'd to *viz* :

IDLE People, (*argoi, ex a particula privativa, et ergo opus,*) without Work, Persons that either have no Business of their own to do, or neglect to do it.

WANDERERS about from House to House, (*perierchominoi tas oicias,*) the Apostle, (1 Tim. ii. 5.) among the Duties of Women, mentions this among the rest, that they should stay at Home, or be keepers at Home; diverse of the ancients, made a *Tortoise* that never goes out of its Shell, the Emblem of a good Woman; to this purpose *Euripedes* observes, that it becomes a Virtuous Woman to stay at Home, but that those who are of no consequence, may Gad about; *Domi manere oportet feminam bonam, foris que nullius est pretii.*

TATTLERS, (*phularoi,*) those that Babble bad Things, against others, faith *Pasor.*

BUSY-BODIES, (*periergoi ex peri circum, et ergo opus.*) to Work all round about.

THE Apostle uses an *Epanorthosis*, a beautiful gradation in the Words, it is as if he had said, they are it is true idle, but this would be more tollerable, if it was alone, for its better to be idle then to be ill employ'd; but they are Tattlers also, as well as Idle; speaking impertinently, not only of their own but others, concerns that don't belong to them.

BUT how do these Things agree, to be Idle and in the mean Time Busy.

I Answer, very well, for such Persons as neglect their own Business, are the most forward to intrude into others Affairs.

THIS same evil is spoken of, (2 Thes. iii. 11, 12.) *For we hear, that*

The same Apostle Cautions the *Corinthians* against those Evils, (2 Cor. xii. 20.) *I fear least when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, least there be among you Debates, Envyings, Strifes, Swellings, Tumults.* \*

OF

there are some, that walk among you Disorderly, (outaffects unquietly) Working not at all; but are Busy-Bodies; there is an elegant *paranomasia*, in the original; *meden ergazominous, alla periergazominous*; doing nothing, and yet doing every-thing; i. e. doing nothing of their own proper Business, but meddling with every other Bodies Business; where they have no call, and often no Capacity; they do no Work of their own, and therefore have leisure, to wander about from House to House, and curiously enquire into, and severely censure other Folks. Of these Horace speaks, *Percunctatorem fugito, nam garrulus idem est, i. e.* shun a curious enquirer, for he is a Chatterer. Now them that are such, saith the Apostle, we command and exhort by our Lord JESUS CHRIST, that with Quietness, they work and eat their own Bread.

\* The Apostle in this Verse makes mention of many awful Disorders (abounding among the *Corinthians*) with a proper Sense of the Evil of them; which every good Man should be affected with, and more especially the *Watchmen* upon the *Walls of Jerusalem*, the Ministers of the Gospel of Christ; whose Business it is to weep in secret Places for Peoples *Pride*, as well as between the *Porch* and the *Alter*; and to cry to God for them, that *Jehovah* would spare them and not give up his Heritage to reproach: And also to reprove them faithfully, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.

How can they be otherwise than grieved for such Disorders as the Apostle mentions in the Verse aforesaid, considering the Dishonour that is thereby Cast upon the Name and Ways of God, the Injury that is done to the Souls of Men, and to the Peace and Wellfare of Society.

The Particulars which he speaks of are these following.

DEBATES (*ereis*) Battles of Words, engaged in only for the sake of Victory; so *Erasmus*.

ENVYING, (*zeloi*) Emulation or heats of Passion, proceeding from envying of others natural or acquired Endowments or Possessions; to this purpose *Beza, Erasmus*.

WRATHS, (*thumoi*) the ragings or ferments of burning Anger, (see Acts xix .28. Gal. v. 20. Ephes. iv. 31. Col. iii. 8.) thus *Grotius* and *Menochius*.

STRIFES, (*eritheai*) chidings, contentions, wranglings, both in Disposition, Speech and Action; *Erasmus, Cajetan, and Grotius*. (See Rom. ii. 8. Philip. i. 16. Jam. iii. 14---16.)

BACKBITINGS, or Detractions, (*catallai*) derived (from *cata contra et laleo loquor*) from Words that signify to speak against one; and hence it is called in general *evil speaking*. (1 Pet. ii. 1. Rom. i. 3.) *Passor*.

WHISPERINGS, (*psithurismo*) who secretly bite their Neighbours, and suggest evil Suspicions, that they may separate Friends. It signifies to utter Slander against another secretly, into the Ear (Psa. xli. 7.) *Erasmus, Menocius, Symachus, Tolletus, Pareus, Grotius*. Of this *Ovid* speaks *Linguae refert audita Sufurro*, Slanders, Revilers, and Backbiters, by evil Speeches hurt anothers fame, more openly, but the *Whisperer* more slyly, softly, and secretly, and sometimes even under the Umbrage of Friendship, this is a new way of calumniating, say

Sufonius

OF all Incendaries to Mischief, Supplanters, Tattlers, Busy-Bodies and Backbiters are the worst; they are the Bane of Company, the Pests of Society, the lumber and burthen of the Creation, under which it groans and travails even until now; some of the most contemptible, but pestilent Animals, whose Business it is to accuse the Brethren, to sow the Seeds of Contention, and inflame Debate, with ignoble Pleasure and unwearied Industry; and like the Salamander to dwell with Delight in the Flames they have kindled. The slanderous Inveclives of such, should be rejected with abhorrence, as the North Wind drives away Rain, so does an angry Countenance a back-biting Tongue. Almighty God expressly prohibits this Practice, (Lev. xix. 16.) *Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among my People.* Upon which Mr.

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Henry

Suetonius and Polibius, to accuse, in Apologies, and condemn in Praise, *excusando opprobare, et Laudantem Ledere.*

SWELLINGS (*phusioseis*) it signifies Persons being puffed up with Pride, as a Bladder with Wind, or a Dropical Man with Water, on account of real or supposed Graces, Wisdom or Wealth, &c. Of such the Apostle speaks (1 Cor. iv. 18, 19. and v. 2, and viii. 1. and xiii. 4.) in all which Places the same original Word is used, that signifies a proud Carriage, strutting and vaunting, and the swelling of the Mind. *Montanus, Erasmus, Symachus, Grotius, Menochius, and Passor,*

TUMULTS (*acatastasia*) confusions, disorders, uproars, whereby others quiet is disturbed; *Beza, Pasor, Piscator;* or *Seditions*, which often spring from Schisms and Confusion, as *Grotius* and *Clement* (in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*) informs us. See Luk. xxi, 9. When ye shall hear of Wars and Commotions, which is the same Word in the Original.

Now as the Apostle *Paul* signifies, that he feared when he came to *Corinth* he should not find them such as he would; that is thoroughly reform'd from the aforesaid awtul and pernicious Disorders? so he fear'd that he should be obliged in Duty to his Master, and faithfulness to them, contrary to his own Inclination (which would chuse rather the soft and tender strains of Love and Endearment, than the harsh Language of *Reproof*) to use Severity with them, as a stern displeas'd Father, to cry aloud and not to spare, to lift up his Voice like a Trumpet, and shew God's professing People their Transgressions, and the House of *Jacob* their Sins. (*Isa. lviii. 1.*) which probably would not be very pleasing to some of them, tho' necessary and profitable; so *Piscator, Beza, Pagnine.* The Apostle speaks much in the same Language, (1 Cor. iv. 18, 21.) *Now are ye puffed up, what will ye, shall I come unto you with a Rod, or in Love, and in the Spirit of Meekness.* His Mind was reluctant to severity and sharp reproof; he would have been exceeding glad there had been no Occaion for it, but it was rendered necessary by their Disorders, as a corrosive Remedy for their Cure, and that of divine Appointment, (*Tit. i. 10, 13.*) for there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, wherefore *Rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the Faith.* The Word *unruly* (*anupotaihoi*) signifies, refractory, intractable, strangers to a yielding Temper, obstinate, untamed, and averse to the Discipline of the Church of Christ. The Word *sharply* (*apotomoos*) signifies, cuttingly, pointedly; it comes from the Verb *temno seco*, to cut.

Henry glosseth thus, " 'Tis as ill an Office as a Man can put himself into. To be a publisher of others Mens faults, divulging what was secret, aggravating Crimes, and making the worst of every Thing that was amiss, with design to blast and ruin Mens Reputation, and to sow discord among Neighbours. The Word us'd for a Talebearer, signifies a Pedlar, or petty Chapman, the Interlopers of Trade, for Tale-bearers pick up illnatur'd Stories, at one House, and utter them at another, and commonly barter Slanders by way of exchange." This evil is condemn'd in *Pro. xi. 13.* *A tale-bearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful Spirit concealeth the Matter.* (*Pro. xx. 19*) *He that goeth about as a tale-bearer, revealeth Secrets, therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his Lips. Slanderers, of every Kind, are Madmen who cast about Firebrands Arrows, and Death, and yet say they are in Sport.*

The Psalmist compares *Doeg's* malicious Tongue to a sharp Razor. And certainly slanderers Tongues are like Razors, that not only wound Mens Characters, but even sometimes cut their Throats. It is an Evil that disparages human Nature, and tends to disband civil Society altogether. It is directly contrary to the Apostles Exhortation, (*Ephes. iv. 31, 32.*) *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all Malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* The Psalmist gives this Character of a wicked Man, (*Psal. l. 19, 20.*) *Thou givest thy Mouth to Evil, and thy Tongue frameth Deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy Brother, thou slanderest thy own Mothers Name.* The Name *Diabolos*, Devil, signifies a Slanderer: And indeed the Slanderer has not only the Devils Name, but his Nature and Practice; for the principal ingredient in the Nature of the Devil is Malice; and *Satan*, in pursuance thereof, is the *accuser of the Brethren*. Both these the Slanderer is no stranger to, and therefore it is evident, he does not bear *Satan's* Name in vain.

WHATEVER we may pretend, *if we bridle not our Tongue*, that unruly Member, that World of Iniquity, *our Religion is in vain*. And whatever fordid Delight any one may take in doing mischief to others, yet let him remember, that in due Time it will recoil upon himself. *A Fools Mouth*, says Solomon, *is his Destruction, his Lips are the Snare of his Soul. The Lip of Truth shall be established forever; but a lying Lip is but for a Moment. He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely; but he that perverteth his Ways shall be known.* And when the Slanderer is known, he is contemned as a publick Enemy to Society, because others know not how soon they may be injured by him. All noble generous Minds detest this Practice, and cannot entertain it with Complacence. *A righteous Man hateth lying*, says Solomon. (*Pro. xiii. 5.*) It is only ill natur'd People that en-

courage such, (Pro. xvii. 4.) *a wicked deer giveth heed to false Lips; and a liar giveth heed to a naughty Tongue.*

BUT because LYING is included in *Slander*, and of dreadful Tendency to Society, I shall speak a little of its *Nature* and *Malignity*.

AUGUSTINE gives this Description of its *Nature*, viz. *That it is a voluntary speaking of an untruth, with design to deceive.*

It is a speaking of an untruth, yea what we know to be such; for to lye is to go against the Mind. \*

FARTHER, it is uttered with an Intention to deceive the Person to whom it is spoken; and therefore *Parables* are no *lies*, tho' they be not literally true, because not uttered with a design to deceive, and their *Scope* is true; thus our Lord is called, parabolically a *Door*, a *Rock*, a *Fountain*. Nor are *Hyperboles* lies, for the same Reason, tho' they be not literally and strictly true; hence the Spies asserted, in their return from *Canaan*, that *the Walls were up to Heaven*; their meaning was, that the Walls were very high. In like manner it is said, that if all our Lord had done was written, the World itself would not contain the Books; this was not expressed with a Design to deceive, but to convince of Error; the meaning was no more than that many Things CHRIST did were not Recorded.

NOR are *Ironics* lies, tho' they be not literally true, (1 King xviii. 27.) *He mocked them and said, cry aloud for he is a God.* This was not uttered with a design to deceive, but to convince of Error, and reprove upon the Account of it.

I may add, that a Persons acting contrary to what he before said, is not lying, if the Circumstances of a Thing be altered, (Gen. xix. 2.) *The Angels told Lot that they would not come into his House, but abide in the Street all Night; yet upon his importunity they went in with him: And so Peter with some Vehemency refused that CHRIST should wash his Feet, but when he was instructed in the Significancy of this Condescension of our SAVIOUR, he intreated him to do it.* But in the mean Time this Caution must be observed, that the Actions be not such as we are bound to by divine Precept, or such as we have bound ourselves to, by some Vow to God, or such that our neglect of them will be prejudicial to others; for if we have promised to another what is beneficial to him, however we have changed our Opinion, we must not change our Purpose, unless he release us, or hath fail'd in the Condition of the Promise.

DIVINES do generally distinguish *Lyes* into three Kinds, viz. *Jocose*, *Officious* and *Malignous*.

JOCOSE *Lyes* are told to divert the Company; but it is too expensive a Method to divert others by, for such as lye in Jest must expect to go to Hell in Earnest, except they repent; besides it prepares Persons for that which is of a more malignant Kind.

\* Mentire, est contra mentem ire.

OFFICIOUS *Lyes* are told with design to do some kind Office to others; but *we must not do Evil that Good may come.* Bishop *Saunderson* justly observes upon this Head, "That we know not a greater Good than the Glory of God; that we know not a lesser Sin, if any Sin may be called little, than a Jocoselye, yet may not this be done for that, *wilt thou speak wickedly for God, or talk deceitfully for him,* says *Zophar* to *Job*, "and surely if we may not speak deceitfully for God, much less for Man." But

MALICIOUS *Lyes* are when Persons endeavour to fix false Charges designedly, upon the Innocent for their Hurt.

Now lying of every Kind, especially of the last, is a Violation of God's Precept, which enjoins us, *not to lye one to another,* (Col. iii. 9.) and that we should *put away lying and speaking guile,* (Ephes. iv. 25.)

LYING is also odious to the God of Truth. *A lying Tongue is one of the seven Things that are an abomination to him.* (Pro vi.)

LYING tends to the Destruction of human Society, and contradicts the Use and End of Speech, which is to promote Communion and Commerce, and therefore it's implicitly agreed to by all Men to speak *Truth* to one another. But if *lying* be indulged, how can Society be promoted, when mutual Confidence and Love are broken? Seeing that Truth is a Debt we owe to all that we converse with, *lying* must needs be unjust and lead to every Injury, Violence, and Rapine. These Evils naturally follow Mens making no Conscience of performing their Promises and Contracts.

LYING is base and ignoble; it justly brings a blot upon the Character of him who is guilty of it, when it is found out, as it generally is at the long run, because of their Inconsistencies: It shews a base, cowardly Disposition not to dare to tell the Truth. This Evil is not only hated by God, but by good Men. *I hate and abhor lying,* saith the Psalmist, *he that tells Lies shall not tarry in my House,* (Psal. ci. 7.)

LYING is an Imitation of the Devil, who when he speaketh a Lye, speaketh of his own, i. e. agreeable to his natural Inclination and Genius, for he is a liar and the Father of it, he was a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth. (Joh. viii. 44) Observe Malice is joined with lying; in the Character of Satan; he is a Murderer as well as a Liar, to shew that malicious lying is the first born of the Devil, the Beginning of his Strength, for by Lyes he prevailed over Mankind at first, and therefore this is his darling Sin. When Persons lye, they but repeat what Satan dictates; hence is that saying of Peter's, (Act. v. 3.) *Why hath Satan fill'd thine Heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?*

LYING is not only very Criminal but very Dangerous, it cracks the Credit of the Guilty Person, when found out; those that are accusom'd to lye, will not be believ'd when they speak the Truth

Truth; and its generally found out pretty soon; its generally and justly esteem'd to be one of the *basest evils*, because it bewrays a cowardly fear of Man, and most daring Contempt of GOD! whoever lyes does it out of some fordid fear, least some Inconvenience should come upon them if they told the Truth: And this *Montaign* in his Essays, gives as the Reason why the Charge of lying is the most reproachful Ignominy, which can be cast upon any, and therefore excites Men to the most warm resentments: Indeed lying unfits Persons for common Converse, and for all Business.

Besides,

LYING, exposes to the Vengeance of GOD forever, (*Rev. xxi. ult.*) *Without are Dogs and Sorcerers, and every one who loveth, and maketh a lye.* (*Rev. xxi. 8.*) *And all lyars shall have their Part in the Lake, which burns with Fire and Brimstone.* Again,

LYING is an awful Evidence of a bad State: A course of lying proves Persons to be the genuine *Children* of the *Devil*, who is the *Father* of *Lyes*. On the contrary *Truth* in *Speech*, is the *Character* of *God's People*, (*Is. lxiii. 8.*) *Surely they are my People, Children that will not lye.* Unless we make Conscience of avoiding all those Kinds of evil Speaking, that I have mentioned, we cannot consistently or successfully, Endeavour after Peace. But the

2d. KIND of *evil-speaking* beforementioned, is RASH JUDGING. To prevent Mistakes, I think it necessary to be distinct and particular here, and to observe, that that which I oppose as rash Judging, consists in these Particulars following, *viz.*

1. WHEN we take upon us, to judge and condemn Men's *secret Designs*, in acting not made evident. And

2. WHEN we judge our *Brother's* different *Opinion* from ours in *Circumstantials*, and different or contrary *Conduct* to ours, grounded thereupon, to be a sufficient Foundation, for concluding the State of his *Soul* to be *bad*. And

3. WHEN we make our Judgement of Men's State towards GOD, founded upon their spiritual Experience, separate from Principles and Practice, the Ground of our *publick Conduct* towards them.

THE first of these is a manifest assuming of the divine *Prerogative* of *searching the Heart*; and has a direct Tendency to overthrow all *Goodness* of human *Action* entirely; for the very best of them, may by this Claim of Power, be unjustly ascribed to a mean a bad Cause; thus CHRIST was treated by the *Pharisees*, who gave bad Names to all his virtuous Actions, and ascribed his *miraculous Works* to the *Devil*, his easiness of Access, and kind Treatment of the looser Sort of Mankind, as a *Physician*, in order to their Cure, they term'd a criminal familiarity with them, as a *Companion*: His innocent Openness and freedom of Behaviour, as to Meats and Drinks, they ascribed to an inordinate Appetite: His miraculous Works which they could not deny, they ascribed to

a bad Cause, the Power of *Belzebub*. Behold a *gluttonous Person* a *Wine-bibber*; and a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*.

*PAUL's* faithful Endeavour to do extensive Good by preaching, was ascrib'd to a *feditious Design*. And also *Job's* exemplary and unblemish'd *Integrity*, was assign'd by *Satan* to a (sinfully) selfish Cause, *Doth Job fear GOD for nought?*

As this Method of Proceeding, implies in it, a *sacreligious Invasion of the Rights of Heaven*, and a *criminal Imitation of the worst of Men*, yea, of the *Devil* himself, so it is directly contrary to *Charity*, which obliges and inclines us to hope the best, until there be Evidence of the contrary; and therefore in one Word, it tends utterly to eradicate all mutual Confidence from among Men, all *Peace and Quiet*, all *Union, Order, and Harmony*, from Church & State; and to turn every Thing into the utmost *Confusion*.

THE second Instance of *rash Judging*, is directly contrary to the entire *Series of the Apostle's Reasonings*, in the 14th Chapter to the *Romans*, for he declares that Persons, upon both Sides of the *circumstantial Controversy* then subsisting, were sincere and accepted of *GOD*; and informs us, that the condemning of Persons upon the Account of such smaller Matters, was in effect to condemn the *Law* itself, as an insufficient *Rule of Action*, without our after Additions thereto, and an *Encroachment upon our Christian Liberty*; *He that judgeth his Brother, speaketh Evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law*; because the *Law* gives no such Power, (*Jam. iv. 11.*) but assigns all Judgment of secret Things to *GOD* only (*1 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 5.*) *But with me it is a very small Thing, that I should be judged of you, or of Man's Judgment, but he that judgeth me is the Lord, therefore judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come, who will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the Councils of the Heart, and then shall every Man, every good Man, have Praise of GOD.*

SOME there were in those early Times, who were of *Apollos* and *Cephas's Party or Faction*, that slighted *Paul*, judged him with rashness, censured him with indecency, and preferred *Apollos* and *Cephas* before him: Those that blessed Man informs, that he esteemed very *lightly* of their *Censure or Judgment*, so far as it concerned him (*Emci de eis elachiston estin ina up humoon anacritbo*) The Word *Elachiston* (*para to elo to ephairo ab auferendo*) signifies a very inconsiderable Thing, I esteem it as the very least of Things, whether you judge me better or worse than others, sincere or insincere; I neither value nor fear the Judgment of Men; the Judgment of my value does not belong to you, nor to any of the Children of Men, nor to my self; yea, I judge not my own self; I pronounce no Sentence for my self, I leave my self to the Judgment of *GOD*: I may be mistaken in my Judgment concerning my self, and therefore I will affirm nothing as to myself, and yet I am better known to myself than to you; I will

not boast of myself, nor be confident of my own fallible Judgment of myself; nor offended with your Censures!

THO' I am not conscious of any willful Unfaithfulness, in the Course of my *Ministry*, yet I cannot from thence certainly conclude, that I am free from *Blame*, because I do not perfectly know myself; perhaps the Almighty sees *Blemishes* in me, that I see not myself, perhaps I have thro' Ignorance, omitted something, that was right and necessary, and committed something that was wrong and hurtful, or forgotten some things wherein I did offend; we often fall into Sins we know not; says *Chrysoſtom*, *ſepe incidimus, in peccata que neſcimus*; in many Things we offend all.

THEREFORE judge nothing before the Time; until the Lord come; i. e. ſeeing that ſecret Things belong to God, Deut. xxiii. 23. leave the Judgment of them to him, and do not judge any ſecret Thing, till CHRIST comes in the Clouds to judge the World: He only can, and he certainly will, in the Day of his Appearance; bring to light the hidden Things of Darkneſs, and make manifeſt the Councils of the Hearts, remove all diſguiſes, and make certainly and fully known, all the Thoughts and Deſigns of Men. Here you may obſerve a poſitive COMMAND of GOD, againſt JUDGING OF SECRET THINGS. To the aforeſaid Purpoſe upon the Place, ſpeak the following Divines, Mr. *Pool*, in his *Annotat. Grotius, Caſtallio, Menochius, Tirinus, Erasmus, Eſtius, Simachus, Juſtinian, Scultetus, Calvin, Piſcator, Beza, Cameron*.

AND in 1 Cor. x. 22. the Apoſtle ſpeaks thus, *For why is my Liberty judged of another Man's Conſcience?* i. e. ſaith *Pool*, "Why ſhould my Practice in a Thing wherein I have liberty, "be cenſured or condemned by the Conſcience of another, he "being perſuaded that what I do, and judge that I have liberty "to do, and may do lawfully, is done by me finfully; and I by "him accounted a Tranſgreſſor for it." As to the

3d. INSTANCE of *raſh Judging*, I deſire to know, where Almighty God has given any of the Children of Men, Authority to inſpect into the ſpiritual Experiences of others, ſo as to make our Judgment of them, abſtract from their Doctrines and Life, the Ground of our Opinion concerning the State of their Souls, and of our publick Conduct towards them? If any ſuppoſe that there is a divine Warrant for ſuch Conduct, they would do well to diſcover it, for others Inſtruction; for my part I muſt freely confeſs my Ignorance of the Matter, I know of no Places of Scripture, that give ſuch a Power to any of the Sons of Men, and much leſs to every Man.

PERHAPS ſome gracious and well meaning Perſons, of the preſent Day, do not thoroughly underſtand, or have not ſufficiently conſidered the evil Nature and awful Conſequences of *raſh judging*; it appears to me to be an Evil pregnant with *Pride, Malice* and *Miſchief*, tho' perhaps not perceiv'd or intended: An Evil which under a Cloak of miſguided ill-temper'd Zeal for God, Chriſtian Liberty, and ſuperior Attainments in Knowledge and Religion;

Religion; rebelliously opposes the clearest Dictates of *Reason* and *Humanity*; the plainest Laws of revealed *Religion*; an Evil that under a Pretext of Kindness and Piety, cruelly rends our Neighbour's *Character*; saps the Foundations of the Church's *Peace*, and turns it's *Union*, *Order* and *Harmony* into the wildest Confusion, of ungoverned *Anarchy*, *Schism*, Prejudice and Hate!

AN *Evil* that sometimes rages the more under corrosive Remedies, proper and necessary for it's Cure, and expresses its unreasonable Repentment; in the very Language of impiety; our Tongues are our own and who is Lord over us, not considering that when Man's Tongue is abus'd to uncharitable and ignoble Purposes; his *Glory* is turned into *Shame*, and that *those shall have Judgment without Mercy, who shew no Mercy.*

AN *Evil* that scorns Controul, either by human or divine Authority, and spurns at Restraint; either from God or Man! which in Opposition hereto, is wont to express its haughty Sentiments, in the following Strains of *Rebellion* and *Faction*; *Let us break their Bands asunder and cast their Cords from us.*

BUT if any after all that has been said, are still enclined to execute the Office of spiritual *Judges*, let me beg of such, to answer in their own Minds, these two Questions, *viz.* Pray, Sirs, how are you qualify'd for your Office? And how do you discharge it?

YOU know that the Office of a temporal JUDGE; is a very important and difficult Business; to manage well; and yet much depends upon their good Management; wherefore it is necessary, that they be Men of superior *acumen* or Genius, and Men of distinguished Eminence, in acquir'd Endowments: This being the Dictate of Reason, and common Sentiment of all Nations, they endeavour to make Provision accordingly.

AND likewise it is acknowledged by all Mankind, that *Judges* should be no Accusers, in respect of the Affairs, that they judge of, for if they are either ignorant or byas'd, just Judgement cannot reasonably be expected from them.

BESIDES it is highly necessary, to have a Commission for this grave and important *Function* from a proper Authority, otherwise what we do in it is assuming and unjust.

Now my Friends, pray examine, whether you are qualify'd as I have now represented, to take the BENCH?

IN the mean Time let this be premis'd, as a self-evident *Maxim*, that there is vastly more Difficulty attending our judging aright of some spiritual Cases, than any temporal; because of the variety of the Operations of a *Sovereign God*, upon the Souls of Men; the plausible *Advances* that some make towards Religion, who have not a right Principle of Action, and the melancholy *Decays* of some, that have it; and especially, because the *Soul* is a Province hid from human Observance, so that there is vastly more Difficulty in being a spiritual *Judge*, than in being a *Lord Chancellor of England*. The Words of CHRIST to *Nicodemus*, concerning

cerning the Nature of *Regeneration*, John. iii. 8. deserve to be thought of under this Head, *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* “Tho’ the Spirit, as Mr *Henry* observes, works “powerfully in *Regeneration*, you hear the Sound thereof, tho’ “its Causes are hidden, its Effects are manifest; yet he works “arbitrarily, and as a free Agent; the Wind blows where it “listeth for us, and doth not attend our Order, nor is subject “to our Command: The Spirit dispenseth his Influences where, “and when, on whom and in what Measure he pleaseth; and as “he works arbitrarily, so mysteriously, and in secret hidden ways; “the Manner and Method of the Spirit’s Workings is a Mystery!”

MR. *Pool* observes in his *Annotations*, “That the Original of the Winds Motion, is to us imperceptible, we can speak something philosophically to the Cause of it, and can tell whether “it bloweth from the *East, West, North* or *South*, but we cannot “tell the particular Place, where or from whence it ariseth; so “is every one who is regenerated, by the Working of the Spirit “of GOD, changed and renewed so as we can give ourselves or “others no Account of it, in all Points as to the inward Operation, tho’ in the Effects it be discernable.”

BECAUSE he had began to speak of the Spirit, he takes an Example from the Wind, which is also wont to be call’d a Spirit, (*Gen* viii 1.) and often elsewhere.

*Minutus Octavio* observes, that tho’ all Things are impell’d, shaken and tossed by the Wind, and Blast, yet we cannot see them, with our Eyes, *Vento et flatibus, omnia impelluntur, vibrantur, agitantur, at sub oculis tamen non venit ventus, et flatus.*

THE Wind moves itself, now here, now there, with a free and unconstant impetus; it is a Metaphor taken from Men, like that *Rom.* ix. 19. to 22. a Will is ascribed to the Wind, by the Figure *Prosopopy*, as in the Writings of the Apostle *Paul*, the Law, Sin, and Death are introduced in the same Manner.

You hear the Sound thereof, but know not whence it comes, or whither it goeth, its Original is not perceiv’d, some imagine it to be a natural *Flux* of the Air, others *Exhalations* from the Earth, there is such a Diversity of Conjectures concerning it, even in the same Places, that its Nature cannot be fully known, its Original is sought but not beheld.

NOR is it known, where it goes, or known where it ceases, its Exit is no better perceiv’d than its Original.

AND so it is with every one, that is born of the Spirit; admirable *Actions* of one regenerated by the Spirit are beheld, but the *Original* from which they spring, and the *End* to which they tend, are quite hid from the View of all Mortals in this Life; the certain Discovery of them is reserved for a future World; the End indeed is eternal Life, and our Life is hid with CHRIST in GOD. (*Rom.* vi. 22. *Col.* iii. 3.)

with our *Eyes*, nor the Mode or Manner of it comprehended by our *Reason*.

THE *Similitude* which our Lord uses plainly shews these three Things, *viz.* 1. That the Work of the holy Spirit in Regeneration, is something *real*; this its Fruits and Effects point forth, as the Sound indicates the Wind. 2. That the holy Spirit acts freely and sovereignly in this Matter, according to his own Pleasure; and not according to any Dignity or Merits of Creatures, or Limits prescrib'd by them; he breathes upon whom, and when and how he pleases. And 3. The *Similitude* shews, that the Work of Regeneration is unsearchable to human *Reason*, from whence the *afflatus* comes, and to what Event the Spirit operates upon, even the Regenerate themselves do not know. To the aforesaid Gloſs that I have given of the Words of CHRIST, agree the following Interpreters, *viz.* *Beza, Grotius, Simachus, Chemnitus, Burgenſis,* and *Dr. Lightfoot.*

SURELY Sirs, your Reason must inform you, that Persons cannot judge well what they do not understand, and that it is not probable, they will judge impartially, of a Case in which they are *Parties* and *Accusers*, and that it is unjust for them to judge what does not belong to them, or what they have no Commission or Authority for.

WHETHER you have all of you, such peculiar Poignance of natural Genius and uncommon Eminence in acquired *Knowledge*, as well as Freedom from corrupt partial *byaſs*, in these Times of *Division* and Debate, as to qualify you for the high Office of spiritual JUDGES, are too tender Points for me to touch; I therefore leave them to the Decision of your own Consciences, and humbly beg you would produce your *Commission* to judge Men's secret Thoughts and Designs, or the States of Mens Souls, upon the Foundation of circumstantial Differences in Opinion, and Practice consequent thereupon: Where is your Authority? What Part of the *Bible* contains your *Commission*? Methinks, it is but reasonable, that you should either produce it, or quit your *Office*? *Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant?*

BUT after you have assumed the *Judge's* Office, pray how do you manage in that Business? Do you therein conform to the common and rational Course of judicial Proceedings, and Example of good Judges? Do you hear with *Patience* the Defendant's *Apology* for his Conduct, and *examine* it *thoroughly*, before you pass Sentence? And are you of *Council* to him? Do you examine all Parts of his *Apology* with Candour, putting a *favourable Construction* on Things that appear doubtful, as far as *Reason* will admit, being loth to find your fellow-creature guilty of what is criminal and dishonourable to human Nature? Farther, do you lay the *Stress* of your Sentence only upon Things that are plainly prov'd? (*allegatis et probatis*) And do you pass your Sentence of Condemnation with *Grief* and Reluctance, from a Principle of Justice attended with Humanity? Being willing that several guilty Persons

Persons should escape with Impunity, rather than that one innocent Person should suffer? For the former is only inconvenient, but the latter unjust.

ARE not every of these Particulars now mentioned, agreeable to the clearest Dictates of *Reason*, and plainest Maxims of *Equity*? And if the Conduct of any of us has been, or is disagreeable thereto, is it not condemned by both? Pray let us consider seriously, these few Passages of Scripture following; (Prov. xviii. 13.) *He that answereth a Matter before he heareth it, it is a Folly and Shame unto him,* (Ps. cxxx. 1.) *Lord my Heart is not haughty, nor mine Eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great Matters, or in things too high for me.* (Jer. xvii. 9. 10.) *The Heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins.*

It is true, upon conversing with Mankind about divine Things, we cannot well help thinking something about the *States* of those with whom we converse; as to some there will be a sweet Satisfaction in our Minds, and of some others there will be Fears and Doubts: Now as there is a sinful *Jealousy*, which is quite without Foundation, springs from the Corruption of our own Nature, and is contrary to the Nature of that blessed Grace of *Charity*, or Love which thinks no Evil; so there is a *Godly Jealousy*, which has some ground of Fear, at least in our Apprehension: Of this the Apostle *Paul* speaks, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. *For I am jealous over you, with a godly Jealousy; I fear,* and in the Fourth Chapter of his Epistle to the *Galatians*, and Twentieth Verse we have these very remarkable Words, *I desire to be present with you now, and to change my Voice, for I stand in doubt of you.* I do not know what to think of you. The original Word for standing in doubt\* is very emphatical and instructive; it is deriv'd from a Particle and a Word, which signify to be in a *Labyrinth*, thro' which there is no Passage; it properly relates to *Bodies*, but is by a *Metaphor* transferred to the *Mind*; and signifies one's being perplex'd, or in anxious suspense, doubtful, poor, wanting Council, from which he cannot extricate himself. The same Word is used *Luke* xxi. 25. and translated *Perplexity, and upon the Earth distress of Nations, with Perplexity, the Sea and the Waves roaring.* And *Acts* xxv. 20. it is translated *doubting, And because I doubted of such Manner of Questions.* Many learned Men explain the Word, as I have mentioned.†

HERE you may observe, the vast Difficulty that attends our Thoughts about the States of others, (some especially) and the humble *Modesty* and great *Caution* which the great Doctor

I 2

of

\* *Aporumai*, ex (a particula privativa, et poros via transitus.) ubi via est interclusa, ubi non datur transitus, proprie de corpore, per metaphoram vero transfertur ad animum, perplexus, dubius, item pauper, cum genit. aporia concilii inopia, Luk. xxi. 25. *aporeo* proprie ad angustias, ex quibus me explicare nequeo, reductus heiro; Act. xxv. 20.

† *Pasor, Castalio, Tremelius, Erasmus, Vatabulus, Regerius, Piscator, Beza, Arias Montanus,*

of the *Gentiles* used, in expressing his: There is a vast difference between this godly Jealousy, this rational Fear, and unreasonable doubting of the Case of others, or rash Judging.

No doubt the *Reasons* of this pious *fear* and *doubting*, may be either expressed publickly and generally, especially by Gospel *Ministers*, in the discharge of their important *Trust*, in the manner the Apostle did his; or privately and particularly to the Persons we are afraid of, in Case there is a rational probability of *Success* in so doing.

AND in Case this personal Application, is conducted with *Discretion*, *Humility*, and *Meekness*, and attended with that deference and respect, which the God of *Order* requires should be expressed to the different Stations, Characters and Conditions of Men; and in Case our private *fears* be kept private, and not divulg'd to the disgrace of the *Characters* of particular Persons, and breach of the publick *Peace* and *Union*; and in Case our private *fears* are not made the Foundation of any publick Process, or of our Behaviour towards them. With such Limitations, I believe it is our *Duty* to express our *fears*, and that it may be of Service so to do: But otherwise I believe it is sinful and dangerous to the *Honour* of God, the *Peace* of Society, and to the *Souls* of Men.

BUT perhaps some may object, against what has been offered, that Passage of Scripture, (1 Cor. ii. 15.) *But he that is spiritual judgeth all Things, yet he himself is judg'd of no Man.*

I *Answer*, That the Place, rightly understood, confirms what I have said against *rash-Judging*.

Now to the right Understanding of it, it is proper to observe, that the Apostles Scope in this Chapter, is to extol the Wisdom of God, in the mysterious Method of Man's Salvation by *Christ* crucified, as far superior to the natural Wisdom of Man, *hoheit*, says he, *we speak the Wisdom of God in a mystery*; tho' it is wont to be esteem'd *foolishness* by such who are strangers to its Power and Influence, by such who have nothing but *Nature* and *Reason* to direct them, which is owing partly to the Weakness, Darkness, and Pride of the human Mind, which cannot find out this Way to Heaven by a *Mediator*, without supernatural Revelation, nor esteem it when revealed outwardly, without divine Influence. The *Mind* is vainly puffed up with a conceit of self-sufficiency, and strongly prejudiced against *Justification* by the *Righteousness* of a MEDIATOR, by our being born under a Covenant of Works, of which disorders we are never cured until we are convinced by the Holy-Spirit, of *Sin*, of *Righteousness*, and of *Judgment*. \*

FARTHER

\* *Quo Semel imbuta, Servabit odorem testa din, i. e.* a Vessel keeps long, the taint of Liqueur once put into it.

We like the Spider's proud *Mato*, who spins its Web, out of its own Bowels.

*Michi Soli Debet.* I am a Debtor to myself alone.

FARTHER, Persons in a State of Nature are inclined to esteem the *Mysteries* of the Gospel, *foolishness*, partly because of the Corruption of their Wills, which will not, cannot cordially comply therewith, until renew'd by the Holy-Spirit. (*Job*. v. 40. *Job* vi. 44.)

BUT after the Mind is illuminated, and the Will changed, it discerns great *Beauty* in the Gospel of the Grace of God, and great *Value* in the Blessings therein contain'd; highly esteems the Device therein ordened; greatly admires the *Wisdom of God* therein display'd; heartily consents to the *Terms* therein required, and is pleas'd with the whole *Plan* so far as discovered to it; thus the spiritual Man judgeth, or rather as the Word should be rendered, *discerneth* all Things.

MOREOVER the *Antithesis* between the natural and spiritual Man, in the Verse I am considering, and that immediately preceding, gives *light* to the labouring Point.

THE natural or animal Man, (*psuchicos*) one that depends wholly upon human Reason, such as were many of the Philosophers of the *Greeks*, and many of the *Jews*, says *Grotius*. The Word *animal* being oppos'd to *spiritual*, is undoubtedly the same with *carnal*, says *Alting*, *Calvin*, *Symachus*; one that follows the Conduct of the *Flesh*, a meer *natural Man*, who has nothing noble in him but a rational Soul, much degenerated, by the Inclinations of which he is governed, and not by the Spirit; one who is not regenerated. (to this Effect *Piscator*.)

DOES not receive or approve of the Things of God, i. e. those divine and spiritual *Mysteries* which exceed the Reach of human Reason, and are not known without the Revelation of the Spirit; such as the *Method* of Salvation by CHRIST'S *Sufferings*, and the *Happiness* prepared for those that love God.

THERE is, sayeth *Pareus*, "a natural Impotency in Man " to know spiritual Things, partly thro' want of Light in the " Mind, and partly thro' the Corruption of the Will, because " spiritual Things are discerned, apprehended, and distinguished " spiritually, i. e. by a spiritual Understanding and Light of " Faith, or by the Influence of the Holy Spirit." To this purpose speak *Beza*, *Piscator*, *Erasmus*, and *Arias Montanus*.

BUT the spiritual Man, or regenerated Person, who is led by the Spirit, (so *Piscator*, *Calvin*, *Sclaterus*) judgeth all Things. The original Word (*anacrinei*) here translated judgeth, primarily

I bear them record, saith the Apostle that they have a Zeal of GOD, but not according to Knowledge, for they being ignorant of GOD'S Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of GOD. (*Rom*. x. 2, 3.) For when in the Wisdom of GOD, the World by Wisdom knew not GOD, it pleas'd GOD, by the Foolishness of Preaching, to save them that believe (*1 Cor*. i. 21.) We preach CHRIST crucify'd, to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those that believe the Wisdom of GOD and the Power of GOD, (*1 Cor*. i. 24.)

ly and properly signifies, to discern, apprehend, or distinguish, and so it is translated in the Verse immediately preceeding, and in many other Places of Scripture, (see Mat. xvi. 3) *O ye Hypocrites ye can discern the Face of the Sky, but can ye not discern the Signs of the Times.* (1 Cor. xi. 29.) *Not discerning the Lord's Body.* (Act. xv. 9.) *and put no difference between us and them.* (1 Cor. xii. 10.) *to another discerning of Spirits.* (Heb. v. 14) *who by Reason of use have their Senses exercised to discern between good and evil.*

ALL THINGS. Observe it is not *Persons* that are represented as discerned by the spiritual Man, but *Things*; and the Word ALL, must be understood with that Restriction the Context leads us to, viz. All the peculiar and important *Mysteries* of Christianity, which are absolutely necessary to Salvation or the Method of Salvation by *Jesus Christ*, which the Apostle had been discoursing of, thro' the series of this Chapter. To understand the Word ALL in an absolute unlimited Sense, charges *falsehood* upon the Apostle; for we are sure that every spiritual Man, nay not one of them in this Life, understands *all Things*, both natural, civil and religious; and if the Word be restricted to *religious Matters*, yet without limitation, it is not true: Every spiritual Man understands not the whole System or Analogy of Faith, in all its Branches, and their mutual Relations and Dependencies. Nor do many of them understand the Chronological Difficulties of the Scriptures, or perceive the great variety of their Rethorical Charms, and Elegancies, &c. So that the true meaning of the Words, is no more than this, that the regenerated Person discerns, apprehends and distinguishes the grand *peculiar*s of the *Gospel Method of Salvation*, by the *Death* of the SON of GOD, discerns Things that are absolutely necessary to his own Salvation, in some Measure.

BUT he himself, in the mean Time, is discerned or known certainly, by none, by no Man; and hence God's People are called his *hidden ones*, (Psa. lxxxiii. 3.) And special Grace in them, is called the *hidden Man of the Heart*. (1. Pet. iii. 4.) and *their Life* is said to be *hid with Christ in God*, (Col. iii. 3.) and that *the World knoweth them not*. They are not only unknown to the World, who generally esteem those that are pious as Fools, wicked or miserable Persons, but even in part to themselves, because many of them feel the divine Life in them weak and doubtful, because of their inward *Corruptions*, because of *Temptations*, of the World, the Devil and the Flesh.

IT is farther observable, that pious People are *sealed*, (Ephes. iv. 30.) *And grieve not the holy Spirit whereby ye are sealed to the Day of Redemption.* (2 Cor. i. 22.) *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts.* And in divers other Places God's People are represented as the *sealed ones*. Now every one knows that the Design of a Seal is not only *Security* and *Confirmation*, but *Secresy* also; and hence *Letters* are sealed up to this Purpose. And are not the pious *Corinthians* called *the Epistle*

of CHRIST, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshy Tables of their Hearts. (2 Cor. iii. 3.) not only to signify the reality and permanency \* of the good Impressions made upon them by the Apostles Ministry, thro the divine Concurrence therewith; but also the *Secresy* of those Impressions. The *springs* of Action in good Men are hid from all Men, and therefore the *State* of their Souls, which may said in some Sense, to be built thereupon, is certainly discerned by no Man.

But do we not read of that Gift of *discerning* of Spirits being given?

I Answer, Yes, we read of it in 1 Cor. xii. 10. To another the working of Miracles, to another Prophecy, to another discerning of Spirits, to another divers Kinds of Tongues. "This was a Power, says Pool, wherein God for the farther Authority and Credit of his Gospel, in the Primitive Times, communicated to some Men something of his own Prerogative, to discern Mens inward Thoughts and Hearts, and to make up a Judgment of their Truth and Sincerity; or contrawise of their Falseness and Hypocrisy." This was an extraordinary and admirable faculty given even to private Men, to discover and reprove fanatical Spirits, and false and devilish Prophets, of which there were many at that Time. (1 Joh. iv. 1) And hence the false Pretender is said to be convinced of all, and judged of all, (1 Cor. xiv. 24.) or as the original Word signifies, discerned of all. But this Gift seems to have been especially given to such as presided (*pro tempore*) among the Presbiters, who often met to judge of this Matter. (1 Cor. xiv. 29---33.) †.

THIS was a miraculous Gift as well as the rest joined with it in the same Verse; so that for any to pretend to it now, when miraculous Gifts are ceased, is the vainest Vanity! Nor have we any Reason to believe their Pretences, unless they can speak with Tongues they have never learned, or unless they can speak the sick whole, and the Dead alive in an Instant, without the Use of Means.

I THINK it his highly probable, that it was by this Method of Miraculous discerning, that the Church of Ephesus try'd those, which said they were Apostles, and were not, and upon Tryal found them to be Lyars; because it was the easiest, speediest Method, and did at that Time obtain in the Church.

BUT if it was not so, they doubtless try'd them by their fruits, that is by their Doctrines and Lives, say Piscator, and Beza; the Pretenders falsely said they were Apostles, immediately sent in an extraordinary Manner as Paul was: Now an excellent Method of knowing such, says Grotius, was if they privately sought after Money

\* Litera scripta manet.

† To the aforesaid purpose, for Substance, speak the following learned Men, Beza, Grotius, Erasmus, Pool, Cameron, Lightfoot, Menochius, Tirinus, Munsterus,

Money, which they pretended to contemn; then it appeared that they were such who are describ'd, (2 Cor. xi. 13.) *And found them to be Lyars, i. e.* discover'd their deceits. Many false Prophets had gone forth, of which they had sufficient warning; (1 Tim. i. 3. Acts xx. 29, 30.) Among which were the Heretical *Ebion* and *Cerintus* and his followers, who feign'd they had their Revelations from an Apostle of the first Rank; so *Cluverus*, *Brightman*, *Pareus*, and *Hammond*.

Now neither of these Methods, give the least Handle for *Rash-judging*. The first being *miraculous*, has long since expir'd; and the last being *external* only, does not in the least Countenance making our *Opinion*, of *spiritual Experience* (in Particulars) a Term of *Communion*.

BUT does not our LORD assure us, that we may judge the Tree, by the Fruits.

I ANSWER our LORD informs us, that we may *know* the Tree by the Fruits, (*Mat* xii. 33.) Our Saviour does not propose a certain; but only a probable sign, he speaks of Things as they happen generally, as *Maldonate* justly observes; he does not say that a bad Tree cannot become good, but that while it is bad, it cannot bring forth good Fruit. (i. e. spiritually good) a bad Tree cannot bring forth good Fruits, unless it be engrafted, and a good Tree will bring forth bad, if it be not cultivated; says *Tertullian*. \* The Fruits CHRIST speaks of, are the Doctrines and Lives of Men, so *Simachus Maldonate*, *Hammond*

CHRIST'S memorable Negative Precept, mention'd (*Mat*. vii. 1, 2, 3.) strongly confirms what has been now said, *Judge not that ye be not judg'd, for with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and why beholdest thou the Mote, that is in thy Brothers Eye, but considerest not the Beam that is in thy own Eye.*

THAT which is here forbidden, saith *Pool* in his Annotations, "is either, 1st. *Rash-Judgment* of his State, or a judging him "for doing his Duty, such was *Simons* or the Disciples Judgment "respecting the Woman, (*Mat*. xxvi. 6, 7.) Or, 2d. A Judge- "ing of others, for Things, which they judge to be indifferent, "forbidden. (*Rom*. xiv. 1, 2, 3.) Or, 3d. a Judging of them "for secret Things, such as inward Habits of Grace, when no "apparent Fruits to the contrary are seen, or a condemning "others for single Acts, or a Publick censuring others for private "failings.

FOR with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; that is, "the ordinary Temper of Men and Judgment of GOD, will "not leave such a Practice unrewarded," they are generally paid in this World in their own Coin, *good Measure, pressed down and running over.*

THE same worthy Author farther observes from that saying of our Saviour, *And why beholdest thou the Mote that is in thy Brothers*

*Brothers*

\* Non dabit arbor mala bonos fructus, si non inseratur, et bonos malos dabit, si non colatur Tertul.

Brothers Eye, but considerest not the Beam that is in thine own, these Things following. " 1. That those who are most censorious of others, are usually more notorious themselves, if not for the same Sins, yet for others of equal if not greater Magnitude. 2d. That it is notorious *Hypocrisy*, to spy smaller faults in others, and not to see greater in ourselves. 3d. that is notorious *Impudence*, to pretend to Censure and Judge others, for Sins in which we live ourselves. 4th. That there is no such Way to teach us *Charity*, in not hastily, rashly, or too severely judging others, as to look first into our own Hearts and Ways, and seeing if we have not the same, or greater failings. Our *Charity* in this Kind should begin at home."

GIVE me leave to consider one *Objection* more, which is this, viz. That the denial of our *Judgment* about, or certain *Knowledge* of Mens *spiritual Experiences* and gracious State by them, renders our exercising a special *love* towards them, impracticable, which is nevertheless a commanded *Duty*, and otherthrows the *Communion* of Saints, which we profess our belief of in the *Apostles Creed*.

I *Answer*, That the aforesaid Consequencies do not fairly and necessarily follow, because our charitable *Hope* concerning the good State of others, grounded on their *Doctrines* and *Lives*, is sufficient to excite our special *Respect* to them as *Brethren*, and *Communion* with them as such; and our conferring special *Kindness* upon them, as being of the Household of Faith.

WHAT our Lord asserts, (*Mat. x. 41, 42.*) sufficiently confirms this; the Words are these, *He that receiveth a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophets reward; and he that receiveth a righteous Man, in the Name of a righteous Man, shall receive a righteous Man's reward: And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of those little ones, a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward.*

Now to receive them *in the Name of a Prophet, Righteous Man, or Disciple*, is to receive them in *quality* of such, or *as such*; not because they are rich, powerful, learned, eloquent, or related to us, but because they bear the *Character* of *Ministers* of CHRIST, or religious Persons, and appear so to us, by Reason of their regular *Admission* into the *Ministry, Doctrines* and *Lives*; or if of a private Station, by their *Principles* and *Practice* only. Now our Lord informs us, that if we be mistaken in our charitable *Opinion* of them, and *Kindness* towards them, yet if we have been sincere in our *Designs* therein, we shall not miss a gracious and liberal *Reward*, even for the most *minute Instances* of our *Generosity*, if proportioned to our *ability*: The Lord will look upon such *Kindnesses* as done to himself. Thus *Grotius, Mead, and Pool*, interpret the aforesaid memorable *Scripture*.

IF it had been the Will of God, that we should have farther *Grounds* than I have mentioned, for the performance of the aforesaid

said Duties, he would have expressed it somewhere in his Word, and enjoined us to seek after it, as well as directed us how to manage so difficult and important an Affair, and given us a Capacity equal to it, as well as some Examples (in all probability) of some pious Men that had attempted to perform this arduous Business of *searching the Heart*; but of these Things the Scriptures of Truth, which ought to be the *Rule* of all our Sentiments and Conduct in religious Matters, are entirely silent, so far as I know, excepting the Case of miraculous discerning, which I have spoke of before, and does not concern the ordinary Times and State of the Christian Church in Point of Practice. But

3. NOT only *unkind Thoughts* and *hard Speeches* should be avoided, in order to obtain *Peace* of every Kind, but likewise unjust and unkind *Actions*.

FRAUD and Injustice, breaking of our Words, over-reaching in our Bargains, taking advantage of the Necessities of the Poor to oppress them, and grind their Faces, and all other Methods of Circumvention, the whole *Mystery of Deceit*, are exceeding Perverse, but if any or all of these Things are done under a *Cloak of Religion*, they are much more heinous: This makes the Professors of Religion stink in the Nostrils of others, and strengthens their natural Prejudices against all Religion, *O therefore let us not go beyond and defraud one another, seeing God is the avenger of all such*. Some of the *Pharisees* were of this Stamp; for a Pretence they made long *Prayers*, that they might devour *Widows Houses*: Such accursed Practices have doubtless occasion'd that infamous Proverb, viz. *That in the Name of God every Evil begins*. \*

BESIDES a proud, disdainful, distant *Behaviour* and *Neglect* of returning *Offices* of Humanity, Civility and Respect, as they bewray unmannerliness and ill-nature, so they are prejudicial to *Peace*, and should therefore be avoided by all those that are desirous of it. But,

2. POSITIVELY, The following Means tending to *Peace*, should be carefully observed, viz.

1. KIND *Thoughts* of our Brothers *Speeches* and *Actions*, for *Charity Thinks no Evil, and hopes all Things that are good*.

2. COURTEOUS *Speech*, let the *Law of love* be in our *Hearts*, and the *Law of Kindness* in our *Lips*; *soft Words assuage Wrath: The Wisdom that is from above, is peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated; full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and without Hypocrisy. But bitter Envy and Strife, is a Wisdom that descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish*.

3. IN our *Actions* and *Behaviour*, we should not only be strictly just to all, but *charitable* to the indigent, and express that *Respect* to every Man which his *Place* and *Station* require, hereby obeying the Command of God, in *giving Honour to whom Honour*

is due. As a levelling Principle and Carriage, is contrary to all Order and Government, as well as good Manners, so its far from being a humble, self-denying Principle in People of lower Life, as is pretended by some. *Clownishness* is a wild freak of *Enthusiasm*, *Nonsense* and *Arrogance*, but no part of the Religion of JESUS.

It is likewise necessary to bear with *Patience* hard Treatment, not insisting on our *Right* in small Things, *forgiving Offences* freely, as God for *Christ's* sake has forgiven us: To this End we should consider him who endured the *Contradiction* of Sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our Minds.

BUT how should we pray for the Peace and Prosperity of Jerusalem? I Answer,

1st. **HUMBLY**, being sensible of God's Glory and Greatness, our own *Meanness* and *Vileness*, behold I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord of Hosts, who am but *Dust* and *Asbes*, O let not the LORD be *Angry*: A constant *Reverence* of God's Majesty, because of his *Infinite Distance* from us in respect of *Dignity* should inspire our Minds, when we bow before his gracious *Throne*, to implore, any benefit from him for ourselves or others!

2d, **SINCERELY**, with a right View that God may be hereby glorify'd, ye ask and receive not, says the *Apostle James*, because ye ask amiss. As all Things are from God, as a creating Cause, and thro' him as a preserving and governing Cause, so all Things should be to him as a final Cause. If we have not upright Views in our Petitions, we are not like to speed; *Sincerity* is the *Benjamin*, without which our *Supplications* will not meet with favourable access. If even in Eating and Drinking and in every other *natural*, yea in all the *civil Actions* of our Lives, we should aim at the *Glory of God*, much more ought this to be in all our sacred Service. Happy, and only happy are those who are *Israelites* indeed, in whom there is no governing guile.

3. **FERVENTLY**. We should pray for the Peace and Prosperity of Jerusalem, with the utmost engagedness of Soul; we must be fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord, not Lukewarm and Indifferent, for such who are neither cold nor hot, the Lord Jesus will spue out of his Mouth. i. e. reject with great Abhorrence!

4. **FREQUENTLY** and perseveringly. O Sirs, we should often send up Sighs to God for Jerusalem, and plead with him to make her a Praise on the Earth; plead that *Jehovah's* Arm might awake in her behalf, as in the Days of Old; that he would Command Deliverances for *Jacob* and speak *Salvation* to *Israel*; that he would make her Peace as a River, and her Glory as a flowing Stream; that the Time may be hastned when the Children of *Juda* and *Israel*, Brethren, unhappily disunited, shall be reunited in one Band of Affection, and external Union; shall join together in seeking the Lord their God, shall ask the Way to *Zion*, with their Faces thither ward, and weep as they go; that the Time may be hastned, when *Juda* and *Ephraim*, being re-united in brotherly

love, may join together in social Serviceableness, to promote the common and valuable *Interests* of Religion and Vertue, and thus become as one *Sick* in the Hand of the Lord.

AGAIN, we should *pray for the Peace and Prosperity of Jerusalem,*

5. BELIVINGLY. (Mat. xxi. 22.) *And all Things whatsoever ye shall ask in Prayer believing, ye shall receive.* O! how sweet and Soul supporting are these Words of our dear Lord! But what is it to pray believingly?

I ANSWER, it contains these following Particulars, *viz,*

1. OUR full *Perfection* that what we *ask* is lawful, agreeable to God's revealed *Will of Precept and Promise*, which are the Guides of our Petitions, the Measures of our Devotion. And

2. That God is *able* to grant what we ask, yea able to do *exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think.*\* We can ask a great deal, and yet our Thoughts exceed our Words: But God's *Power* exceeds both; for they are but finite and limited; but this is infinite, incomprehensible, immense! *As the Heavens are high above the Earth, so are God's Thoughts and Ways above ours.* Seeing Jehovah JESUS is Almighty in Power, and infinite in Merit, *he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to the Father by him; seeing he ever lives to make Intercession for them.* (Heb. vii. 25) O! the *Power of GOD* is a glorious support and stay to *Faith in Prayer*; in all extremities; in the most difficult

\* The passage of Scripture refer'd to, *viz.* (Ephes. iii. 20.) Has a very strong and beautiful *Emphasis* in these Words, exceeding abundantly, (*Hyper et perisum, ex hyper supra et perisum abundantia vel redundantia.*) Above abundance, above redundancy, above Measure, so *Passor.* Above, exceedingly above, the Observation and past *Experience* of our *Lives*, above the *conception* of our *Minds*, rais'd to the utmost sublimity, they are capable of; for even then they are but finite still, but the *Power of GOD* is infinite, absolute immense, vastly above not only the utmost elevation of our *thoughts*, but likewise above all the *expressions* that we can Form. Our *Words* our *Thoughts* are lost, in this untathomable *Abyss*, this incomprehensible *Ocean*, of Omnipotence! *Omnia facere, supra ea que petimus, aut mente concipimus, vel petere aut cogitare audamus,* saith *Grotius, i. e.* He is able to do above what we ask, with our *Lips*, or conceive in our *Minds*, yea more then what we dare ask or think!

THE Words are particles of gradual increase, heap'd up together saith *Camera*, in them is an amiable *auxesis*, which Form of Speech the Apostle *Paul* lov'd, (Sec 2 Cor. iii. 9. and vii. 13. *Phil.* i. 9. 1 *Thef.* iv. 10. *Rom.* v. 20. 2 *Cor.* vii. 4.) It is an emphatical *Periphrasis*, of GOD the Father, saith *Vorslius* who can do all Things with infinite redundancy, with immense plenty, and unexhausted Profusion, to this Purpose *Grotius, Erasmus, Vatabulus.*

To the utmost, (*Eis to panteles, ex pan omne et teleios perfectus*) perfect and compleat in all Things. Our Lord *Jesus* is able to bring us to perfect and perpetual Salvation, because as a Priest he purchased it by his *Blood* for us, and in the same *Character* constantly interceeds with his Father for the Application of that purchased Salvation to us.

ficult arduous and gloomy Conjunctions, when all human Helps fail, and there is no Way open for *escape*, *Omnipotence*, who has an absolute Sovereignty over all Nature, and Grace, Heaven and Earth, who holds the *Springs* and *Rule* of both in his Hand, and carries the *KEYS* of the invisible *World* at his *Girdle*; can easily turn in a moment our deepest *Darkness* into the *light* of the *Morning*; the most doleful *Captivity* of *Zion* into the most agreeable *Liberty*, and make us like those that *Dream*, (compass our *Deliverance* so suddainly, that we can hardly for a Time think it real) yea fill our Mouth with Laughter and our Tongue with Singing upon this Occasion. (Psa. cxxvi.)

WHEN the State of the Church is reduc'd to the most deplorable and hopeless Extremity, like *dry Bones* in the open Vale, without Life, without moisture, without Motion, without Beauty, Strength, yea without Connection and Defence, open to all the Artillery of the *North*, and all the inclemencies of the Seasons, a piteous galsful Spectacle indeed! Well but even in this extremity, Omnipotence can easily interpose, and Cause the *Dead* to leap into *Life*, and the *Bone* return to his *Bone*, (Ezek. xxxvii.) But to proceed, praying *believingly*, includes our *Perswasion*,

3. THAT GOD is gracious and merciful, yea, *Love* itself, and consequently inclined to confer, yea, and that he will confer all those *Benefits* that are for his own *Glory*, and his People's *Advantage*, in case they make their humble *Suit* to him in their *Distresses*, (Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.) *And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin.* (H. lxiii. 15.) *Look down from Heaven and behold, from the Habitation of thy Holiness, and of thy Glory, where is thy Zeal and thy Strength, the sounding of thy Bowels, and of thy Mercies towards me, are they restrain'd?* (Hos. xi. 8.) *How shall I give thee up Ephraim, how shall I deliver thee Israel, how shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine Heart is turn'd within me, my Repenting are kindled together.* (Ps. ciii. 13.) *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* (H. xlix. 15. 16.) *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb, yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the Palms of my Hands, thy Walls are continually before me, mine Eye and Heart is constantly upon thee.* There is an Allusion in the Words to the common Practice of Men, who put *Memorials* or *Signets* of what they tenderly regard, and would remember, upon their Hands: *Thy Walls are continually before me; thy broken down ruin'd Walls, tho' not a pleasing Prospect, No! but a sorrowful Spectacle, a sable Scene, are constantly in my Thoughts, how to repair and rebuild them; the Model, the Plan of this is immovably fixed in my Purpose, which Providence goes Pregnant with,*

and

and will certainly bring to the *Birth* in the appointed *Season*. Do *Zyon's* Friends favour her very *Dust*, so doth her gracious *God* much more; her *Walls* are constantly under his *Eye* and *Care*: O! the tenderest *Compassions* of the most indulgent earthly *Relations*, are but as *savage Cruelty*, as obstinate *Iron* and impenetrable *Adamant*, compared with the *BOWELS* of a *God*, in *CHRIST!* in *Covenant!* For the *Lord GOD* is a *Sun and Shield*, the *Lord* will give *Grace and Glory*, and no good *Thing* will be withhold from them that walk uprightly. (Pl. cxlv. 18.) The *Lord* is nigh to all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in *Truth*. (Pl. l. 15.) Call upon me in the *Day of Trouble*, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me, (Is. lxxv. 24) And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear: *Jehovah* is so much inclined to *Pity* and *Benignity*, that he sometimes gives *Mercies* unask'd, he sometimes prevents the *Prayers* of his *Church* and *People*, with the *Blessings* of his *Goodness*. When *David* did but say, *I will confess*, a gracious *God* forgave! The *Father* of the *Prodigal* ran to meet him, and embraced him with open *Arms*, with the utmost *Tenderness* and *Endearment*, without so much as the least *Mention* of his former unhappy *Conduct!* While they are yet speaking I will hear; before they conclude their *Prayer*, the *Blessings* they implore shall be conferred!

AN eminent Instance of this we have in *Daniel*, while that pious generous *Prophet* was passionately bewailing the desolate and melancholy *Circumstances* of the *City* and *Temple* of *Jerusalem*, whose *Buildings* were demolished, and whose *Altars* were laid waste, to the great *Reproach* of the *Professors* of *Religion* in that *Day*, as well as lamenting their *Sins*, as the procuring *Causes* of so great and general *Calamities*, and earnestly interceding with *God* for his favourable *Smiles* upon his *Sanctuary*, in such striking *Language* as this! O *Lord* I beseech thee, let thine *Anger* and thy *Fury* be turned away from this *City* *Jerusalem*, thy holy *Mountain*, because for our *Sins*; *Jerusalem* and thy *People* are become a *Reproach* to all that are about us: Now therefore, O, our *GOD*, hear the *Prayer* of thy *Servant*, and cause thy *Face* to shine upon thy *Sanctuary*, that is desolate, for the *Lord's* Sake, i. e. rebuild it upon its ancient *Foundation*, and repair its unhappy and perilous *Breaches!*

Now while that gracious *Man* was yet praying, in the *Manner* before observed, for the *Repair* of the *Breaches* of *Zyon*, the removal of her *Desolations*, and the propitious *Influxes* of her *God*; which lay nearer to his zealous *Heart*, than all the civil *Interests* of the *Nation*: A gracious *Grant* was made of the important *Mercies* he ask'd, and an *Angel* sent in haste (*being caused to fly swiftly*) to inform him of it, before he concluded his *Devotion*: Which noble *Messenger* address'd the *Prophet* in this respectful *Manner*; O, *Daniel*, I am now come forth, to give thee *Skill* and *Understanding*; at the *Beginning* of thy *Supplication* the

Commandment came forth; and I am come to shew thee, for thou art greatly below'd. Hence we may note, that the ready Way to be greatly below'd by GOD, is to be much concerned for, and laborious after *Zyon's Prosperity*, and the *REPARING* of her *BREACHES*, or in other Words, to pray for the *Peace* of *Jerusalem*. But

4. *PRAYING believingly*, includes our *relying* upon *GOD* in *CHRIST*, for what we *ask*; our *relying* upon the *Attributes* of the *divine Nature*, and *Promises* of the *divine Word*, (Is. l. 10.) *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, that walketh in Darkness, and hath no Light, let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his GOD.* (1 Pet. v. 7) *Casting all your Care upon him, for he careth for you.* (Ps. xxii. 4. 5.) *Our Fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou didst deliver them, they cried unto thee and were delivered, they trusted in thee and were not confounded.* (Ps. xxxi. 19.) *O how great is thy Goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the Sons of Men.* (P. cxxv. 1.) *They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed.* (Ps. xviii. 30.) *As for God his Way is perfect, the Word of the Lord is try'd, he is a Buckler to all that trust in him.* (Ps. xxxiv. 21.) *None of them that trust in him shall be desolate.* (Ps. xxxvii. 40.) *And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them and save them because they trust in him. Tho' he slay me, saith Job, yet will I trust in him.* Again,

5. *PRAYING believingly*, imports our *patient Expectation*, in the *WAY* of *Duty*, of a *gracious Answer* to our *Requests*, and hence it is said, *that he that believeth shall not make haste*, (Is. xxviii. 16.) that is, *sinful haste*, to obtain his *Desires*, by going out of *GOD's Way*. (P. xxxvii. 5, 7, 8, 9) *Commit thy Way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Fret not thy self in any Ways to do Evil.* (Ps. xl. 1.) *I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.* The *Prophet Isaiah* informs us, that the *Church* of old, us'd this as an *Argument* to obtain *Favour* and *Deliverance*. (Is. xxxiii. 2.) *O Lord be gracious unto us, we have waited for thee, be thou their Arm every Morning, our Salvation also in the Time of Trouble.* (Is. xxx. 18, 19.) *Blessed are all they that wait for him, for the People shall dwell in Zion, at Jerusalem, thou shalt weep no more, he will be gracious unto thee, at the Voice of thy Cry, when he shall hear it he will answer thee.* (Is. viii. 17.) *I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his Face from the House of Jacob, and I will look for him.* (Mic. vii. 7.) *Therefore I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my Salvation, my God will hear me.* (Heb. vi. 19.) *Which Hope we have as the Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast: As the Anchor by fastening under*

Water, upon a *Rock*, or firm Ground, stays the *Ship* in a *Storm*, and keeps her from running upon *Rocks*, *Sandbanks*, or into the foaming *Main*; so *Hope* by fastening upon an invisible *Saviour*, who is the *Rock of Ages*, the *Rock of our Salvation*, stays our Souls and keeps them from running adrift into *Presumption*; or from being entirely overwhelmed by *Despair*; amidst the innumerable *Temptations* and *Pressures*, to which we are here exposed. *Hope* of the right Kind, is not only firm and stable *objectively*, by Reason of the *Foundations* it is built upon, *viz.* the *Promises* of *GOD*, confirmed by his *Oath*, the compleat *Satisfaction* and continual prevalent *Intercession* of the dear Redeemer, which are impregnable, immoveable and eternal; and hence it is said to enter within the *Vail*: But it is also *firm instrumentally*, for under *GOD* it makes us so; this *Similitude* opens before us, the *Difficulty*, *Danger*, and *Uncertainty*, of our *State* in this *World*. We are like a *Ship* upon the instable *Element*, the open *Ocean* tossed with *Tempests*, (If. liv. 11.) subject to a variety of *Vicissitudes*, of *Winds* and *Weathers*, in which we need some *stay* and *support*; which the *Hope* or Expectation of promised (spiritual and) future Benefits affords us, yea, better in some Instances than the *Anchor* to the *Ship*, for that may be broken, and is some *remora* to the *Ship's Motion*, but *Hope* is an immortal *Seed* which shall never make us ashamed; this instead of obstructing quickens and animates our *Course*, to the *Port* of the heavenly *Paradise*; by setting the *Glory* thereof before us, it makes us diligent in religious Labours, intrepid in Dangers, patient, yea, cheerful in the darkest *Glooms* and greatest *Depths* of *Adversity*; by this we rejoice, tho' under the humblest Circumstances, and are glad tho' involv'd in the most inextricable *Labyrinths*, and expos'd to the greatest *Calamities*, *Pains* and *Pressures*! I say, notwithstanding of all of them, we rejoice in the Expectation of the *Glory of GOD*, in comparison of which exceeding great and eternal *Weight of blessedness*, the *Sufferings of this World*, which are light and but for a *Moment*, are not worthy to be once compared. In this calm *Haven* is our *Hope* fixed and fastened; where no *Tempest* can reach, or *Sea* roll: There Believers after all their tossings upon this tempestuous *Ocean*, shall soon enjoy a calm serene, a secure *Retreat* from every *Wind* and *Tempest*, a sweet and eternal *Rest* from every *Labour*, which shall as far exceed all our *Thoughts*, *Expressions* and *Hopes*, as it does our *Deserts*.\* The next Particular under the

## FOURTH

\* But *Hope for Good* from *GOD* in a *Course of Negligence*, or *Omission* of the *Duties* enjoined us, is the *Hope of the Hypocrite* which will make ashamed at last, and fail in *Extremity* like a *Spiders Web*, the Person that would lay hold of it, to stay him from falling down a steep and dangerous precipice; *Sloth* and *Indolence*, is not spiritual but carnal and perverse, oppos'd to the current of the whole Book of *GOD*, which enjoins us, to *run*, *wrestle*, *strive*, and *Labour*, (Religiously) in order to obtain the blessings, spiritual and eternal which, we implore, desire, and expect: *Sloth* and *Indolence* is not a *wating* for *GOD*, but for his and our *Enemy*, a *Spirit of Error* and *Delusion*.

FOURTH General Head of Discourse, comes now to be considered, which was to shew why we should pray for the Peace and Prosperity of Jerusalem? Now the Reasons are these following, viz.

1. BECAUSE it is the Command of GOD, as our Text informs us, *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.* And in the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, chap. xii. ver. 14. *We are commanded to follow\* Peace with all Men, and Holiness,* and assur'd that without these we cannot see the Lord. And in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, (chap. xii. ver. 17. 18.) this important Duty is again enjoyn'd, in these Words; *recompence to no Man Evil, for Evil:—If it be possible, as much as lyeth in you, live peaceably with all Men.* Of the same tendency are these Words of GOD, by the Apostle Peter, (1 Epistle, chap. iii. ver. 11.) *Let him eschew Evil and do Good, let him seek Peace and ensue it.\** And elsewhere another Apostle speaks thus, *let us therefore follow after\* the Things which make for Peace, and Things wherewith we may edify one another, and for Meat destroy not the Work of God.*

2. To pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, is the Spirit and Genius of true Religion, as appears from the following Places of Scripture, (Rom. viii. 6.) *To be spiritually minded is Peace,* i. e. spiritual mindedness it not only accompanied with Peace with GOD, but disposes to Peace with Men. (Rom. xiv. 17) *The Kingdom of GOD is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, i. e. the Power and Life of true Religion, consist not in circumstantial Points of Truth, and Practices dependant on them, but in real Holiness of Heart and Life, in a peaceable DISPOSITION of Soul, towards every Man, and in a cordial COMPLACENCE in the Perfections of GOD's Nature, the Works of Creation, the Conduct of divine Providence, the Methods of divine Grace, and in the Good and Wellfare of all Men, whether Friends or Enemies.*

THE Gospel of this Kingdom, is a Gospel of Peace, (Rom. x 15) *How beautiful are the Feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace.* The Author of the Gospel is the GOD of Peace, the Ministers of the Gospel are Messengers of Peace; the Design and Tendency of the Gospel is Peace, with GOD and Man. (1 Cor. vii. 15) *But GOD hath called us to Peace.* (1 Cor. xiv. 33) *But GOD is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace in all the Churches of the Saints.*  
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\* The original Word *Diocain* (is the same in the three Places of Scripture before mentioned which are marked with an Asterism and) signifies a singular Contrivance, Speed and Vehemence, in the Protection of what we have in View, and is frequently apply'd in Scripture, to Persecution, which is generally carried on (alas for it!) with much Haste, Fervour and Industry, so that there is a great Emphasis in the Word, The Almighty hereby signifies, that we should prosecute the important Blessing of PEACE, so far as is agreeable to Truth and Holiness, with the utmost Study, Alacrity and Diligence; at all Adventures.

74 *Reasons why we should pray for the Peace, &c.*

(Gal. v. 22.) *The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace, Love, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, but the Works of the Flesh, are Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Envyings.* (Jam. iii. 17.) *The Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy.* (Jam. iii. 14, 15, 16.) *But if ye have bitter Envy and Strife in your Hearts, glory not; don't boast of your Wickedness; and lie not against the Truth, this Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; for where Envy and Strife is, there is Confusion, and every evil Work.* (1 Cor. iii. 3.) *For whereas there is Envy among you, and Strife and DIVISIONS, are ye not CARNAL, and walk as Men? What is sickly and infirm, is wont to be full of Uneasiness and Complaint!\** (Rom. xiii 13.) *Let us walk honestly as in the Day, how; not in Strife and Envy.* Has not CHRIST given us a new Commandment, a Commandment newly inculcated, and enforced with new Arguments, and Incentives; to LOVE ONE ANOTHER; a Commandment which contains the Sum and Source of all the Duties required by the second Table of the Law; and is not the natural and necessary Consequence of this, Love, Peace, at least in Disposition and Endeavour?

To oppose Peace when it may be had with Safety, to the *Fundamentals* in *Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline*, of the Religion of JESUS, is to set ourselves virtually and really, (tho' I believe not designedly) against the *Authority, Spirit, and Intention* of the Gospel; as well as the *Example* of the Author of it, and to rise up in *Rebellion* against the commanding *Authority*, of the King of the Church, which expressly and positively enjoyns all his Subjects to *receive one another, as he receives them to the Glory of GOD.*

3. THIS Peace and Union our dear Lord pray'd for (Joh. xvii. 11.) *Holy Father keep, thro' thine own Name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are: i. e. that they may continue to be one among themselves, in Mind, Spirit, Agreement, Faith and Love, As we are ONE in Essence and Will.* The Particle *as*, is not a Note of Equality, but of Similitude. † This Prayer of our Saviour, saith Mr. Pool, in his *Annotations*, on the Place, “ doth oblige all those who, in any Sincerity own Christ, to study UNION, both in *Opinion* and *Affection*, and also give us Ground of *Hopes*, that there is a Time coming, when there shall be a greater Measure of it than we have seen in those miserably divided Times, wherein we have lived, and do yet live.”

IN Sum the *Unity* here pray'd for, consists especially in these Things, *viz.* Design, Affection and main Principles, (which the holy Unction is promis'd to direct unto) together with an external joining into one Body mystical and visible, *by one Spirit*, saith the Apostle, *we are all Baptiz'd into one Body, and drink into one Spirit.*

(1 Cor.

\* Omne invalidum, est sua natura querelum,

† To this Purpose speak divers learned Men, *viz. Ludovicus de clug, Grocius, Burgensis, and Simplicius.*

(1 Cor. xii. 13.) But speaking the Truth in Love, may grow up unto him in all Things, which is the Head even CHRIST, from whom the whole Body fitly join'd together and compacted, maketh Increase, to the edifying of itself in Love, (Eph. iv. 15, 16.) As the Church is united to CHRIST their Head, by the Spirit and Faith; so among themselves, by the Profession of fundamental Truths, and unfeign'd Love. *Jerusalem is a City that is compact together.*

THIS Passage of Scripture (Eph. iv. 15, 16.) is so very remarkable, and applicable to the Subject I am discoursing upon, that I shall beg leave to consider it a little particularly,

FIRSTLY *join'd together*, (*sunarmologemenon, a sun con, et aro opto.*) to fit the Joints of Things exactly together, to build with agreeable Proportion.

AND *compacted*, (*sumbibaz omenon, proprie facio ut aliquis eat mecum, a sun cum et baino incedo, per metaphoram doceo, as sentire cogo, ut aliquis mecum in eandem sententiam descendat.*) Acts ix. 22. compelling them by force of Argument to assent, that JESUS was the CHRIST. And hence it sometimes signifies Instruction, so it is translated (1 Cor. ii. 16.) and sometimes a Union in Love, which is often the Fruit of an Agreement in Sentiments (Col. ii. 2.)

THIS Word, saith *Hammond* and *Grotius*, seems to signify a closer Band than the former, that denotes a suitable fitting of the Parts, but this a Connecting of them together, as with *Cement*, or with a *Peg*, so firmly and straitly, that they cannot be well pull'd asunder; the Words plainly import an exact *Order*, suitable *Disposition*, and close *Connection* of the *Parts*, or *Members* among themselves, and in Consequence thereof a social Performance of *religious Offices*.

EVERY *Joint* supplieth, (*Pases aple tes epichregias, aple ab aptein tangere*) The Word *Joint* is derived from a Verb that signifies to touch, and points to the *Ligaments*, *Veins*, and *Nerves* of the *Body*, by which the *Members* of it are join'd to the *Head*, and among each other, says *Zanchy*.

IN a Word, the *visible Church*, in the Verse referred to, and some preceding, is compared to a natural *Body*, and to a *House*, in which we may observe these Things.

1. THAT the *Head* of this mystical *Body*, the Foundation of this mystical *Building*, is JESUS CHRIST.

2. THAT the several *Members* of this *Body*, the several *Parts* of this *Building* are united to the *Head*, to the *Foundation*, and among themselves, by certain *Ligaments*, *Joints*, and *Junctures*.

3. THAT upon this *Union* depends, and by the *Joints* or *Bands* thereof are convey'd, the Church's *Edification* and *Growth*.

4. THAT the *Band* or *Ligament* of a visible *Union* to the *Head* or *Foundation*, is a *Profession* of *Faith*, (in Subjects capable of it) and of a vital *Union* the *Grace* of *Faith*. (Heb. x. 23.) *Let us hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering*

ing, for he is faithful that promised. (Eph. iii. 17.) That CHRIST may dwell in your Hearts by Faith.

MOREOVER that the Bands and Ligaments of Union among themselves, are especially these,

I. TRUTH, Agreement in *essential* and necessary Truths, Now we beseech you Brethren by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same Things, and that there be no Divisions among you (or Schisms as it is in the Original, *Chismata*) but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgement, (1 Cor. i. 10.)

By Schisms, the Apostle means new *Factions, Sects* and *Parties* within the Church, whereby it is torn, *Ferments* promoted in its Bowels, the Affections of the People uncharitably and unreasonably alienated from each other, not upon the Account of Differences in *Essentials* of *Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline*, but *circumstantial Matters*; while some gloried in this, and some in the other *Patron*; some carnally crying up *Paul*, and some *Apollos*, and some *Cephas*, to the *Disparagement* of each other, and the *Prejudice* of the Church's *Peace and Union*; so *Calvin, Beza, Pareus, Grotius, and Symachus*.

THE Conduct of the Apostle *Paul* upon this critical Occasion, was truly amiable, and worthy of a Minister of JESUS CHRIST, he refused their immoderate *Respect*, and spake DIMINUTIVELY of HIMSELF, with Design to stop the perilous CAREER of the People, in making new *Parties, Sects, and Factions*, and setting himself at the Head of one of them, he would by no Means accept of such a false Honour, to the Prejudice of CHRIST'S Kingdom, No! He abhorr'd it! He would rather be condemned and despis'd by the *Corinthians*, than condemned by GOD, and his own Mind; for being the Instrument of *uncharitable Schisms and Factions!*

HE therefore nobly ventures his Character in the Cause of GOD, the Cause of the Church's *Peace and Union*, and fearlessly exposes himself to all the Fury of their *Reflections*, for his *Fidelity* to his Master: *Reflections* which were as unreasonable as they were well intended.

THAT blessed Man, endeavoured to stop the violent Torrent of *Faction*, by addressing the *Corinthians* in this humble Language,

BUT is CHRIST divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptiz'd in the Name of Paul? 1 Cor. i. 13. How came these Parties? There is but one CHRIST. Did I enlist any that I baptiz'd, under my own Banner? Seeing the Head is but one, why should the Body be divided?

Now compare the aforesaid Scriptures with what the same Apostle says *Phil. iii. 15, 16.* and you may easily perceive, that he urges *Forbearance* in lesser Things, and only proposes *Essentials* as Terms of Communion, the Words are these, *Let us therefore as many as be perfect (i. e. sincere and grown Christians) be thus minded, and if in any Thing ye be otherwise minded, GOD shall reveal even this unto you, nevertheless whereto we have already attained*

attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same Thing.

But

2. ANOTHER Bond or Ligament of Union among ourselves, is Love, Ephes. iv. 15. But speaking the Truth in Love, may grow up into him in all Things, which is the Head even CHRIST. The Words are beautiful in the Original, *Aletheuontes en agape*, which either signifies the Sincerity or Truth of our Love, or our contending for Truth, in a Consistency with Love, viz. our speaking for Truth with a loving Frame of Mind, without Anger or Bitterness, seeing the Wrath of Man works not the Righteousness of GOD. And likewise our forbearing from Love, those that differ from us in lesser Things. Truth and Love agree sweetly, in the harmonious System of the Religion of JESUS, and should they not do so in our Sentiments, Temper of Mind, and outward Behaviour? But to proceed, a

3d. LIGAMENT of Union with our Brethren, is Peace, and hence we are commanded to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of PEACE. Without a peaceable Temper and Behaviour, Union can neither be obtained, or long preserv'd.

To these I may add the Observance of the Order CHRIST has instituted, and the joint or social Performance of religious Duties; which the Words joined together and compacted import, as was observed before, which Duties are of noble Tendency to promote and preserve Union among ourselves.

FROM all which I would observe, that when any of these Duties are neglected, the Edification and Increase of CHRIST's Body mystical is oppos'd and marr'd.

4. THIS Peace CHRIST laid down his Life to purchase, as well as Peace with GOD, which is signified by the Commemoration of his Death, in the Ordinance of his Supper, designed to promote Love and Fellowship among the Members of his visible Church; and hence we are exhorted, to walk in Love, as CHRIST also has loved us, and given himself for us, an Offering and Sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to GOD.

5. Are not Christian Churches agreeing in Fundamentals, the Children of the Kingdom, the visible Children of GOD, and so related to each other as Brethren; and should such quarrel together in their Way to Heaven? Does this become their Profession, their Relation, their Character, their Hopes? O do not the Enemies of Religion warm their Hands at the fire of their contentions? Do they not deride their scandalous Debates, about Matters (comparatively speaking) of small Moment; and are not their Prejudices against Religion altogether, hereby fatally strengthened and confirm'd?

6. Quarelling about lesser Things, much obstructs our religious Progress, for it diverts our Minds from more important, delightful and Soul nourishing Subjects, breaks the pleasing calm of our Souls, and stirs up sinful Anger. This is so self evident a truth, that even a Belarmine acknowledg'd it, and signify'd his being weary

wearry of Thorny *Controversies* of small Moment, and his choosing to dwell upon practical *Subjects*, that tend to improve and delight the Mind, and reform the Life.

7. Angry Debates, and Divisions about little Things, are awful *Presages* of impending *Judgments* and *Calamities*. When the *Sea* roars and swells, it looks like an approaching *Storm*! The lamentable *Desolation* of the Protestant Churches of *France*, by the unparallel'd *Treachery* and *Barbarity* of the *Papists*, was prefac'd by sinful and scandalous *Divisions* among *themselves*!

Angry *Debates* and *Divisions* about Circumstantial Matters in Religion, dishonour *God*, render the Church *Contemptible*, make the several Members of it *terrible* to each other, instead of being desirable and amiable, *engines* of mutual *Sorrow* and *Mischief*, instead of *Comfort* and *Benefit*; and likewise Marr the publick *Good*, which every generous Mind has a principal regard to. For *Zyon's* sake says the *Zealous Prophet*, *I will not hold my Peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the Righteousness thereof go forth as Brightness, and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth; and the Gentiles shall see thy Righteousness, and all the Kings thy Glory*. Alas the Conversion of Strangers from the Error of their Ways to the Wisdom of the just, is hereby unhappily prevented, for nothing Hardens and Stumbles such more, then the unchristian *Contentions* and *Animosities* of *Professors*; it is on this Account that our Saviour pronounceth a *wo* to the *World* because of *Offences*.

YEA my Brethren such *Divisions* and *Contentions*, tend to and wou'd certainly issue in, did not Almighty Power interpose, the utter Destruction of the visible *Kingdom* of *Christ*, upon the *Earth*; for as he himself who is the Wisdom of the Father, justly and excellently observes; *how can a House that is divided against itself stand*.

BUT by Peace and Union, on the Terms before observ'd, *God* is glorify'd, in our obedience to his *Precepts*, and Conformity to his *attributes*, *Religion* is honoured, by a real, a visible and amiable *Representation*, of its peaceful, kind and beneficent *Nature*.

THE visible Church is *strengthened*, and made awful to its inveterate Enemies, its implacable opposers: Our own *Minds* are *delighted* with the most agreeable prospect and sweet Sensations; and others *Benefit* is thereby promoted, for being at Peace with them they are the more ready to receive our Council and *Reproofs*!

BUT shou'd we join with those who we fear are Graceless?

I Answer the *Terms* of Church *fellowship*, that *God* has fix'd are soundness in the Main *Doctrines* of Religion, and a regular *Life*; a *Heritick* saith the *Apostle* after the first and second *Admonition* reject; *him that is weak in Faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputation: Receive one another, as CHRIST has received you, to the Glory of GOD*.

WHEN Persons are found in the *Fundamental Truths* of Religion,  
and

and regular in *Life*, we ought to hope well of them, till they prove the contrary by their Practice; and receive them to *Communion*, *Charity* thinks no Evil, and hopes all Things, that are good; whatever *jealousies* we may have and perhaps sinful ones, they should be kept *Secret*, and not divulg'd to our Neighbours *Prejudice*, and far less made *Terms* of *Communion*.

THE standard of our *King* and *Master* we must buckle to, and not follow our own fickle and often partial and byas'd *Fancies* and *Humours*. The aforesaid *Terms* that CHRIST has fix'd are invariable and perpetual, nor can we add to them, without reflecting upon his *Wisdom* and *Fidelity*, and invading his incommunicable *Royalty*, without rebelliously attempting to commensurate *Kings* in his *Kingdom*, contrary to his *Order*, and robbing his Subjects of the *Liberty*, wherewith he has made them Free.

THE aforesaid *Terms* that *Christ* has fix'd may be certainly known, and therefore they are *rational*. But some of the novel and superstitious *Terms*, which some good Men have invented, tho' with a pious design, are *irrational*, because they cannot be certainly known, unless it be suppos'd that Churches are infallible in their Determinations; a claim which the *Protestants*, (some *Enthusiasts* excepted) have not pretended to, at least in Words; but the Bible is a stranger to such *Terms* of *Communion*. I know not one Passage in it, that proves converting Grace, or the Churches Judgment of it, to be a *Term* of *Christian Communion* of divine Appointment. If any think otherwise, let them prove it, and I will give an attentive Ear, and readily submit to their Instruction and Correction: But I humbly conceive, they will find it a hard task, without producing another Bible. \*

BUT must not we adhere to our former Testimony to Conversion?

I Answer, Yes, and we do so by declaring our assent to the Holy Scriptures, and by maintaining our excellent *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms*, which open the Nature, and assert the Necessity of Conversion agreeable to the sacred Oracles.

AND as to our fallible Opinion concerning the late religious Appearances, which is a distinct Thing from the Doctrine of Conversion in general; we may and ought to maintain it, but in a consistency with Peace, Love and Charity.

THERE is a vast difference between our holding our uncertain Opinion concerning the *reality* of this or that Instance of Conversion, and our imposing it upon others as a *Term* of *Communion*, either Ministerial or Christian. Such as are for imposing their private Opinion about Matters of Liberty, which they cannot certainly

\* I can't find that the Christians of the three first Centuries after CHRIST made gracious experiences, or the Church's Judgment about them *Terms* of *Communion*. they made no Enquiries about them as to Baptism, and all that were Baptiz'd, and of adult Age, and free from Church Censure, were admitted to the Sacrament,

tainly know, of which Kind particular Instances of a Work of Conversion in any (in our Times) undoubtedly are, as a Term of Church Fellowship, refusing to join with them in Communion; until they be of their Sentiment; should either produce their Charter from the Holy-Scriptures; for such an extraordinary claim of Power, for such an unprecedented kind of Proceeding, or at least be silent; if they are not free to do what perhaps they urge upon others, viz. to confess their *Error in Principle*, and *Indiscretion in Practise*.

If they can't prove a *Difference of Opinion* from theirs, respecting some Instances of a Work of Conversion (for more or less don't alter the Kind) in others of our Times, and since the first Ages of Christianity, to be a fundamental *Article* of Religion; their Cause is entirely lost: And if they can, Fundamentals are built upon a very precarious Bottom indeed; and how to distinguish between such *Fundamentals* and *Circumstantials*; is I confess vastly beyond the Reach of my Understanding: At this rate of Proceeding; the Number of *fundamental Articles*; will encrease or change every Age; for every Man's Conversion, with all its Circumstances, makes one of the Number: If this Method be followed, shall we not have a goodly Multitude of *Fundamentals*? Our *Confession of Faith* will swell to a bulk much superior to the late *Universal History*, twenty Volumns of which have been already printed, and a great Part left yet undone.

In short; such a Sentiment seems to me to be equally contrary to Scripture, Reason, Antiquity, and the Peace and Union of the Churches of CHRIST.

INASMUCH as good Men may and do differ in Opinion about such uncertain Things. Witness the Messrs. the *Erskines* and their followers, with others that might be mentioned. To make them *Terms* of Communion, will oblige us to cast out of Church Fellowship, those that are sound in the main Doctrines of Religion, and regular in Life, whom CHRIST commands us to receive; and therefore it directly opposes his Authority. Besides as it is an Addition to the *Terms* which the KING of the Church has fix'd; it is an Invasion of his Royalty, and an Infringement upon our Brothers Liberty.

Is it not unreasonable to make that a *Term of Communion* which we cannot certainly know, for hereby such as should be received are in Danger of being rejected, as CHRIST himself observes in his *Parable* of the *Tares*.

WHAT Church from the Foundation of the World to the present Times, ever made the open acknowledgment of some Mens Judgments, concerning the reality of some Instances of *Conversion*; carried on in their Times, without the Testimony of *Miracles*, a *Term* of Ministerial *Communion*. I confess I know of no Instance of this kind, in *Scripture*, or *History*.

AND seeing in a Case of such uncertainty, as Mens Judgment of gracious Experiences of others, good Men are apt to be of  
contrary

contrary Sentiments, because of their different Degrees of Knowledge, different Experiences in some Things, different Tryals, Byasses, and natural Tempers, it has a direct Tendency to alienate their Affections from each other, and so disturb the Churches Peace, weaken her mutual Love, and break her social Union, and consequently tear the seemless Coat of CHRIST into an infinite Number of Parts; Yea and prevent a desirable re-union, after unhappy Breaches; it is a schismatical Evil, pregnant with dangerous Divisions, and manifold Mischiefs of hideous forms and malignant Influence. The Apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, counsels with great Seriousness, Christians to shun the Abettors of such Evils, in the following Language, *Now I beseech you Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them, for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ.* And in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he writes thus, *for ye are yet Carnal, whereas there is among you Envy and Strife, and Divisions; are ye not carnal and walk as Men?* Against this Evil he observes, *that there should be no Schism in the Body, but the Members should have the same Care one for another. Now ye are the Body of Christ and Members in particular.* Union is the Strength, the Beauty and Glory of the visible Church, *unita viz fortior*; but Division covers it with Scandal, and renders it weak and contemptible.

IF it be a commanded Duty to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, to long for it, to pursue after it, with Vehemence, rejoice in its Approaches, and to bewail its Absence; it must needs be a great Iniquity to fly from it, as if it were a Buck-bear, to reject the Offers of it upon reasonable Terms, to be grieved for and frightned at its approaches, as if it were an Enemy, and pleased with its Distance: This shews a distorted Judgment and distemper'd Heart: This Religion, or rather misguided and ill-temper'd Zeal, and severe narrowness of Soul, is directly contrary to right Reason and to the Christian Revelation; Contrary to all social Offices, and every valuable Interest of Society. Alas its pitty that any who are sincere in Heart, should have such contracted, gloomy, and irregular Views of Things! May it please the God of Mercy, Love and Peace, to instruct, enlighten and reclaim them, and soften their well meant Rigours, and untam'd Fierceness into Gentleness and Love!

But how can those who have offended be receiv'd to Communion, without a confession of their fault? I Answer Confession is two-fold, either virtual or express, a virtual Confession of Sin is a Reformation from Sin, this necessarily supposes a sight of Sin and Sorrow for it, in Cases of a moral Nature. But express and publick Acknowledgment in Words is not always necessary; it is enough in some Circumstances of the Church, to have Reformation, which is the End thereof: *We have this Power, (viz. of Government) to Edification and not to Destruction,* says the Apostle. Discipline is designed for the good, and building up of

the visible Church, and therefore it must be administred in such a way as tends to promote it, in such a Way as is suited to its ordinary and extraordinary Circumstances. Reformation implies a *real Confession*, which is much better than a *verbal* one, for it cannot be reasonably suppos'd, that one will of his own accord reform from an Evil which he sees not the Danger of.

To imagine that our Lord by the Discipline he has instituted, always requires an open and explicit *Confession of Faults*, even of a *moral Nature*, not only in a Church formed and established, but even in a Church forming, or in its *Infancy*, or in a broken and divided State; prejudiced against each other by mutual *Contentions* and angry *Debates*, even after there is a *Reformation* and Disposition to be at *Peace* upon equitable and honourable Terms; seems to make *Discipline an Enemy to Christ's Kingdom*, a mischievous *Engine* to destroy what it was designed to promote: I cannot be easily induced to imagine, that the all-wise and gracious Redeemer, would ever communicate to his Churches such an irrational and pernicious plan of *Government*, which they had better be without altogether, O! No. There is an amiable *Harmony* in all divine *Truths*, in all divine *Institutions*, a noble moral Tendency to answer their *Design*, the *Glory of God* and *good of Mankind*.

EXCELLENT Mr. *Durham*, one of the most pious, judicious and calm Divines of the *Scotish Nation*, fully confirms what I have been now observing, in his truly valuable Treatise of *Scandal*, a Book well worthy of our serious perusal.

BUT as to *Offences* in Conduct, occasioned by different *Sentiments* in *Circumstantials*, the Case is still more plain, that urging of acknowledgments, when *Controversies* between the contending Parties are dropt, is unreasonable and unjust, not only in an Infant and broken State of the Church, but even in a Church united and form'd; the Reason is, because it implies our *imposing* upon others our *Sentiments* in Matters comparatively *doubtful*, contrary to the Command of GOD, which obliges us to *receive* the *Weak*, or those that *err* in *Circumstantials* only, but not to *doubtful Disputations*; what Christ has left free, we should leave so too.

AND it is also contrary to the Apostles *Practice*, in Relation to the *Jewish* and *Gentile* Christians, who contended about *Days* and *Meats* to that degree of ungoverned, unchristian fierceness, that they condemned one another, and were inclined to unchurch each other. Now did the Apostle encourage their *rashness* and *severity*, and advise them to insist upon mutual open *Acknowledgments* of their *faults*, in order to *Love* and *Union*; No, by no means: He understood the Nature and Design of Church *Government* better than by unreasonable rigour and harshness, to blow up the Churches Peace, Beauty and Strength.

OR did he desire the *Gentiles*, who were in the Right as to the Points in Debate, to insist upon the *Jews* acknowledgment, or wait till the *Jewish* Christians came and made *Proposals of Peace*;

No. Instead hereof, he expressly enjoins them to *receive the weak*. He was so far from the Severity mentioned, that he did not say explicitly which Party was in the Right, or which was in the wrong, as to the Matters they contended about; but made charitable *Apologies* for both, as to their *States* towards God, and their pious *Designs* in contrary Practices, respecting the Matters then controverted among them, *He that regardeth the Day, regardeth it unto the Lord; he that regardeth not the Day to the Lord, he doth not regard it.*

IN the mean Time he reprov'd them smartly for their sinful *judging* of each other, and well he might; for that God provoking, Church rending *Iniquity*, was unspeakably worse than a mistake in Opinion about the Points controverted among them. *Let not him that eateth, saith he, despise him that eateth not; who art thou that judgeth another Man's Servant? Why dost thou judge thy Brother? and why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? for we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ: Let us not therefore Judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no Man put a stumbling Block, or occasion to fall, in his Brothers Way.* O blessed Advise, well worthy of an Apostle, well becoming the *genius* of *Christianity* and *Dictates* of right *Reason*.

PEOPLE must be plainly told the evil and danger of this horrible *impiety* of *rash-judging*, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear; even tho' a necessary *corrosive* should, thro' their unrelenting obstinacy, aggravate the *Disease* to appearance, and make it rage for a time with more fury and fierceness against the friendly Hands who run the risk of their *Reputation* in offering a *Medicine* for its Cure.

RASH-JUDGING, Sirs, of Mens *States* and *Designs* in general, and more especially about Things of a circumstantial Nature, is like a train of *Gun-powder*, which tends to blow up the Churches Peace, Unity, Beauty, Comfort, Order, and Usefulness, at one dismal blast.

To divert the aforesaid contending Parties herefrom, the Apostle informs them, that the *Nature* and *Power* of true *Religion*, did not consist in any *Sentiments* and *Controversies* about Matters of small Moment. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, sayeth he, but Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost. He that in these Things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.* (see Rom. xiv) *i. e.* If we are agreed in main Points of *Doctrine*, *Worship* and *Discipline*, and are *Holy in Heart* and *Life*, *peaceable in Disposition* and *Behaviour*, and have spiritual *Complacence* in God thro' a *Mediator*, *Jehovah* will *justify* our *Persons* and *Conduct*, and Men of *Piety*, *Judgment*, *Candor* and good *Temper*, who are not under the sinful *byass* of *Temptation* and *Party-Zeal*, will have *charity* for our *Persons*, and be pleased with our honest Attempts for God, and the *Peace* of his *visible Kingdom*.

BUT to proceed, That the noble *designs of Peace and Union* might be carried on among them, he advises them to beware of hurting their *Brethren* in their best Interests, thro' want of *Forbearance and Condescension* in smaller Matters, for *Meat destroy not the Work of God*: And likewise counsels them, especially in Times of Temptation and Debate, (which was the Case of those he spoke to) to keep their Opinion about Circumstantials to themselves, and be satisfied with the *Liberty* of enjoying their own Judgment; *hast thou Faith, have it to thyself before God; let every Man be fully perswaded in his own Mind.* O! how far was this blessed Apostle from a quarellom, imposing Temper, in respect of Circumstantials, or lesser Matters in Religion. \*

BUT perhaps it will be objected, that what has been now said is not pertinent to the *Controversy* of the Times.

I *Answer*, Why so? What is it that is disputed? Is it the necessity of *Conversion* to God, in order to *Salvation*? No. That is freely acknowledged upon both sides of the Question.

Is it the *Nature of Conversion* propos'd in the *Scriptures of Truth*, and in our excellent *Confession of Faith* agreeable thereto? No! For that is likewise acknowledged by both the contending Parties.

Is it the *Marks and Signs of Conversion* mentioned in the *Scriptures*? No! For these are also confessed by Persons of both Sides.

Is it the *reality* of those *Instances of Conversion* contained in the *Bible*? No! The divine Authority of the *Holy Scriptures*, is equally asserted by both the Parties in Controversy.

Is it whither some have not been *converted*, in the successive *Ages* of the *Christian Church*, from the Apostle's Times to the present Day, and whether some have not been converted in this *Age*, and in this Part of the World, and whether Good has not been done, and some effectually changed to all Appearance during the late *Revival* of Religion? No! For these Things are also acknowledged.

WHAT is it then that is controverted? Why our Opinion respecting the religious *Experiences* of some in the late Times, and concerning the Number of such; it has been disputed, whether those Experiences were of a saving Kind, and whether the Number was so great, as is concluded by some.

AND is our OPINION concerning what we cannot certainly know, a great Matter think ye? Or are we *infallible* in our *Judgment* my *Brethren*, about these Things, that are hid from the View of all Mortals? If not, why is all this Heat and Flame about

\* To insist therefore upon the absolute, universal and continual necessity of Acknowledgments, in all Cases of Offence and Scandal, and especially of such as are occasioned by lesser Errors in Sentiment, is to rebel against the commanding *Authority* of the great GOD, and prefer our Wisdom to his, as well as to contradict the *Practice* of his inspired Apostle.

about Uncertainties? But if we were *infallible*, a *Claim* which belongs to none of the Sons of *Adam*, and which none of us has the Vanity to pretend to in WORDS: Yet unless we could give that Gift to others, that differ from us in some *Circumstantial*s; I see no Reason for severe Censure upon them, for indecent and un-governable *Heats* against them!

DO N'T let big Words, my Brethren, unexplained and undistinguished, frighten you into a *Panick* of groundless *Fear*, or raise you into a *Ferment* of sinful *Anger*; for *Passion* is a blind *Guide*, DECEIT lurks in *Generals*, nor does our *Anger* work the Righteousness of GOD. Remember the just *Rebuke*, which the Meek and loving JESUS gave to his Disciples *James* and *John*, for their fiery furious *Zeal* against the *Samaritans*, for treating their *Master* ill, ye know not, saith CHRIST, *what manner of Spirit ye are of*, as if he had said, you are not sensible what *Wickedness* is in your Disposition and Temper, how much *Pride*, *Peevishness*, *Passion*, *Prejudice*, and *personal Revenge* is covered under and mixed with your real honest *Zeal* for your *Master's Honour*! *The Son of Man* is not come to *destroy Men's Lives*, but to *save them*; my *Religion* is to be propagated by *Love* and *Condescension*, by *Gentleness* and *Sweetness*, and all the amiable *Methods of Endearment*, not by *Force* and *Bitterness*, by *Fire*, *Fury*, and *Blood*; I came to slay all *Enemies* of every Kind and Form, not to animate and encrease them, under any *Pretext* whatsoever. Now Sirs, examine the *Matter* calmly, and let sober *Reason* touch the *Point* in *Debate*, and that which appears like a huge *Mountain*, when beheld at a *Distance* transiently and confusedly, will shrink exceedingly; I had almost said into a *Mole-hill*, but I forbear.----It does certainly shrink into a *Circumstantial*, and that is enough.

BE it supposed and asserted, that the late *Revival of Religion* had in divers Instances I mean of *Individuals*, all the external *Signs* of a divine *Original*; yet can it be safely said, that these *Signs* are certain and *infallible*, or equally evident to all that are pious? And can no charitable *Apology* be reasonably made concerning the *Mistakes* of good Men. Are not even such liable in Times of great *Temptation*, to the corrupt but insensible *Byass's* of *Prejudice* and *Passion*? Pray was there nothing of the *carnal Corinthian Disease* among us, in the late Times? Were not some too highly extoll'd, and others depressed too low?

No doubt different Degrees of *Love*, may and ought to be entertained towards Men, according to the different Degrees of their Knowledge, apparent Goodness and Usefulness; but in the mean Time none ought to be IDOLIZ'D upon the one Hand, nor should any be SLIGHTED and discouraged on the other: For Extreams both ways are dangerous, and of fatal Tendency to the *Peace* of the *Church*, and to the Souls of Men. Respect should be shewn to the ministerial *Character*, in all those that have been regularly introduced into the Ministry. Such who are found in the main Principles of *Religion*, and regular in *Life*, should be hon-  
oured

mured for their *Work's* sake, their Office sake, nor should any be condemned positively as to the *State* of their *Souls*, who have the aforesaid *Fruits* or *Evidences* of *Religion*, which are the only certain *Scriptural Standards* of our fixed *Sentiments* concerning Men, and publick *Proceedings* towards them.

WAS there no *rash Judging* in the late Times on both Sides the Question? None that had religious *Impressions* and lost them, and turn'd to open *Prophaness*, or dangerous *Errors* and *Delusions*? Was there nothing extraordinary in the bodily *Commutations* of some which give some Occasion of *Prejudice*? Were there no *Irregularities* and *Indiscretions* in no Part of the *Country*? No false *Reports* spread of *Persons* and *Things*? Well, if there was any Truth in any or all of these Particulars, why may it not be supposed, that some good Men might be led insensibly thro' a secret wrong *Byass* of *Prejudice*, to mistake in *Opinion* concerning the aforesaid Instances of *Conversion*, and of Consequence to speak and act agreeable to that *Mistake*?

IN a Word, Sirs, the controverted POINT is either *fundamental* or *circumstantial*, I know of no *Medium*, now chuse which ye will, if you say that it is a *fundamental*, you consequently say that the holy *Scriptures* are *imperfect*, for they want this *Fundamental*, there's not a Word of it in the *Bible*: The *Scriptures* declare of themselves that they are *perfect*, and able to make the Man of *GOD* so, but how can they be perfect if they want a *fundamental* Article? Can a House be said to be *perfect* that wants a Part of its *Foundation*, or an important Piece of the Building very near to it? And does not this *Opinion* bear hard upon our excellent *Westminster Confession of Faith*, as if it was deficient in *Fundamentals*, for it has nothing of this in it.

IF you say it is a *circumstantial Point*, you have no Right to impose it upon others, no Reason for your irregular *Ferments* of *Party-Zeal*, *Prejudice* and *Censure*!

DOES it not agree with that *Pride*, *Resentment*, and immoderate *Self-love* which we are all by Nature deeply tainted with? To cry out with much *Heat*, against others *Mistakes* and *Faults* in lesser *Matters*, and vehemently urge their being brought to the *Stool* of *Repentance* for them, as if it was a *Fundamental* in *Christianity*, while in the mean Time we are either ignorant of our own, or very hard to be convinced of them, and unwilling to acknowledge them? Is this right, is it commendable? On the contrary, does not the Word of *GOD* recommend *Mercy*, and *Charity* towards others, and a wholesome *Severity* towards ourselves? and does not the true *Spirit* of the *Gospel*, the real *Temper* of sincere *Christianity* as far as we are possess'd of it, incline us proportionably hereto? O, it's pity that the Eye that sees others should not see itself!

MOREOVER, I must in Justice add to what has been offered, that the *Reverend Brethren*, who cast us out of *Synodical Communion*, do deny the *Charge* of "endeavouring to prejudice the People against the *Work* of *GOD's Power* and *Grace*, in the *Conversion*,

“ Conversion of Sinners, wherever there were any hopeful Appearances of it.” Mr. *John Thomson*, in their Name, observes upon this Head as follows,

‘ It is true, there are some Things in our Brethren’s Conduct, which we cannot but condemn; and have condemned and spoken against both in private and publick; and some Things also which are the frequent Effects of their Preaching on many of their Hearers, which we cannot so highly esteem of, as both they and their Admirers do.’ Among which he mentions *crying out aloud* in the midst of the Congregation, in the Time of publick Worship; and others *falling down* half dead, or working like Persons in Convulsion Fits. And in another Paragraph, he speaks in the following candid charitable Strain, to the Honour of the late *Revival of Religion*, as well as the Honour of the *Ministers* he opposed, ‘ It is true; since our Brethren have thus *intimated*, there are, as I am informed and partly know, a great many who are stirred up to have more *serious Thoughts* about their *Soul’s Concerns* than ever they had before; which is a Thing truly to be *rejoiced in*; and many, it’s said, are much reformed, in several Particulars of moral Practice, which also is just *Matter of Satisfaction*; may the Lord grant that it may be more and more so.’ And elsewhere he speaks in the following Christian-like humble Strain, ‘ As to the general Complaint which Mr. *Blair* in his Introduction makes, concerning the low State of Religion, and experimental Godliness, and the Influence which the Negligence and Remisness, of *Ministers* in the Duties of their *Office* and Station, have upon the same, I *acknowledge* that I believe there is too much Ground for it; and that it is just *Matter of Mourning and Lamentation*, to all who have the *Welfare of Zion*, and Prosperity of Souls at their Heart; yea, I am firmly persuaded, that our Barrenness and Futility under the Means of Grace, the Decay of vital Godliness in both *Ministers and People*, our too great Ease and Contentedness with a lifeless, lukewarm Orthodoxy of Profession, is one principal Evil whereby our God hath been provoked against us, to suffer us to fall into such *Divisions and Confusions*, as we are now visibly involv’d in. And O, that the Lord, by his holy Spirit, would send a *Reviving* to his own *Work* in the *Hearts and Lives* of both *Ministers and People*.’ In another Part of the same Book he speaks thus, ‘ However, *we rejoice* that the great God, who over rules all Events for his own Glory, and the Good of his Church, doth make the *Gospel* preach’d by these *Brethren*, *effectual* in many, to stir them up to a more serious Consideration of their Soul-Concerns, than ever before. I also hope that our gracious Lord will give us, who are in the Ministry, Grace to observe and obey his Voice by his Providence to us, to search and try our Ways, and turn again unto the Lord; to search out our own real Faults and short comings, in our *Christian and Ministerial Capacity*, and to study Repentance

and

‘ and Reformation, as there is great Need we should; the general Lifelessness and Lukewarmness of the present Age, no doubt hath had too much Place with us, and Influence upon us, may the Lord teach us now to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it, and without delay to obey his Call to us thereby.\* And in Page 119. he saith, ‘ Whatever be the instrumental or inferior Cause of this our confus’d divided, melancholy Condition; we may be sure the Lord is pleading a Controversy with us; we certainly have offended and provok’d him to anger against us, and so to suffer a Spirit of DIVISION and DISCORD to get footing among us.’ And having made mention of several prevailing Evils, he says, ‘ Neither is it to be doubted, but that we who are in the Ministry, are in no small Degree justly chargeable with the Guilt of these Evils, on various Accounts; by our personal Guilt of those abounding Sins; by our not bearing Testimony against them with that Zeal the Case requires, both doctrinally and in a disciplinary Way; by our not mourning over them, and lamenting with due sorrow of Heart before the Lord; by our too lax and untender walk in our own private Conversation; by our being too Carnal in our conversing with our People and one another.-----And farther I think it not unlikely that God in his infinite Wisdom, hath permitted our Brethren, who appear to be so MUCH MORE ZEALOUS than WE for carrying on a WORK of CONVERSION----which they apprehend is wholly neglected by us, as it is indeed too much, to be Instruments in the Lord’s Hands to chastise us for our neglects and short comings.

Now seeing the Reverend Mr. *John Thomson* appeared as the *Appologist* of the present SYNOD of *Philadelphia*, it may be reasonably presum’d, that he speaks the Mind of at least the generality of that Body; and therefore it is evident from the aforesaid Passages, that they were far from opposing (with Design) the late REVIVAL of RELIGION; that on the contrary they expressly ACKNOWLEDGED it, REJOYC’D in it, and PRAY’D for its INCREASE; yea and in several Instances as HUMBLY as PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDG’D their own Imperfections in Relation to the present Debate. Do not the aforesaid Passages, breath the candid and humble Spirit of sincere Christianity? Why therefore is this string of Acknowledgment so much harped upon? Pray have we done in this as much as our Brethren? Or are we forsooth absolutely Perfect and Infallible even in a Time of Temptation and Debate? For my own Part, I must declare my utter abhorrence of inflexible Stiffness in our own Justification in every Thing in so perplexing a Controversy, of so long Continuance, as well as of unrelenting Rigours and Severities against our Brethren.

O that the God of *Peace* and *Love* would in Mercy give us all such

\* See his Book upon the Government of the Church of CHRIST, Pages 29, 32, 33, 34, 48.

such a *pacifick Temper*, as the very Reverend Dr. *Bates* ascribes to excellent Mr. *Baxter* in his Funeral Sermon, in the following Words, ‘ His pacifick Spirit was a clear Character of his being a Child of God. How ardently he endeavour’d to cement the Breaches among us, which others widen and keep open, is publickly known. He said to a Friend, I can as willingly be a Martyr for LOVE as for any Article of the Creed. ’Tis strange to astonishment, saith the Doctor, that those who agree in the substantial and great Points of the reform’d Religion, and are of differing Sentiments only in Things not so clear, nor of that moment as these wherein they consent, should still be opposite Parties. Methinks the Remembrance how our Divisions lately expos’d us to our watchful Adversary, and were almost fatal to the Interest of Religion, should conciliate our Affections. Our common Danger and common Deliverance should prepare our Spirits for a sincere and firm Union. Integrity, with Charity, would remove those Things that have so long disunited us.’ What Dr. *Bates* observes, is agreeable to that excellent *Maxim*, *in necessariis unitas, in non necessariis Libertas, in omnibus charitas*. In fundamentals Unity, in circumstantial Liberty, and in all Things Charity. O its pity that this does not universally obtain among the Children of Men!

BUT are we not enjoined to turn away from those that have a Form of Godliness, but deny the Power thereof, (2 Tim. iii. 5.)

I answer, those whom the Apostle advises *Timothy* to turn away from, were both *prophane* in Practice, and *heretical* in Sentiment: for thus he describes them in the Context, *covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to Parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural Affection, (as pondoi make bates) such as will be held by no Bonds, or rather as the Word is translated, Rom. i. 31. implacable, Men so full of Malice, that they will admit of no Terms of Peace. False Accusers, (Diaboli DEVILS, for so the Word signifies) incontinent, FIERCE, and despisers of them that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of Pleasure, more than lovers of GOD: Men of corrupt Minds, roprobate concerning the Faith.*

BUT, why then are they said to have a Form of Godliness? (*Morphosin*) a Mask or Visor.

I answer, they had in it *Speech* in Pretence, but not in Practice or Power; they pretended to a right Way of worshipping GOD, and to be the only true Church; and this was all: And therefore according to the Rules of the Gospel, they were not fit Persons to associate with.

BUT was not the Prophet enjoined to take forth the Precious from the Vile?

ANSWER, Yes: That is, saith *Pool*, “ He was to separate the precious Truths of GOD, from the vile Conceits of Men; or rather to preach so, as to distinguish good and bad Men from one another.” To the same Purpose speaks Mr. *Henry*, in his *Annunciations*, “ That the Good and Bad should be distinguished in our

“ Preaching, not by their *Names*; but by their *Characters*, and “ each have his proper Portion given him.” To the like Effect speak *Piscator* and *Calvin*.

WHEN there is a Breach of *Union* in a *Society*, should not that Party that is most in the right, tarry, till the other sue for Peace?

I answer with Mr. *Durham*, No: The more they are in the Right, and the less Need they have of Peace upon their own account, the more self-denying and noble are their innocent humble Condescensions, their early and earnest *Suits* for *Peace* and *Union* for *God's* sake, and for his *Kingdom's* sake, and not for their *own*! The *Religion* of *JESUS*, is not a business of *Pride*, of *State*, or *Stoutness*, (that hangs on haughty *Ceremony*) but of *Humility* and *Self-denial*; the more of these Graces we have, and exercise, the more we imitate the blessed *IMANUEL*, and the more we partake of, and express the *Spirit* of his *Religion*, and conform to its important and truly noble *Design*: Surely as *Solomon* observes, *It is a Glory to pass over a Transgression, but for Men to search their own Glory, it not Glory. He that hath no Rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down, and without Walls, but he that is slow to Anger is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.*

If it be said, that there is no Necessity of this *Peace* and *Union*, we are well enough as we are.

I answer, that there is always a *Necessity* of *Obedience* to *God's* commanding *Authority*, nor are we ever well, but while we endeavour to comply therewith. Now is it not the Command of *God*, that we should *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem, and keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*? If we should keep *Unity* when we have it, should not we labour to recover it when it is lost?

BUT perhaps some may object, to this Purpose, that to join with a Company of dead Men, is the ready way to make us deader than we are.

ANSWER, It is cruel and censorious Judging, to condemn the States of those we know not; and to condemn positively and openly the spiritual *States* of such as are found in *fundamental Doctrines*, and *regular in Life*. The Way to obtain quickning Grace, is the Path of *Duty*, and not the scandalous Practice of that God-provoking and Church-rendring *Iniquity RASH-JUDGING*, this may quicken indeed, but not to any Thing that is good; but to *Back-biting, Slandering, Wrath, Malignity*, and all Manner of *Mischief*! O! that a gracious *God* would open the Eyes of the Children of Men, to see the inexpressible *Benefits* and *Horrors* of this detestable *IMPIETY*, that is pregnant with innumerable *Evils*!

AGAIN, it may be objected, that we are enjoined in divers Places of Scripture, to beware of *Wolves* in *Sheep's* cloathing, of *Dogs*, of *Foxes*, &c.

I answer, these *Places*, and others of like tendency, if they are strictly examined, together with the Context, where they are they

they will be found to respect in my OPINION, primarily, principally and directly *erroneous* and *heretical Teachers*, such may be known, and such should be with Care avoided; but to *separate* from such as are found in essential and necessary Articles, of Faith, regular in Life, and edifying in their Ministry, meerly or only because they differ from us in some circumstantial Points which they do not impose, or are judg'd by us to be unregenerate, is uncharitable, unscriptural, and of dangerous Tendency! As this Practice wants a divine *Warrant*, so it puts the Peace and Union of the visible Church of CHRIST, upon a very uncertain and precarious *Bottom*, and opens a *Door* to innumerable mischeivous and scandalous *Rents* and *Divisions*! And if it be sinful to make a Breach on such a Foundation, (which has been ever my Opinion, tho' now I confess, thro' God's Mercy, I have a more distinct and enlarged View of the Case than formerly,) it must needs be so to keep up the *Breach*, to neglect or refuse reasonable *Overtures* of *Peace*, upon such a Foundation.

IF it be farther said, that the Church is now in a cold *declining State*, and that when there was more *Liveliness*, and more Good done, no Proposals of *Peace* or *Union* were made, nor was there any Prospect of it.

I answer, the Church is now in its ordinary *State*, in which Men being *calm*, can best examine and judge concerning the *Doctrines* of *Religion*, altho' not so many are alarmed out of their *Security*, as some Time since, yet thro' divine *Goodness*, some are awakened and to Appearance *converted*; and the *Body* of CHRIST is *edify'd*, for which there is great Cause of Thankfulness. We are not wont to think it a bad *Year*, in temporal Respects, because we have not such an extraordinary *Harvest*, as in the seven plenteous *Years* in *Egypt*, when the *Earth* brought forth by *Handfuls*, or as the *Jews* had every sixth Year in *Canaan*, when thro' the surprising Blessing of GOD, the *Earth* brought forth Fruit sufficient for three Years.

SOME Years past, the Church in this *American Wilderness*, was in an extraordinary Situation, by Reason of a very uncommon *Effusion* of divine *Influence*, in the *Conviction*, and *Conversion* of *Sinners*, (to all Appearance) in much greater Numbers than what is usual, but the *Ignorance* of some, and corrupt *Passions* of others, mixing therewith, cast a *Cloud* over the blessed *Work* of GOD, and were at least the Occasion of *Offence* and *Stumbling* to some (which if they had more PATIENTLY ENDURED, for a Time, would probably have prevented unhappy Consequences,) These Things together with some difference of *Sentiment* about *lesser Matters* and warm *Disputes pro* and *con* respecting them, raised the *Ferment* so high, that it was to no *Purpose*, to make Proposals of *Peace*, speedily after the *Rupture*, till the *Minds* of the contending *Parties*, became more *calm*, and took more Time to reflect upon, and examine Matters with more Impartiality and Exactness.

FARTHER, there was as hopeful Appearances, of ministerial

Success before the Breach, as after, and this is certain, that Breaches of Communion, being carnal, have no Tendency to Success or any Good.

If the Objection could be *prov'd*, which I believe cannot, yet it would conclude nothing: The variable *Frames* of Men's *Minds*, and *Successes* of their *Labours*, which a Sovereign God dispenses with infinite *variety*, can be no *Rule* of *Action* to us, to the *Law* and to the *Testimony*.---*Duty* is ours, but *Events* are God's.

SUCCESS in a great degree, will not prove those that have it to be right in all their *Sentiments*, and *Conduct* respecting *lesser Things*. No! a gracious God often overlooks, as it were *Mistakes* in *Opinion* in such *Matters*, and many *Imperfections* in his poor *Servants*, who are in the Main *upright* before him, and blesses their *Labours* notwithstanding; to deny this is to ascribe *Success* to one *Set* or *Party* only, which is exceeding *uncharitable*: This *enthusiastical Argument* which I am now opposing, shews a want of better, and therefore manifests the *Badness* of the *Cause* for which it is produc'd.

If there is not so much *Appearance* of *Zeal* among *Professors* at present, as formerly, yet I trust it has this valuable superior advantage, *viz.* that it is more *knowing*, at least in some, and better *temper'd* with *Humility*, *Meekness* and *Love*. Is not a little grain of solid *Gold* preferable to a great lump of *Brass*, that has some mixture of *Gold* in it, notwithstanding its superior *bulk* and *showy Appearance*! Much *Ignorance* and *wild-fire*, much *unmerciful rashness* and *severity* sometimes attend the *Zeal* of *young Converts*, who are *Ignorant* and of a *passionate Temper*, which it is a favour to be delivered from, thro' farther acquaintance with ourselves, by a *variety* of *Tryals*, outward and inward. Nor is it any *Argument* of *coldness* or *decays* in *Religion*, to have that fiery, furious *ferceness* against others, softened and qualified with *Charity*, *Meekness* and *Mercy*; but of the *Contrary*, namely, of *real* advances in true *Holiness*, whatever its misguided *votaries* pretend to the *Contrary* notwithstanding.

BUT if we are in any *Measure* grown *cold*, the best way to obtain quickning, is to *obey* the blessed God in *praying* and *striving*, as much as in us lies, for the *Peace* of *Jerusalem*. The *Path* of *Peace* and *Love*, so far as is consistent with essential and necessary *Truths*, is certainly the *Way* which God himself has chalk'd out, to obtain that quickning which is of the right *Kind*.

BUT does not our joining with those that hold *circumstantial Errors*, imply our *Approbation* of them?

I *Answer*, No, by no means! No more than our joining with imperfect *People*, infers our approving all their *Imperfections*. For if the *Case* was so, it would be altogether *sinful* to unite into a *Church State*, because all are imperfect, *there is no Man that liveth and sinneth not*, but that God who cannot look upon *Sin* but with *abhorrence* has appointed a *Union* in *Churches* and therefore the other is *false*.

BESIDES the Almighty commands us to receive the Weak, as I have before observed, or such as Err only in Circumstantials. Now if our joining with them in Church fellowship, necessarily included, our Approbation of their Errors, then it would follow, that the GOD of Truth commanded us to approve of Error, which is impossible and blasphemous. No our joining with them only shews, our mutual Agreement in *essential* and *necessary Articles*, and our Charity for them, as Children of the Kingdom, or rightful Members of the *visible Church*.

IT may be again objected, that Paul being beaten publicly by the Magistrates, uncondemn'd declined to go out of the Prison privately, till they came and fetched him, (*Act. xvi. 37.*)

I Answer, That in Order to understand this Scripture aright, it should be observed, that by the *Porcian* and *Sempronian* Laws, it was utterly unlawful to beat a Roman Citizen unless the Sentence of Death had been pronounced upon him; and still more so when the beating was publick, and the Cause unheard; so *Cicero*, *Hesiod*, *Appuleius*, and *Tertulian* Witness, with many others.

ACCORDING to the Constitution of said Laws, when a Roman Citizen was wronged, the Majesty of the Roman People was reckon'd to be wronged or les'd, says *Grotius*.

Now the Pagan Magistrates of *Philippi*, a Roman Colony, being stirred up by the Clamours of the People, broke the afore-said Laws in ordering Paul and *Silas* to be beaten publickly and imprison'd, who were not condemn'd to Death, being ignorant they were Roman Citizens: The Apostle knowing that when the Magistrates came to understand this, they would be terrified with the Apprehension of incurring the Displeasure of the Roman Empire for so manifest a Violation of their Laws, (*Act. xxii. 29*) and therefore ready to come into some Condescensions to prevent it; prudently declined going out of Prison directly, in a private manner as they were desired, and insisted on the Magistrates coming themselves and bringing them out, alledging that they were Romans. This the Apostle probably did to prevent future Severities of the like Kind; and partly to vindicate their Characters from the Imputation of Crimes that demerited such scandalous corporal Punishment.

GROTIUS observes justly, that Paul knew how to use the Roman Laws for the Defence of Innocence and a good Cause.

BUT can any Body think, that the Apostle wou'd have stay'd some Years in Prison, when he had Liberty to go out in Case the Magistrates had delayed their coming so long. No! Surely.

IN a Word, we are to learn from this Instance, the necessity of human Prudence, especially in Affairs of a civil Nature, and therefore it is foreign to the Point in Debate: The cases are not parallel, which appears thus, in the one, the Persons Offending were Pagan Magistrates, the Offence was upon one side only, the Offence was of a civil Nature, depriving the Apostle of the right of a Roman Citizen: The Offence was committed against the civil

civil Laws of the Land, as well as against the Law of Nature directly. But in the other Case, the Persons offending are *Brethren*, of the sacred Character, professing the same fundamental Principles of the Christian Religion; the *Offences* are not against the civil Laws of the Land, nor against the Law of Nature, (directly) but have been occasioned by difference in Opinion about Circumstantials in Religion; the Offences have been mutual in a greater or lesser degree, in Matter or Manner of management; the Offences are not properly of a civil Nature.

Now seeing the *Cases* are not *parallel*, no just inference can be drawn from the one to the other, of desisting Endeavours after Peace and Union, until the Party that is most in the fault, come first into some Condescensions in order to it; and indeed as it is in itself unjust to draw the same Conclusion from different Premises, so it likewise makes the Apostle contradict himself, for in the 14th Chap. of his Epistle to the *Romans*, he exhorts Parties contending about Circumstantials, to come into a Peace and Union without such Preliminaries; nor is it reasonable that any one should neglect his Duty because another neglects his; for if so, he may possibly neglect it during Life, and thus make void the Law and yet be guiltless. But supposing the Cases were parallel, the aforesaid Instance would not conclude, for there has been a delay already of several Years, and we do not know that the Apostle delay'd so much as one Day

BUT don't mistake me, I am for *Peace* and *Union*, tho' I insist upon Acknowledgment.

I *Answer*, It may be so in *Words* and *Intention*, but not in *Deed*. Is it not very inconsistent in a Case of Debate of a long Continuance, wherein are mutual complaints of Misconduct, flowing from a difference of Sentiment in lesser Things, for one of the Parties to urge Acknowledgment, and yet pretend *Peace*, seeing it directly tends to renew the War? For the Right of *Self-Vindication* is equal upon both Sides; and if one has a right to require Acknowledgment, so has the other, and doubtless will in such a Case; for self-love is common to all, and a due Degree of it is but reasonable. This severe Method therefore of course brings upon the Carpet all the dormant Controversies that have been between the contending Parties, and loudly summons them to War and Arms, both offensive and defensive: This excites them respectively to defend their own Conduct, and to charge and re-criminate upon the others; and hence the Churches *Wounds* are like to *bleed* afresh, and the *Breach* instead of being healed will be widen'd: For how can Men, with a good Conscience, acknowledge that to be wrong which they don't see to be wrong? And where has God obliged us upon pain of Exclusion from Church fellowship, to be of one Opinion in every little Thing? And thus in this Way, the Churches *Peace* and *Union* are like to be perpetually prevented. Now can we suppose reasonably that the All-wise God in order to promote *Peace* and *Union* (in a Case  
of

of this Nature) enjoins us to take a Method that is but an alarm to War, and tends to increase the *Debate*. Will not some be tempted to say, that while *Acknowledgment* is insisted on, by any of the Parties in Controversy, as a *Term of Communion*, and in the mean Time they do not bewail the want of *Peace and Union*, nor Use any Method to remove Uneasinesses, (but on the Contrary perhaps such as tend to inflame the Debate) I say will not some be tempted to think, that all their *talk of Peace* is a meer *sham and pretence*, Words and no more, empty Words and Flourishes, without a meaning, unless it be to screne themselves, but in vain, from the dint of numerous Passages of holy Scripture, which enjoin *Peace and Union* among those that profess the same Foundation Principles of Religion, and forbid the contrary, which it would be a shame explicitly and formally to oppose; this would look like an abandoning of the *Bible*, and commencing open *War* against the *Christian Religion*. Here it may be queried, whether it would not be more candid and consistent, to say in plain Words, that unless others come to be of our Minds in all Circumstantials, we will have nothing to do with *Peace*; but on the Contrary, are determined for *War, Debate Schisms and Confusions* during Life! For by the same Rule that one *circumstantial* of human Invention is made a *Term of Communion*, a Thousand may be made; and then what will become of the Churches *Peace and Union*?

BUT do not we by coming into a *Union* without *Acknowledgment*, give up the Work of GOD?

I *Answer*, No. We do and may retain our Opinion concerning it till Death, only we do not make it a *Term of Communion* to others, for which we have no Authority in the Scriptures. Did the inspir'd Apostle *Paul* advise the *Gentile* Christians to give up the Truths respecting *Liberty*, for which they contended, when he exhorted them to receive the *Jews to Communion*, that deny'd them? If yea, then the *Bible* is wrong! For the aforesaid *Advice* is of the same Original with the rest of the Scriptures. If nay, the Objection vanishes! If every Thing we believe must be made a *Term of Communion*, or it is given up, there can be no Church on Earth, because there can scarce be found any that are agreed in every Thing.

IF it be said, that opposing the late *revival of Religion*, is worse than open *Immorality*.

I *Answer*, It is a great *mistake*, which appears thus, all must acknowledge that *Sins* against *light*, are worse than those that flow from *Ignorance* or *Mistake*; because there is a greater *contempt* of God's *Authority* in them, than in the other. *If I had not come and told them, they would not have had Sin, but now their Sin remains; now they have no Cloak for their Sins.* This general self evident *Maxim* easily applies itself thus, *gross Iniquities* against the *Moral Law*, are against the *light of Conscience*, which is common to all, and hard, if possible, to be quite extinguish'd,  
and

and therefore they are heinous, and admit of no *Apology*. But *Opposition* to the late *revival of Religion*, might, and we have Reason in Charity to believe, it flow'd from *Mistake*, about a Matter, comparatively, doubtful, not discoverable by the meer *Light of Nature*, namely, the inward *Experiences* of some of a work of *Conversion*; which the best of Men may, and generally are at least in some Instances, mistaken about, and more especially when they are under any *Temptation* by hard *Usage*, and other Incidents. It is true, if they did it against clear Light and Conviction to the Contrary, it would be a dreadful *Evil*; but none can say this in the present Case, except they take upon them the peculiar *Province* of GOD, to judge the secret *Thoughts* of the *Heart*, and break the Law of *Charity*, both which heinous Evils, we should with equal Care avoid.

AND if they did it from *Mistake*, it's vastly less faulty than *immoral Conduct*. Now to require an *acknowledgment* of them upon this account includes one or other of these two Things, viz. either 1st. Our imposing our Opinion upon them, or obliging them to believe as we believe, upon pain of exclusion, in a Matter comparatively doubtful, without a divine Warrant, yea contrary to a divine *Precept*, which enjoins to receive the *Weak*. Or else 2d. It includes our obliging them to act contrary to their *Consciences*, viz. in acknowledging that to be wrong, which they think to be Right. Now seeing, as the Apostle informs us, *he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of Faith*, i. e. if one does what he doubts is unlawful to be done, he commits a damnable Sin, or a Sin that deserves Damnation; and therefore to urge Acknowledgment in this Situation of Things, is in effect to desire a Man to offend God and damn his Soul; or to do that which wounds and ensnares the Soul, and merits everlasting Ruin! I believe indeed that those that urge *Acknowledgments*, have no such *Design*, have no such *view* of the *Case*, but this is the real Language of the *Principle*, the true State of the Matter. Now judge calmly and impartially in your own Minds, if both the aforesaid Particulars be not exceeding unreasonable and sinful?

NOR can I see any possible *Medium* between the aforesaid dangerous *extreams*, but mutual *forbearance*: For if there is any Right to urge Circumstantials, and acting agreeable to them, as *Terms of Communion*; the Right is equal upon both Sides of the Question, and then there must be contrary *Acknowledgments*, respecting the same Thing: Which every *Eye* may see are absurd and ridiculous!

THE Apostle has directed us to the aforesaid *Medium* in a Case of the same Nature, (*Rom. xiv. 22.*) *Hast thou faith have it to thy self before GOD, happy is he that Condemneth not himself, in that Thing, which he alloweth.*

UPON which Mr. *Pool* in his *Annotations* speaks as follows, "He does not speak of Faith in the fundamentals of Religion," "this

“ this must be profess’d, and acknowledg’d, let who will be of-  
 “ fended, but of Faith in indifferent Things, (which are the  
 “ subject Matter he is treating of) our believing or persuasion  
 “ therein, is not to be unseasonably utter’d, or declar’d, so as  
 “ to occasion Scandal or Contention,; an excellent Aphorism  
 “ respecting all, especially the Stronger and more knowing  
 “ Christian; the Sense is, he is a happy Man that when he know-  
 “ eth a Thing to be lawful, he doth so manage the Practice of it,  
 “ that he hath no Reason to accuse or condemn himself,  
 “ or else that inwardly doth not condemn himself for  
 “ doing that against his Conscience, which he openly alloweth  
 “ or practiseth : Such a one is happy in this respect, because he  
 “ is free from those Terrors that torment those who act against  
 “ their Consciences.” And ver. 20 of the same Chapter, *for*  
*Meat destroy not the work of God; all Things indeed are pure, but*  
*it is evil for that Man who eateth with Offence, i. e.* by sharp  
 Contentions about circumstantial Things. Do not *destroy the work*  
*of God.* What is that ?

*Answer,* Peace and Union, which God worketh among believers,  
 says *Pool* in his *Annot.* And indeed of this the Apostle speaks in the  
 Verse immediately preceeding. *Love,* say *Toletus, Beza, Meno-*  
*chius,* and this is the same for Substance with the former ; for *Love*  
 is the Source of *Peace* and *Union,* or beginning *Pity* in your  
 weak Brother, says *Estius.* Or your Neighbour, whom God has  
 made religious, so *Menochius.* All these Glosses are very con-  
 sistent; the Sum of the whole is, do not disturb the publick  
*Peace,* or break the *Union of Societies,* or weaken brotherly *Love,*  
 or injure your Brothers Soul, by angry *Debates* about *Circum-*  
*stantials;* all which unhappy Effects, such needless Contentions do  
 frequently produce. Here is advice worthy of an Apostle, Coun-  
 sel, or rather a positive *Command,* of great weight and moment,  
 well would it be for the Churches if it was better understood and  
 observed by the bulk of Mankind.

I may add, that it should be seriously examined, and consider’d,  
 whether none were *accessary* to the *Opposition* which others made  
 to the late *Revival of Religion,* by treating them hardly,  
 and condemning their *States,* upon an insufficient Foundation,  
 and so guilty in some *Degree* of what they themselves so warmly  
*oppose;* and whether they are as ready and zealous to make ac-  
 knowledgments of this themselves as to require it of others ?

In the mean Time, it should be also seriously enquired, whe-  
 ther Persons not being convinced by sufficient Evidence, was not  
 unreasonable, and their expressing their private *Sentiments* in such a  
 Manner as had a tendency to offend their *Brethren, sinful,* tho’  
 I will not dare to encroach upon my *Brothers Liberty,* or *judge*  
*his Conscience;* Yet this I may say, that *Liberty* may be so us’d  
 as to give *Cause* of Offence, and occasion stumbling and prejudice.

If any upon either Side of the Question should object against

<sup>a</sup> *re-union*, that there is a Corruption in *Principle*, or Evil in *Practice*, in any one of either of the *Bodies*.

I *Answer*, That I hope there is no such *Cause* of *Complaint*, upon either Side, as some perhaps have *suppos'd*. *Party-Zeal* is apt to create *Prejudice*, as well as heighten Matters, and set them in too strong a *Light*, partly thro' its own *Byas*s, and partly thro' *Misinformation*, which very much abounds in Times of *Contention*. But if the Case was really so, I think with judicious, pious and peaceable Mr. *Durbam*, that it is an Argument for, and not against a *Union*; because in a State of *Union* these Things may be much better remedied, than in a divided State.

NOR should *Reports*, of an ungenerous *Use*, made by some, of the *Conference* for *Accommodation*, obstruct or discourage our *honest* and *earnest* *Endeavours* for *Peace* and *Union*, upon *Scriptural* *Terms*. I hope Things are not quite so as they are represented. When People are divided and prejudiced against each other, they are apt, thro' the force of their *Passions*, to misapprehend one anothers meaning, which of Consequence they mis-relate; besides after long *Debates*, Persons are under strong *Temptations* in order to make themselves appear *Consistent*, or support what they call their *Credit*, to speak of Things that should be *buried* in silence, in an *undue* *Manner*, which has a very bad tendency.

IT is certainly a very lamentable Evil, to prefer what we are apt to reckon our *Credit*, to the *Peace* of the *Church* of *GOD*. On the Contrary, it is our real *Credit*, in the Account of an All-wise *GOD*, and of all such as are judicious and free from the *Byas*s of *Prejudice*, to deny ourselves, and condescend, as far as we can with *Inocence*, for *Peace*. *Solomon* truly observes, *that it is an Honour to cease from Strife*,

BUT the very Appearance of *Prejudice* in some, shews the Necessity of a *Union* to remove it. Nor can this, after a wide *Breach* and long *Debate*, be ordinarily obtained without *Difficulty* and *Uneasiness*; but it is better to bear a medicinal *Pain* in order to a *Cure*, than to let the *Distemper* grow *desperate*, thro' a total neglect of proper Means. The advantages of a *Union* to the Kingdom of *CHRIST*, obtain'd upon an equitable *Foundation*, would much preponderate such temporary *Disquietudes*.

IF any should say, that it is wrong and dangerous to *re-unite* to a set of *disorderly* *Men*.

I *Answer*, It is true; it is unreasonable to unite to such as oppose the *Essentials* of that *Order* and *Government* which *CHRIST* has appointed in his Word.

BUT perhaps the true State of this Case has, thro' the heat of *Debate*, either not been thoroughly understood by some, or not sufficiently attended to.

HERE if it be enquired, what *Order* and *Government* was oppos'd in the late Time of *Contention* among us.

WAS it the *Necessity* of *Order* and *Government* in the Church of *CHRIST* in general? No.

WAS it the Nature of that Government which the Scripture expresses? No.

WAS it that Plan of Government which is expressed in our Directory, agreeable to the Scriptures? No.

WAS it what was reckon'd fundamental in our Constitution, by the Majority? No.

WHAT then was the Core of the Controversy? Why some Circumstantials in Government; or in other Words, some Rules or Acts of Discipline, form'd by the Majority, and reckon'd prudent and expedient by them; but on the Contrary, prejudicial and sinful by the Minor Party.

Now it may be considered, whether it be not at least as unreasonable to make Circumstantials in Discipline, Terms of Communion, as Circumstantials in Doctrine? And if so, whether what has been before said against such Things, as Terms of Communion, does not conclude here with equal Evidence?

No doubt a smaller Number ought freely to submit to the Conclusions of the Majority, in Matters relating to Government, which they (the Majority) judge essential to the well-being of the Church: For without this, there can be no Government at all: Without this the Minor Party would have Power to impose upon the Major, in Things which they reckon of the last Consequence to the good of the Society; which is absurd.

It is true, the Major Party may be mistaken as well as the Minor, and consequently abuse their Power, for which there is no help in the present imperfect State of Things, but humble Remonstrating by Reason and Argument: Yet consider'd as a Society, the Majority have a right to judge for themselves, (upon the Plan of private Judgment) what they reckon essential to their Constitution, or to the well-being of the Church under their Care, and consequently to exclude from their Society such as do not comply therewith.

MOREOVER, even in Matters that are reckon'd Circumstantial by the Majority, the Minor Party ought, for Peace sake, to comply, if they be not Conscience bound in the Matter; but if so they cannot; and whether Forbearance should not be exercis'd towards them, in this, as well as other parallel Cases, I leave to others to determine.

It will not do for any to say, that we are surely Right, we are certainly Right.

I answer, The great Degree of our Confidence will not prove us to be so; for then two Contraries would be Right; seeing that Confidence is generally equal in Degree upon both Sides of the Question, and never stronger than in doubtful Matters.

EITHER there is an absolute Promise, that all good Men shall be set right in every small circumstantial Matter in this Life, or there is not. If there is, then one of these two Things will follow necessarily, viz. Either that the Promise is not fulfill'd, which charges unfaithfulness upon God, or that all true Christians

are reduc'd to one Party, and to a small Number of that Party, which is as *uncharitable* as the other is *blasphemous*: For there are perhaps scarcely Ten of a Thousand of religious People, even of the same Denomination, that exactly agree in every minute Point of *Religion*. Well if there be no absolute *Promise* in Relation to *Circumstantials*; then it unavoidably follows, that we have no firm *Foundation* for such a great degree of *Confidence*; and therefore seeing it is either without *Foundation* altogether, or disproportioned in Measure to its *Foundation*, it is as foolish as it is pernicious.

BUT the Matter of *Difference* is of great *Moment*.

I answer, It is easy and natural to think so in Matters that we are engaged in, because in such Cases, our *Honour* and *Humour* are apt to be affected; which thro' our dreadful *Degeneracy*, our *Ignorance* and *Corruption*, we are apt to prefer at least for a *Time*, to the most important *Things*, viz. the *Peace* and *Union* of *Christ's* visible *Kingdom* among Men.

OUR *Affections*, are apt to give a secret wrong *Byass* to our *Minds*, which we ourselves discern not so that while we are critically and warmly spying and Censuring others suppos'd or real *Mistakes* and *Blunders*, we over look our own: Our *Affections* incline us to look upon both what we *like* and *dislike*, in a *magnifying Glass*, which soon turns, to our heated *Imaginations*, *Musketoës* into *Mountains*, and so unhappily, but equally, misleads us in our Judgment, both as to the *Objects* of our *desire* and *aversion*.

LET our warmest *Zeal* and our best *Actions*, be but quite strip'd of all sinful selfish *Respects*, and they will be found notwithstanding of all their gay *Appearances*, to be very *lean* and *Jejune*; we sometimes contend for our *Honours* and *Humours*, more than for *God*, (tho we know it not) and that under a *Cloak* of *Zeal* for him; this is a doleful dreadful *Truth*, which may justly humble the *Pride* of *Man*, and reasonably excite us to be as *suspicious* of *ourselves*, as *cautious* and *moderate* in our *Censures* of others: *The Heart of Man is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it?*

No doubt those great *Bodies* of religious *People*, that so fiercely contended in the *primitive Times*, about *Easter-Day*; look'd upon it to be a *Point* of the last *Moment*, for they were so violent and *furios* upon the *Matter*, that they were deaf to *Scripture* and *Argument*, they would not regard all the sober *Reasonings* of pious peaceful *Irenius* and others for *Accommodation*, but with obstinate and unrelenting *Fury*, proceeded to the dreadful *Sentence* of *Excommunication* against each other.

IN like Manner the *Jewish* and *Gentile Christians* were all by the *Ears*, about *Days* and *Meats*, they imagined their different *Opinions* about these doubtful *Points* in *Dispute*, to be as clear and evident as *mathematical Demonstration*, and of such vast *Importance* and *Moment*, as to give Ground to determine the *States* of *Men's*

*Souls*

*Souls to be bad, on both Sides the Question, and to deserve a total Exclusion of their Persons from Communion; and in Consequence hereof, they indulged the keenest Resentment, and were all in Fire and Flames, full of mutual Prejudice, severe Censure and Rash-judging against, and of one another; and no doubt imagined they were doing great Service to Religion thereby; but the Apostle Paul was of a very different Opinion!*

BUT perhaps some may object in this Manner; say what you will upon this Head, I won't believe you.

ANSWER, I do not desire you to believe me, or take for granted what I say, without Enquiry; nay, on the contrary, I desire you not to believe me, or any other Man in that Sense, *Call no Man Master upon Earth*: I only desire your unprejudiced serious Attention, to what appears to me upon sober Enquiry to be *scriptural and rational*, and your Assent to it, if upon an impartial Tryal, it appears so to you; and if you will not, it will be your own greatest Loss; I cannot pretend to debate the Matter with Men's *Prepossessions and Prejudices*, for I know *Scripture and Reason* will stand no *Chance* in such a *Contest*; being both condemned before they are heard, so far as they relate to the Matter in dispute!

WE think it a bad Sign of you, to speak in the Manner you do!

ANSWER: As to your Censures upon me, tho' I hope you mean well in them, yet I must tell you, that they do not affect me; because I know you, and all other Men are incompetent *Judges of such secret Matters*: I may assure you, *that it is a little Thing to me, to be judged by you, or by Man's Judgement.*

BUT were my Case so, as you apprehend, it would not conclude the Point it is brought for: *Doctrinal Sentiments* may be *right*, even where the *State and Frame* are bad; and *Truth* should be received with *readiness, respect and candour*, for *GOD's sake*, as well as its *own*, whatever he be that delivers it. *Solomon* tells us, *that it is not good to have Respect of Persons in Judgment.* And the *Apostle James*, in like Manner assures us, *that if we have respect of Persons we sin, and are convinced of the Law as Transgressors.*

You know you are liable to Mistakes as well as I am. Well, seeing the Case is so, we should retain a constant Sense of our *Weakness and fallability*, upon our *Minds*; and thence be enduc'd to *re-examine Matters* with a Disposition to be confirm'd in what is right, and convinc'd of what is wrong; for without this, if we are so unhappy as to be in *Mistakes*, we are like to hold them to our own, and other's *Prejudice*, without any Probability of a *Retrieve*.

AND now my Reverend *Fathers and Brethren*, should we not be excited to comply with the *Command of GOD* in *praying and striving for the Peace of Jerusalem.*

THE Religion of the peaceful JESUS tempers the Minds of all that sincerely embrace it, to *Benignity, Love, and Peace*, and to all the kind and condescending Offices of mutual *Charity and Endearment*; notwithstanding of the great Variety of their civil Characters, natural Completions, and acquired Endowments; as well as different Sentiments in religious Matters of a circumstantial Nature.

THIS represents all that truly embrace it, as *Servants* of the same Lord, as *Children* of the same Father, and therefore *Brethren*; as *Members* of the same Body mystical, as *Objects* of the same divine Affection, as *Partakers* of the same important Privileges, as *Soldiers* enlisted in the same spiritual Warfare, as *Professors* of the same essential and necessary Truths, and *Expectants* of the same immortal Blessedness, and thence as united by the strongest Bands and dearest Relations.

THIS opens the narrowest Minds, by beholding the transcendent Glories of the Deity, and tends when rightly understood, to free us from the Shackles of fordid Bigottry, and Party-Zeal. When we see the serene Majesty, and unspotted Purity of GOD, and compare therewith our moral Deformity, native Inconscience and Dependence, we are justly incited to humble and adoring Reverence, which is the Source of Peace.

THIS sweetens the unsocial sourness, and softens the pharisaical Fierceness and Rigour of our Spirits, by communicating to us, a Sense of the divine Love, and by setting the Example thereof before us.

THIS truly informs us, that *he who has no Rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down, and without Walls, defenceless* in the midst of Danger, and so liable to be seduc'd and taken, as an easy Prey, by every Temptation to Envy and Revenge; which four Men's Tempers, marr the Comfort of their Lives, and are as hurtful to the Health and firmness of our Bodies, as to the Purity and Safety of our Souls!

BUT that on the contrary, he who has a just government over his Affections, is like a City whose Walls are so well finished, and fortified, that they despise the rudest Assaults of the most formidable Foe. He is like a Rock immoveable amidst all the Fury and Violence, which the angry Surges discharge upon it, with unwearyed Industry, and unrelenting Resentment.

WHEN our Passions are reduced to their original Order, under the Government of right Reason, they render all the Enjoyments of Life agreeable and especially the Duties of Religion; they flow silently and smoothly on, in amiable Harmony, and instead of obstructing, they serve as a strong Tide to assist and accelerate our pious Progress, and waft us to the Embraces of the Deity, as our last End, our chief Excellency, our supream Good, and Center of Rest.

WE are obliged to be peaceful, charitable, and merciful, my Brethren, not only by the positive Command of GOD, but by the original

original Constitution of our *Nature*, which is so form'd as to need *Sympathy* and *Succour* from others. What kindness we desire and expect should be shewn to us, in our *Distresses*, let Equity and Humanity incline us to render to others in our turn!

It has pleas'd the All-wise good GOD, to implant a *Propensity* in our *Natures* to compassionate the *Calamities* of others, which is no small Argument that we should exercise it, upon proper *Occasions*; our *Bowels* yern towards the Miserable, with a natural *Sympathy*, and we cannot prevent, on our viewing their *Maladies*, *Sentiments* of *Pity*, without doing *Violence* to ourselves! Hence *Solomon* justly observes, *that the merciful Man doth Good to his Soul, but he that is cruel troubleth his own Flesh.*

AND as there is, notwithstanding our *Apostacy*, some remaining *Tendencies* in our *Nature* to *Peace* and *Pity*, so a *peaceful Temper of Mind* is a Part of the gracious *Change*, which the blessed Spirit effects in those that are sincerely Good: A *Star* and not the least illustrious in that amiable *Train*, or *Constellation* of *Graces* which takes Possession of pious *Bosoms*, when they are renewed after the divine *Image*; for this Reason the KINGDOM of GOD is said to be *PEACE*, and the FRUIT of the SPIRIT *PEACE*, *Love*, *Joy*, *Long-Suffering*, *Gentleness*, *Goodness*, *Faith*: Surely, as the Apostle observes, *the Fruit of Righteousness is sown in Peace, of them that love Peace.*

NOR do the *Laws* of *Society*, both civil and religious, less oblige to *peaceful Sentiments*, *Dispositions* and *Practice*; we need the Assistance of *Society* for *Instruction*, *Comfort* and *Defence*, and hence the Almighty has form'd a natural *Inclination* in us, thereto: Now the aforesaid valuable Ends of *Society*, are entirely frustrated, and consequently the *Foundations* thereof overthrown, by a quarrelsome *hostile Temper* and *Behaviour*, for hereby we are prejudiced against the *Councils* and *Reproofs* of our *Brethren*, who instead of a *Comfort* become a *Terror* to us, in such an unhappy Situation; and we are in constant Fear of falling a *Prey* to their *Resentments*: This makes a social State much more uncomfortable and dangerous than an independant one!

BUT on the contrary, when *Peace*, *Harmony*, and mutual Confidence subsist in religious *Societies*, they exceedingly promote not only our *Comfort*, but our *Benefit*, many Ways; and hence it is said, *that the Churches had Peace, throughout all Judea, and were EDIFIED; walking in the Fear of the Lord, and in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost.*

THIS God-like temper of *Mind*, and beautiful *Behaviour*, gives a Man the true *Possession* of *himself*, hereby our *Bosoms* become like the *Pacifick Ocean*, smooth and serene, while such as ignobly indulge a criminal *Resentment*, are like the raging *Sea*, vex'd with the *Winds*, which constantly casts forth *Mire* and *Dirt*; this calms the painful *Tumults* of *Passion*, into *Gentleness* and *Benignity*, and sweetens their uneasy *Rigours* and *Severities* by *Love*! The more holy and heavenly any one is, the more *peaceful* and composed he

is ; like the higher Heavens, which as *Seneca* observes, are not discomposed by *Clouds* and *Tempests*, but possess an invariable Brightness, a stable Serene!

BLESSED says our great Master, the *Prince of Peace*, are the *Peace-makers*, for they shall be called the *Children of God*. Such as are desirous of the *Peace of Jerusalem*, disposed to it, and laborious to promote it in themselves and others, by the earnest Use of all proper Means, either to prevent or heal her *Breaches*, which, alas for it, in many Places are wide as the *Sea*, tho' they often meet with severe *Censures* from Men on both Sides the Question in *Debate*, yet they will get the *Blessing of God*, and Evidence themselves to be his genuine Children, who is essentially, exemplarily, declaratively and efficiently LOVE and PEACE.

WHEN *Peace* prevails, it gives us great advantage to perform the Office of a *Friend* by *Instruction*, *Reproof* and *Council*, with the probability of *Success*. *Love* and *Gentleness* disarm the most obstinate *Prejudice*, and command Attention to what is spoken ; they easily open the obstructed avenues of the *Mind*, and efficaciously unlock the *Springs of Affection* : By this, our simple but friendly *Addresses* softly insinuate themselves into the *Heart*, and consequently become more powerful and prevalent, than all the force of *Argument* and *Charms of Rethorick* from the Mouth of an Opponent. We are therefore commanded, to let our *Moderation* be known to all Men ; to be long suffering towards all, and as we have Opportunity to do good unto all ; not rendering Evil for Evil, not being Contentious, but Gentle, shewing all Meekness to all Men. The Ministers of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all Men, Patient, in Meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves.

THE Cloud of Witnesses with which we are encompassed, should incite us to run with *Patience* the Race that it set before us, looking to *JESUS* the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who endured the *Cross*, despising the shame, who endured the *Contradiction of Sinners* against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our Minds.

IN particular, how amiable is the Example of the Apostle *Paul*, who gave no Offence to the *Jews* or *Gentiles*, or to the Church of *God*, who pleased all Men in all Things, that they might be saved ; who tho' free from all, yet made himself a *Servant* to all, that he might gain the more to *CHRIST* ; and for the same noble Purpose, became all Things to all Men.

AND still the Example of our dearest LORD, the meek and loving Lamb of GOD, shone with superior and distinguished Lustre. He who was GOD over all blessed forever, stoop'd from the highest Glory to the deepest Abasement, and laid down his Life, his Blood, for the sake of his inveterate Enemies, who neither desir'd nor deserved his divine Respect. Ye know the Grace of our Lord *JESUS*, that tho' he was rich, yet for our Sakes he became Poor, that we thro' his Poverty might be made rich. He was a friend to *Publicans* and *Sinners* ; he went about unweariedly doing good to the Souls and Bodies of Men, constantly diffusing, like the

SUN the obscure *Emblem* of his Brightness and Benificence, salutary Light and healing Influences all around him!

THIS compassionate REDEEMER seeing the *Multitudes* fainting and scatter'd abroad like *Sheep* wanting a *Shepherd*, was moved with *Compassion* on them, (*esplanchnisthe*) his tender *Bowels* yearned; he was led as a *Lamb* to the *Slaughter*, so he opened not his *Mouth*. When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not. And tho' free yet for the sake of *Peace*, he paid the *Tribute Money* at the Expence of a *Miracle*. His whole *Life* was full of *Love*, of *Peace* and *Sweetness*. Now should not such who say they abide in him, walk even as he walked? Should not the same *humble, peaceable Mind*, which was in him, be in them?

NOR should we overlook the glorious *Example* of the blessed GOD, who is *Kind* to the *Evil* and *unthankful*, who devised the *Plan* of *Peace* by a *MEDIATOR*, sent his *SON* out of his *Bosom* to purchase it; sends his *Messengers* to proclaim it, and his *Holy Spirit* to apply it. Is not his tender *Mercy* over all his *Works*? How unlimited is his *Benificence* to the sinful *Children* of *Men*? He causes his *Sun* to shine, and his *Rain* to descend upon the *Fields* of the *Evil* and the *Good*. O! how immense is his *Clemency*, and how unwearied his *long-suffering* and tender *Mercy* towards such as bid defiance to his *Power* and *Authority*, and ungratefully contemn the amazing *Riches* and *Condescensions* of his *Grace* and *Love*?

Now methinks my *Fathers* and *Brethren*, we should be excited to pray for the *Peace* and *Prosperity* of *Jerusalem* in the *Manner* before represented, not only by the *Divine Precept* enjoining it, (*Is. lxii. 6, 7.*) *I have set Watchmen upon thy Walls O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their Peace, Day nor Night, and give him no rest, till he shall establish, and till he make Jerusalem, a Praise in the Earth,*

BUT likewise by the *Examples* of good *Men* who have gone before us, who were under no greater *Obligations*, nor had any greater *Encouragements* thereto than we. (*Psa. li. 18*) *Do good in thy good Pleasure unto Zion, build thou the Walls of Jerusalem. Agreeable to which are the Words I have been discoursing upon, Peace be within thy Walls and Prosperity within thy Palaces: For my Brethren and Companions Sake I will say Peace be within thee, because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy Good.*

MOREOVER the *kind Things* that GOD has said of *Zyon* and *Jerusalem*, and gracious *Promises* he has made of good *Things* to her, may encourage and animate us, in our *Prayers* for her *Peace* & *Prosperity*.

HERE observe, that *Zion* and *Jerusalem* are synonymous *Terms*, frequently signifying the same *Thing*, because a great *Part* of *Jerusalem* was built upon *Mount Zion*; or rather *Zion* is (*synecdochically*) put for *Jerusalem*, because it was an eminent part thereof, and both put for the *People* of *Israel* and *Church* of *God*.

THE Almighty has told us, that he hath chosen *Jerusalem*, that his *Name* might be there. (*2 Chron. vi. 6*) and that he has con-

*ferred Mercies for Jerusalem's Sake, that he has chosen. (1 King- xi 13. and Psa. cxxxii. 13----16.)*

The following *Promises* deserve to be thought upon, (Psa. cii.) *Thou shalt arise and have Mercy upon Zion, for thy Servants take Pleasure in her Stones, and favour the Dust thereof. When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his Glory; he will regard the Prayer of the Destitute, and not despise their Prayer. (Psa. cxxviii. 5, 6.) The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the Good of Jerusalem, yea thou shalt see PEACE upon Israel. (Psa. cxxv. 5.) As for such as turn aside into their crooked Ways, the Lord shall lead them forth, but Peace shall be upon Israel.*

Isa. lxvi. 10, 12. *For thus sayeth the Lord, behold I will extend PEACE to her as a River, and the Glory of the Gentiles like a flowing Stream.*

Isa. liv. 11. *And all thy Children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the Peace of thy Children.*

Isa. lx. 17. *I will also make thy Officers Peace, and thy Exactors Righteousness, i. e. loving, meek and peaceable; the abstract is put for the concrete as usual.*

*AND it shall come to pass in the last Days, that the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the Top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations shall flow into it; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

Zec. i. 17. *The Lord shall yet Comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.*

Isa. li. 3----16. *For the Lord shall Comfort Zion, he will Comfort all her waste Places; he will make her Wilderness like Eden, and her Desert like the Garden of GOD, Joy and Gladness shall be found therein, Thanksgiving and the Voice of Melody; that I may plant the Heavens and lay the Foundations of the Earth, and say unto Zion thou art my People.*

Isa. iv. *The Lord will create upon every dwelling Place of mount Zion, and upon her Assemblies, a Cloud, for upon all the Glory shall be a defence.*

Isa. xxxi. 5. *As Birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it, and passing over, he will preserve it.*

Zec. viii. 15. *So again I have thought in these Days to dwell unto Jerusalem, fear ye not.*

Isa. xxiv. 23. *Then the Moon shall be confounded, and the Sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his Ancients gloriously; that is, all the Splendor of earthly Potentates, shall be obscured by the superior brightness of the MESSIAH'S Advent, who is KING of KINGS and LORD of LORDS, when he shall be Incarnate and set up his Kingdom in Jerusalem, and afterwards in other Nations, in the Presence of his Ministers and People, and more especially,*

*when*

when this great REDEEMER being clad with *Light as a Garment*, enrob'd with all the *State of Heaven*, array'd with all the Majesty and Grandeur of the DEITY, and attended with a train of innumerable *Seraphims*, shall come to judge the World, and shine forth in all the unparallel'd *Brightness* and inexpressible *efulgence* of his own and his Fathers *Glory*! This magnificent Appearance of the great God our *Saviour*, to judge the Universe, will, by the force of its superior Lustre, eclipse the Lights of Heaven, turn the *Sun* into *Darkness*, and the *Moon* into *Blood*.

NOR should the following memorable *Promises* be lightly passed over. Jer 1. 4. 5. *In those Days, and that Time, saith the Lord, the Children of Israel shall come, they and the Children of Judah together, going and weeping they shall go, and seek the Lord their God; they shall ask the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward, saying, come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten.*

This *Promise* it is true, more immediately respects the return of some of the two *Tribes*, and some of the Ten, from their *Babylonish Captivity*, (which happened in the Time of *Cyrus*, Emperor of the *Meeds*) to their native Country, and their uniting cordially and humbly into one *Body*, in performing the Duties of publick Worship, notwithstanding of their former *Differences*. *They shall come, they and the Children of Judah together, going and weeping they shall seek the Lord their God, saying, come and let us join ourselves to the Lord.* All these Expressions plainly shew, a Union, Harmony and Concord between the Remains of the ten *Tribes* and of the *two*, so that there was to be no more angry *Debate* and *Division* among them, as *Calvin*, *Symachus*, and *Mariana* observe.

They are represented as very desirous to see *Zion*, which they had been long separated from by their *Captivity*; they could not rest till they saw it; and tho the Difficulties of finding the Road and travelling in it, were not small, yet they were not discouraged, No! They were fully fix'd and bent upon it, *they set their Faces towards Zion, and enquired the Way thither*, which they had forgot by their long absence, while a in State of *Captivity*.

THOSE different *Tribes*, went in Company, and wept as they went, towards *Zion*; either on Account of their former *Sins*, the Causes of all the *Calamities* they endur'd, as *Calvin*, *Symachus* and *Lyra* conclude; and not improbably; or with joy, at the thoughts of their unexpected *Release*, from a melancholy *Captivity* and *Return* to their native Soil their native Country; and especially to the *Temple Service*, in UNION with their *Brethren*! Or, with Grief, because of the Ruins or Desolate State of the *Temple* and *City of Jerusalem*, as *Erasmus* thinks. For my Part I see no inconsistency in admitting a Concurrence of all the aforesaid Causes, in exciting a mix'd *Passion* of Sorrow and Joy in the pious *Israelites*, upon so extraordinary an Occasion. There is something very devout and charming in the aforesaid Representation,

which is indeed a well drawn *Picture* of the Temper and Practice of convinced Sinners, in their seeking *Rest* to their wounded weary Souls, from JESUS CHRIST, in the way of his appointment.

THAT the Promise aforesaid does extend to Gospel Times, appears, as I apprehend, from the following Considerations. viz.

1st. BECAUSE the Completion it had among the *Jews* was but small; there were but few that return'd from the *Babylonish Captivity*, in the Time of *Cyrus* saith *Junius*.

2d. It is a spiritual *Promise*, of a spiritual *Union*, among *Brethren*, that profess'd the same *Substantials* of Religion, and likewise of a *Spiritual Concern* for their own Souls, and *Zeal* for the publick *Worship* of GOD! Now what can be more proper and rational than to extend such a *Promise* to a Dispensation peculiarly, and eminently *Spiritual*, in which a greater *Effusion* of divine *Influences* was promised? And particularly such as greatly encline to a *peaceable Temper* and *Behaviour*, as appears from several Promises before quoted, to which I would only add these following, viz.

ISAIAH xxxiv. "And I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Ground; I will pour out my Spirit upon his Seed, and my Blessing upon his Offspring, and they shall spring up as the Grass, as Willows by the Water-Courses."

ZECHA. xii. 10. "And I will pour upon the House of David and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and Supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn, as one mourneth for his only Son, and be in Bitterness for him, as one that is in Bitterness for his First-born."

JOEL ii. 28. "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh." i. e. upon Persons of all Nations, the Partition Wall between *Jew* and *Gentile* being removed.

ISAIAH xxxv. "The Wilderness and the solitary Place, shall be glad for them, and the Desert shall rejoice and blossom as the Rose, it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with Joy and Singing, the Glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the Excellency of Carmel and Sharon, in the Wilderness shall Waters break out, and Streams in the Desert, and the parched Ground shall become a Pool, and the thirsty Land Springs of Water." And,

3d. IF it be farther considered, that a flourishing State of the Gospel-Church is promis'd, before the End of the World; a Time when the *fullness of the Gentiles shall come in*, and all Israel shall be saved. i. e. when the Infidel Tribes shall flock to the REDEEMER'S Standard, and the Generality of the *Jewish* Nation, be converted to Christianity, to promote which the Union of *B. etbren* into one *Body*, who hold the same Foundation-Principles, is an excellent *Mean*; and as such pray'd for by our dear Lord

LORD JESUS CHRIST. *John xvii. 21.* That all may be one, that they also may be ONE in us, that the World may believe that thou hast sent me, that is, that Strangers to Christianity by beholding the Love of those that profess it, to each other, and UNION AMONG THEMSELVES, which is the proper Consequent of it; may be convinced of my divine Mission, and induced to receive the Declarations I have made to Men, in pursuance of it; or in other Words, that they may receive my Gospel.

AND indeed Sirs, as nothing is more amiable, than to see Brethren, who have been broken from one another by Division, and prejudiced against one another by angry Debate, seeking the Lord in UNION and Harmony, with sincere Sorrow, strong Desires, humble Enquiries, and unfainting Diligence.

So nothing is more efficacious, to excite Mankind to admire and embrace the Gospel, than the mutual Love and Unity of the Professors of it, by this they know that they are CHRIST's Disciples; by this, they see a divine Excellency in his Religion; by this Christianity spread so far and so fast, in the first Ages of it, this made the Heathens admiring say (in the Time of Tertullian) how do the Christians love one another. This as easily as speedily with a gentle Violence triumph'd over the unreasonable Prejudices of the most obstinate Infidels of every Nation, Age, Order, Sex, and Character, and conquered Kingdoms to the Faith of CHRIST.

BUT the contrary is a dreadful Stumbling-block, that Prejudices the Jews, Turks, and Pagans, against the Religion of JESUS; and makes divers even in Christian Countries question its divine Original.

NOR can its ablest Advocates, by all their learned Apologies, do it so much Service as this does Injury! For every new Schism in the Body of Christ, weakens it, and is used as a new Argument against the whole of Christianity, and tho' unjustly, yet really pours Contempt upon it. O, if zealous Men of narrow Minds, would but consider this, they would tremble at the Thoughts of Breaches and Schisms in the Church of Christ, and on the contrary, pray and strive, in the earnest Use of all appointed Means, that as there is but one Shepherd, so there may be but one Sheep-fold, (John x. 16.) (*Mia poimne eis poimen*) there is an Elegancy in the Original, the copulative *And* is not in it, as in our Version; the Words are these, *one Sheepfold, one Shepherd*, viz. *Jesus Christ, one Church* of all Christians, gathered under and united to Christ, as their Head; *one People* of Jews and Gentiles, the Partition-Wall being removed, (*Ephes. ii. 14.*) the Meaning is, to one Shepherd one Flock belongs; as I am therefore one Pastor, so my SHEEP FOLD shall be ONE.\*

I say, when all these Things are considered complexly, together with the broken divided State of the Christian Church at present, they plainly shew that the aforesaid Scripture, *Jer. l. 4, 5.*  
extends

\* So Grotius and Luodovicus de diu

extends to the *Gospel-Church*, (so *Calvin*, *Pool*, and *Henry* understand it.) and that as yet it has not had a full Accomplishment, and therefore it is a great Encouragement, to pray and strive for the Blessing contained in it.

ANOTHER remarkable *Promise*, we have in *Ezek. xxxvii 19*. Thus saith the Lord God, behold I will take the Stick of Joseph, which is in the Hand of Ephraim, and the Tribes of Israel his Fellows, and will put them with him even with the Stick of Judah, and make them one Stick, and they shall become one in my Hand.

THERE had been a *Breach of Union*, and unhappy *Animosities* consequent thereupon, between the two Kingdoms of *Israel* and *Judah*, who were *Brethren*, and but *one Kingdom* before the fatal *Breach*, after which upon all Occasions, *Ephraim* envied *Judah*, and on the other Hand *Judah* vexed *Ephraim*: But here it is promised, that that divided State, which was so uncomfortable to, and unsafe for both, should continue no longer, but that there should be a happy, a comfortable *Coalition* between them, disposing them to bury former *Offences*, and angry Contentions in the *Grave* of perpetual *Oblivion*, and for the future only contend who should love one another most, and excel in the humble-but amiable *Offices* of mutual *Kindness* and *Endearment*!

THEY had been two *STICKS* opposing and hurting one another but now they shall become *ONE*, supporting and strengthening each other, and unitedly under *GOD*, promoting the same good *Cause* and *Design*.

Now altho' this *Promise*, has a primary and direct Reference to the *Jews*, yet undoubtedly it extends farther, even to the *Union of Jews and Gentiles* into one *Church*, under the *Gospel-Oeconomy*; professing one *Lord*, one *Faith*, one *Baptism*, and is very applicable to a *re-union of Brethren*, of the same *Sentiments* into one *Body* or religious *Community*.

UNCHARITABLE *Divisions* and Separations on account of *Circumstantials*, or lesser Things (not impos'd) among those that profess the same *fundamentals of Religion* is a crimson Iniquity, attended with most awful *Aggravations*!

THEY are exceeding contrary to the very *Nature of God*, who is *Love*, as has been before observed: *Love* is the Perfection of all *Grace*, the End of all *Duties*, the most excellent Way, the Work of Heaven, the new *Commandment*, the Imitation of the best of Beings, and a principal mean to obtain and maintain a *Communion with him*. He that loves, dwells in God, and God in him, for God is Love.

UNCHARITABLE *Divisions* are exceeding contrary to the whole *Law* and *Word of God*, which is fulfill'd by *Love*, and especially to that express *Precept* which enjoins us to keep the *Unity of the Spirit, in the Bond of Peace*.

NOR are they less contrary to the whole *Gospel of God*, which is a most astonishing Display of the divine *Love* and *Goodness*, in all it's *Glory, Riches, Charms, and Condescensions*, and therefore

therefore contains the strongest *Incentives* to *Love* and *Unity*, all which are thereby oppos'd. But

UNCHARITABLE *Divisions* are not only contrary to the *Nature* of *GOD*, the *Law* of *God*, and the *Gospel* of *God*, but likewise to the *Christ* of *God*, they stain his *Honour*, and oppose his *Design* in our *Redemption*; making many *Bodies*, looks like a *Disposition* to have many *Heads*, and so either to renounce *CHRIST*, or divide him (1 *Cor.* i. 13.) it is an Attempt to make *CHRIST* himself a *Sectarian*, or a *Ringleader* of a *Sect*; which is a vile *Affront*; *CHRIST* is the common *Head* of *Christians*, but he is not, he cannot be the *Head* of *Parties* and *Factions*, as such: Besides such *Divisions* represent the dear *Redeemer* as an impotent *Prince* that cannot keep his *Kingdom* in *Unity*, or communicate a suitable and sufficient *System* of *Doctrines* and *Laws* of this *Tendency*; the scandalous *Behaviour* of his *Subjects* is cast upon *Zion's King*, his *Laws*, and the *Constitution* of his *Government*: For the *Design* of the holy *JESUS* in our *Redemption*, was to reconcile all that believe, to *GOD*, to unite and center them all in him, to gather together in one, the *Children* of *GOD*, that are scattered abroad, to make in himself of twain, one new *Man*, so making *Peace*. (See *John* xi. 52. *Ephes.* ii. 15.) Farther,

UNCHARITABLE *Divisions* are exceeding contrary to the *Spirit* and *Work* of *GOD*. They oppose the *Work* of *God* the *Holy Ghost* in our own *Souls*, and in the *Souls* of others, in its *Nature*, *Design*, and *Tendency*. By one *Spirit*, saith the *Apostle*, we are all baptized into one *Body*, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one *Spirit*. (1 *Cor.* xii. 13.) The *Nature* and *Tendency* of the *Work* of the blessed *Spirit* of *God*, in our own and others *Souls*, is *Love*, *Peace*, *Unity*: And hence the two former are called the *Fruits* of the *Spirit*, (*Gal.* v. 22.) and the latter is called the *Unity* of the *Spirit*, (*Ephes.* iv. 24) And the *Thessalonians* are said to be taught of *God* to love one another, (1 *Theff.* iv. 9.) Hence you may see, that those who promote uncharitable *Divisions*, oppose (tho' not with *Design*) not only the *Word* of *GOD*, but likewise the *Work* of *GOD* in their own *Souls*, and in the *Souls* of others: By provoking their angry *Relentments* sinfully, they fight against the *Nature*, *Spirit* and *Genius* of *Conversion* to *God*, and real *Christianity*. Again,

UNCHARITABLE *Divisions* are exceeding contrary to the *Ordinances* of *GOD*, viz. *Baptism*, the *Word* preach'd, and the *LORD's Supper*, the *Design* of which is to procure and preserve the *Unity* of his *Church*, and *Kingdom*.

By *Baptism* Persons are added to the *Church* (*Acts* ii. and 1 *Cor.* xii. 12, 13.) For as the *Body* is one and hath many *Members*, and all the *Members* of that one *Body*; so also is *CHRIST*; that is, *Christ Mystical*, or the visible *Church* which is his *Body*: The *Reason* of which *Union* in the *Church* of *CHRIST*, or mean to procure it is *Baptism*; for saith the *Apostle*, by one *Spirit* we are all *Baptized* into

into one *Body*; i. e. The design of *Baptism* is not only as a *Sign* to represent, a *mean* to obtain the aforesaid *Union*; but likewise as a solemn *Bond* of Engagement upon us to promote and preserve it, by all proper Endeavours, without which we are not like to have the *Answer of a good Conscience*, in performing the *Vows* and answering the *End* of that gracious *Institution*.

AND does not *faith* come by hearing, and hearing by the *Word of GOD*? Which we cant bear, faith the *Apostle*, without a *Preacher*; even that faith which unites to *CHRIST* our Head, and works by Love to his Members our Brethren. Moreover,

By the *Lord's Supper* as the inspired writer observes, we are one *Bread*; and one *Body*; tho' we be many, for we are all partakers of that one *Bread*; (1 *Cor. x. 17.*) i. e. We declare that we are but one *Body* Mystical, by our joynt Communicating at the *LORD's Supper*, of one *Bread*, or one *Loaf*; which is made up of many Grains, and as we declare the aforesaid *Unity*; so by partaking of this confirming *Seal* of the *Covenant*, we renew and confirm, our solemn *Obligations* entered into by *Baptism*, to do all that in us lies, to procure and preserve that *Unity*: Which repeated Engagements if it be not a great Evil to violate, I know not what is.

NOR are the aforesaid *Divisions* less contrary, to the Design of the *Ministry* of *GOD*, the *Dispensers* of the *Word* and *Ordinances*; which is the edifying of the *Body* of *CHRIST*; not tearing into Parts the one *Body* of *Jesus*, and making many of it, No! but building of it up, as the *Word* signifies, by bringing new Members to it, and strengthening those that are brought in already, in *Knowledge*, *Faith* and *Holiness*: And likewise bringing Persons to the *Unity* of the *SON* of *GOD*, and to *Growth* and *Establishment* therein, that they may be no more tossed to and fro as *Children* by every *Wind* of *Doctrine* (*Ephes. iv. 13.*) Now how shall *Unity* in *Sentiment*, and *steadfastness* therein be preserved, against all the shocks of *Seducers*, without *Unity* to our Brethren? Is not the *Flock* more likely to be ensnared when it is broken and scatter'd? *Beza* justly observes, that the *Apostle* speaks of the *Church* as one *Man*, that he may declare its *Unity*, which it is the great *Business* of *CHRIST's Ministers* to promote. Farther,

SUCH *Divisions* are likewise exceeding contrary to the *Credit*, *Comfort*, *Prosperity* and *Safety* of the *Church* of *GOD*.

As cutting of a Member of the *Body* deforms it, so does rending and tearing the *Church* of *CHRIST*: If you pluck out an *Eye*, or cut of an *Arm*, or slit the *Nose*, how gashful and contemptible does it make the *Person* look! And is it not so in Relation to the *Church* of *CHRIST*, when broken by *Divisions*? These cruel Methods, marr its *Beauty*, and make it as much the *Grief* of its *Friends*, as the *Scorn* of its *Enemies*.

AND what comfort can be expected, in the midst of *Wranglings*, *Tumults* and *Confusions*, which obstruct every *Duty*, embitter

every Sweet of Life, and open before us, the sable Scene of our own Corruptions, as well as of the Blunders of our Brethren, and present at the same Time to our View, gloomy Ideas of impending Calamities?

NOR is the Church's *Prosperity* and Progress, less obstructed by uncharitable Divisions; for while the Members of the Church are possess'd with *Prejudices* and Envyings against each other, they loose the Benefits of one another's *Gifts*, and of that religious *Communion*, which is equally the amiable Ornament of Christianity, and the agreeable Entertainment of the sincere Professors of it; While their Minds and Hearts are possess'd with that Wisdom, that descendeth not from above, and bitter *Zeal*, (*Zelon picron*) which the inspired Apostle Terms, *earthly, sensual, devilish*, (Jam. iv.) their *Understandings* are darkened, their *Affections* corrupted, and their *Food* turn'd to the Nourishment of their *Disease*: Instead of growing up in *Humility*, *Meekness*, and *Love*, they grow in *Pride*, *Peevishness* and severe *Censure*; more and more unlike the blessed *Jesus*, and the true *Genius* of his *Religion*; and yet *know not what Spirit they are of!* Whereas, if they were of one Mind, and liv'd in *Peace*, the *God of Love and Peace* would be with them.

BUT uncharitable *Divisions*, like a *Trojan Horse*, pregnant with concealed Enemies, tend to introduce into the Church of *Christ*, a dismal Train of *Errors* and *Delusions*, as well as excite and encourage *Ambition*, *Ill-nature*, and *Falshood*; the awful *Iniquities* of the *grand Enemy*: Hence it is, that Men are sometimes induced, thro' desire of Popularity, and with design of *Fame* for their singular Conduct, (as it would seem) to arise as the Heads of *Factions*, and speak *perverse Things*, that they may draw *Disciples* after them. (Acts xx. 30.) In a Word uncharitable *Divisions*, tend not only to obstruct all good *Dispositions* in our own Souls, but to promote evil *Affections*, corrupt *Principles*, and all Manner of *Wickedness* in Life, for *where Envy* (or *Zeal*, *Zelos*) and *Strife* are, i. e. envying *Zeal*, there is *Confusion* and every evil *Work*. (Jam. iii. 16.)

Again,

UNCHARITABLE *Divisions* do also hinder the *Progress* of the *Gospel* of *Jesus* in the World, and obstruct the *Conversion* of poor *Sinners* to the blessed *God*, and thereby their eternal *Salvation*: For what Encouragement have they to be religious, while the Church is torn by *Divisions*, into so great a Number of Parts and Parties, (divers of whom do cruelly condemn all but those of their own way) that they do not know what *Religion* or Profession to be of? O! this is a melancholy Case, which deserves to be lamented, if it were possible, with Tears of Blood.

BESIDES *Schisms* and *Divisions*, directly lead to a total *Apostasy* from the *Faith* of *Christ*, it is doubtless the Master-PLOT of the *DEVIL*, to confound Men with such a Multitude of *Religions*, that they may be brought to think that there is nothing in them all, and so reject the *Gospel* either as a *Fancy* or *Imposture*,

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(a cunningly devis'd Fable) and oppose *Jesus Christ* as an insignificant Person, or grand Deceiver.

SCHISMS and Divisions, my Brethren, do not only expose the Church to Contempt and Scorn, but likewise to a total *Dissolution*, to entire Ruin, and Destruction; either more directly by the Hands of her professed, yea, real *Friends*, thro' misguided and ill-temper'd *Zeal*, destroying each others *Characters*, while they should be better employ'd, in promoting her *Edification*, and *Defence*; or by the Hands of *Enemies*, who have hereby an Opportunity to attack her unarm'd; and also the *Assistance* of her *Friends*, contrary to their Design, to compass her *Ruin*, to forward her final overthrow!

THE Words of our dear Redeemer to this Purpose, should not be lightly pass'd over, *Mat. xii. 25. Every Kingdom divided against itself, is brought to Desolation, and ever City, or House, divided against itself, shall not stand*, that is, every Kingdom tho' large and strong, yet if divided into various *Factions*, is like to be overthrown. (thus *Beza, Camero,*) It was a common Saying among the *Hebrews*, like that of *Salust, Concordia res parve crescunt, discordia maxime dilabuntur*, i. e. by Concord small Things encrease, but by Discord great are destroy'd. Or of *Cicero, Que domus, tam stabilis, que tam firma civitas est, que non odiis, atque dissidiis, funditus, possit everti*, i. e. what House is so stable, what City so strong and impregnable, as cannot be entirely overthrown, by Hatred and Discord?

OUR Lord insinuates, by applying the aforesaid *Proverb* to the Occasion, upon which it was spoken, that *Satan* had more *Sagacity*, than to attempt to promote his Kingdom by *Division*; and may we not learn *Prudence* from an Enemy, *Certe fas est et, ab hoste doceri*.

SCALIGER's Observation is truly applicable to Man's degenerate State; *Quicquid ad Multitudinem vergit, Antipathiam continet, et quicquid vero ad Unitatem tendit; Simpathiam habet*, i. e. whatever verges to *Multitude*, (of Rivals) promotes *Antipathy*, but whatever tends to *Unity*, contains *Sympathy*. Opening the *Veins* of the Body and letting it bleed incessantly, (as poor *Seneca* was treated) does not more directly tend to its Destruction than uncharitable *Divisions* to the Church's Ruin! Any who will deliberately read the *History* of the Church, may easily see what dismal *Havock*, *Divisions* have made in it, for these *Seventeen Hundred Years*! In many Countries where Churches once flourished, *Divisions* have turned all into *Desolation*, and delivered them up to *Mahometan Delusion*; the Contentions between *Constantinople* and *Rome*, the *Eastern* and *Western Churches*, have shaken the *Christian Interest* upon the Earth, and delivered up much of the *Christian World* to *Papal Blindness* and *Tyranny*! yea, such have been the Effects of this detestable *Iniquity*, that it would long ago have rooted the *Christian Name* from off the Earth, if *Almightiness* had not frequently and marvelously interposed,

posed, to prevent it; any Body that wants to promote the *Disgrace* and *Destruction* of CHRIST'S Kingdom on Earth, cannot take a more direct and effectual Method, to that Purpose, than by earnest and unwearied Endeavours to *divide* it, either by making new *Rents*, or continuing those already made.

IN Confirmation of which the Words of the Apostle *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Galatians* chap v. ver. 15. are remarkable, *but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another*, i. e. beware that you do not wound or tear one another, by Words pointed with Envy and Calumny, and by injurious Deeds; least the Issue thereof should terminate in your mutual Overthrow, and final Ruin! least that GOD who is a consuming Fire, should be provoked by your *Impiety* to send desolating *Calamities* and a swift *Destruction*. There is doubtless an Allusion in the Words, *bite* and *devour* to the ill-natur'd *Snarling* and furious *Biting* of *Dogs*, for these Things are indeed more becoming such brutish savage *Animals* than Men & *Christians*.

AND hence the Apostle observes, in the 14th, 16th, 17th, and 20th Verses of the same Chapter, that the whole Will of GOD, containing our Duty towards Men, is reducible to this one thing LOVE; for whatever the Almighty requires towards them, is but a Branch from this Root, a Stream from this *Fountain*; *The End of the Commandment, is Charity out of a pure Heart, and Faith unfeigned*: The contrary to which, *viz. Wrath, Strife, SEDITIONS, Heresies*, he expressly calls the *manifest Works* of the *Flesh*, the *Lustings* of the *Flesh* against the *Spirit*, Things contrary to the *Spirit*, *which if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfill*.

AND observe that one of those *Works* of the *Flesh* is SEDITION, (*dichostasiai, a distemi disto, sejungo, dissentio dissidium*) Dissention, Discord; the same that is elsewhere called *Division*, and SCHISM, consisting in an uncharitable Alienation of Mind, among those that profess the same *Fundamentals* of Religion, on Account of *Circumstantial* Differences of Opinion; often breaking the external *Unity* of the *Church* of CHRIST, and dividing it into Parties, which follow different Leaders, whose Persons they have in Admiration: One saying he is of *Paul*; another he is of *Apollos*; another of *Cephas*; and another of CHRIST. (*Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. i. 10. And iii. 3. xi. 18. xii. 25.*) What is called *Sedition* in the *State*, is generally term'd *Schism* in the *Church*, but the latter so much resembles the former, in its *Rise, Progress, and Issue*, that it has sometimes the same Name assign'd it.

AND yet that which makes this horrible *Iniquity* the more perilous and fatal, is that it is seldom repented of, nay, it is commonly justified by those that commit it, and contended for, as an Instance of *Spirituality*, an important *Duty*, and a proper *Mean* to promote CHRIST'S Kingdom. It's true it may be *Spiritual*, but then it is not from the *Spirit* of GOD, but as the Apostle *James* observes, the *Spirit* of the *Devil*; and to try to promote CHRIST'S Kingdom thereby, is just as prudent, as to cut off our *Legs* in

order to quicken our Motion; or pluck out our *Heart* or *Bowels* to promote our *Health*! It is easy to convince People of the Sinfulness of *Swearing*, or *Drunkeness*, but it is difficult to convince them of this, which is perhaps as much spoken against by the blessed God, as any Sin in the *Bible*; nay, some, instead of seeing Evil in it, father the *Abomination* upon God himself, which is horrible *Blasphemy* tho' undesign'd!

AND that which tends to confirm Persons in this unhappy Mistake, is the *Piety* of some that are guilty of it, but we should learn to distinguish between *Persons* and their *Actions*; and to love the one, while we sometimes reasonably hate the other: The Goodness of none can either *justify*, or *protect* our *Imitation* of them in what is bad; all Men are *Vanity*, nor should the Interest of *Truth* be sacrific'd to their *Credit*, and far less to their *Humour*! Whatever good or bad Men may say in favour of envious bitter *Zeal*, and pretend to derive its Original from *Heaven*, the Apostle *James* assures us, that it does not descend from above, but from beneath, from an infernal Source; and that those who say otherwise, *do lie against the Truth*: How unreasonable then is it for any to be offended, that others can't join with them in calling *Evil Good*, and *Good Evil*! *And to speak Evil of such as cannot run with them to the same Excess of Riot!*

BUT the aforesaid uncharitable *Divisions*, are not only exceeding contrary to the *Credit*, *Comfort*, *Prosperity* and *Safety* of the *Church* of God, but likewise to all the dear and honourable *Relations* we sustain to God, and one another: *We are all* (professedly) *the Children of GOD*, by *Faith* in *Jesus Christ*. (Gal. iii. 26.) *Members of his mystical Body*. (Rom. xii. 5.) We are also *GOD's building*, *fellow-Citizens with the Saints*, and of the *Household of GOD*. (1 Cor. iii. 9. Ephes. ii. 19.) Now are civil Wars comfortable in a *Kingdom*? Or angry *Contentions* decent in a *Family* among *Brethren*? May I not speak to such in the Language of *Abraham* to *Lot*, (Gen. xiii. 8.) *Let there be no Strife I pray thee, between me and thee, for we are Brethren*. Is it a friendly Part, to wound or maim our *Bodies*? Or can that be the *Safety* of *this Kingdom* which is the *Ruin* of all others?

AND dear Si, are not such *Divisions*, exceeding contrary the to *Heavenly State*, where perfect *Love*, entire *Harmony*, and delightful *Union* reign, without any envious Motion, or discordant Jar forever! How then can angry *Resentments*, sinful *Divisions*, and ungovernable *Tumults*, lead to that *Kingdom of Peace*, of *Unity* and *Love*?

Nay, my *Brethren*, is not such a wretched State of Things, in some respects, worse than the *Kingdom of Satan*? who has a greater *Regard* to his *Interest* than to destroy it, by dividing it. (*Mat. xii 26*)

But are not we commanded, *to come out from among them, and to be separate and not to touch the unclean Thing, and told that the Lord will receive us.* (2 Cor. vi. 17.)

I answer, These Words are taken from *Isaiab* lii. 11. to which are joined some Words from *Levt.* xxvi. 12. What the Prophet says concerning leaving the *Babylonians*, the Apostle applies, by a Parity of Reason, to other gross Idolaters, which likewise must be forsaken, as *Grotius* observes.

*And touch not the Unclean Thing.* By unclean Animals, and unclean Things, the *Hebrews* mean Idolaters, (*Act.* x. 14.) because abstinence from Meats, pronounc'd unclean by the ceremonial Law, was one principal Stone in the Wall of Separation, between the *Jews* who called themselves *clean*, and the Idolatrous *Gentiles*, whom they reckon'd *unclean*; so that this Text does not reach the Point at all, that it is brought for, it only speaks of leaving Infidels and gross Idolaters, that are out of the Communion of the visible Church; but it speaks not of breaking Communion with the Church at all.

THIS Interpretation, the Verses immediately Preceding confirm, which speak in this Manner, *what Concord hath CHRIST with Belial? Or what Part hath he that believeth with an Infidel? And what agreement hath the Temple of GOD with Idols? With Belial*, that is, either 1st. with the *Devil* who is so called by way of emphasis, as elsewhere the *wicked one*; for *Belial* signifies a *Knave*, or *out Law*, so the *Seventy* interpret the Original Word. Or 2d. with his *Laques*, Men notoriously *Wicked* and *Scandalous*, who are called *Children of Belial*, (See *Deut.* xiii. 13. *Judg.* xix. 22. *1 Sam.* i. 16. and *2 Chron.* xiii. 7.) i. e. what Portion, Communion or Society hath *Christ* with the *Devil*, or profane *Idolaters*? This was a common Phrase among the *Hebrews*, See *Jos.* xxii. 24. *What have you to do with the LORD GOD of Israel? What agreement hath the Temple of GOD with Idols?* i. e. What religious Confederacy or Communion can we who are Members of the Church of God and Temples of God, have with Infidels, or the Worshipers of Idols; who are the Temples of Idols, that is of the *Devil* worship'd in them; to this Purpose speak many learned Interpreters.\*

To suppose that it intends a *seperation* from the visible *Church*, upon the Account of *Circumstantials* not impos'd, is in effect to say, that Almighty God commands positive Contradictions, because he elsewhere enjoins such to receive each other; and therefore that *Scriptures* must needs be false from which such a Contradiction flows.

It is true if any Church imposes *Circumstantials* upon us, against our Consciences, as *Terms of Communion*, we must obey God rather than Man, in forbearing to communicate with them; and if divine Providence offers an Opportunity of enjoying religious Privileges, without such Impositions, no doubt we may peaceably and charitably withdraw and embrace it: This is far from

\* Beza, Piscator, Erasmus, Menochius, Drufius, Grotius, Vorstius, Zegerus, Baxter, Pool.

from *Schism*, which chiefly consists in an *uncharitable Alienation of Mind from our Brethren*: And hence the Apostle speaks of *Schisms* among the *Corinthians*, who met at the same Sacramental Table. *Chillingworth, Hales, and Dr. H. More* have justly asserted, 'That if the *Pope* had imposed but one *Lye* to be subscribed, or one *Sin* to be done, and said all Nations and Persons that do not this, are no Christians, or shall have no *Communion* with the Church: The Man that refuseth that imposed *Lye* or *Sin*, is guiltless of the *Schism*, and doth but obey God and save his Soul; and the *Usurper* that imposeth them will be found the heinous *schismatick* before God, and the Cause of all these *Divisions* of the Church.'

SOME draw an Objection against *Union* from these Words of GOD to the Prophet *Jeremiah*, (chap. xv. 19, 20.) *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them, and I will make thee unto this People a fenced brazen Wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee.*

ANSWER, I think Mr. *Pool* gives us the true meaning of the aforesaid Place of Scripture, in these Words, 'He chargeth the Prophet to keep his ground and not to go over unto wicked Men, but to use his endeavour to reduce them to that Obedience he yielded to him,' Do not flatter them or conform to their Evil Practice, but labour to reclaim them and bring them under the Yoke of God, declare faithfully what I have commanded thee; to this Effect speak *Calvin, Junius and Grotius*. So that what is forbidden, is a criminal Neglect of Duty, a criminal Compliance with, or conformity to what is *Evil*; but to seek *Peace* with, and *Union* to our Brethren, who hold the same Foundation Principles, and are regular in Life, is so far from being Evil, that it is positively commanded: Hence it appears, that the Text aforesaid, is foreign to the Point for which it is aduced. To take the aforesaid Scripture in any other Sense than I have given of it, makes it contradict many positive divine Precepts, which enjoin us to *ensue Peace, to leave our Gift at the Altar, and go first and be reconciled to our Brother*; and therefore any other Sense of the Text cannot be true, for GOD cannot command Contradictions.

IN reading the late *Christian History*, composed by Mr. *Prince of Boston*, I could not but observe in the Accounts he gives of many Reverend Ministers of *New-England*, who favour'd the late revival of Religion, that notwithstanding of their Zeal for that blessed Work of the most high God, they still retained charitable Sentiments of their Brethren, who differed from them in Opinion upon that Head, and spoke honourably of them: This is an Example well worthy of our Imitation, which may it please the God of Peace and Love, to encline and enable us all to conform to.

OBJECTION, But we must not partake of other Men's Sins, (I Tim. v. 22.)

I Answer, It is very true, we must not partake of them by  
Consent

*Consent*, either *negatively*, by neglecting any Duty incumbent on us for the Prevention or Cure thereof; or *positively* encouraging it by our *Council* or *Example*, but when you have done all that is your Part to oppose and prevent it, the Sin is not yours.

To suppose that your *Presence* or *joining* in publick *Ordinances*, makes you *Guilty* without your *Consent*, is ridiculous Nonsense: For at this Rate, as was hinted before, all social Worship must be destroy'd. For if by joining in Communion with them in outward Ordinances, we are, contrary to our *Consent*, made partakers of one Sin of our Brother, why not of all his Sins, by the same Rule? And if of his, why not of every other Man's that we join in Worship with? It is absurd to imagine with some Ignorant, tho' well meaning People, that we partake of this Guilt at the *Sacrament* only, for we join in religious Worship with them in other Parts of it, such as *Prayer* and *Praises*, as really as there; and therefore the aforesaid Gloss will make us guilty of all the Sins of every one that we join with in Worship, either in our Families or publick Assemblies. And if the Case be so, Reason will teach us, to avoid with great Care, all private and publick *Worship*, for the sake of our *Safety*, to prevent our Ruin and Damnation; and yet the Almighty enjoins both, to promote our Benefit and Salvation.

Now how can these Things consist together? Can it be reasonably suppos'd, that an all-wise and gracious God would, in order to promote our good, enjoin us to use any Method which would bring upon us the *Guilt* of innumerable Transgressions? By the aforesaid Objection, considered in its just and natural Consequences, all private and publick Worship are entirely overthrown; because all Men that we do, or can associate with in this World, are imperfect Creatures, guilty of Multitudes of Sins, which according to it becomes ours, on our worshipping *Jehovah* with them, according to his Command; and therefore it does not only destroy private and publick Worship altogether, but casts base *Blasphemy* upon the blessed God, as if he was an Enemy to his Creatures as such, and enjoined a Religion upon them that tended directly to promote their eternal Damnation, and that under the Pretext of Kindness and Love! But where is the Sense of our being *Guilty* of the Sins that we never consented to either virtually or actually?

BUT pray observe, that God is not only blasphemed by the aforesaid *Objection*, and all *private* and *publick Worship* overthrown but likewise all Church *Government* is entirely unhing'd; for under the ubrage of it, every one that is Ignorant enough, and inclin'd to be a *proud Separatist*, (the Character of the *Pharisees* of old) may according to their humour pretend *Dissatisfaction* with some *circumstantials* in *Principle*, or *fault* in *Practice*, either in the Minister or some of the Communicants, where they were wont to join, and so pack off abruptly as the fit takes them, agreeable to the wild flights of their ungovernable *Fancy*: According to this

*Plan every Member of the Body takes upon himself, without any Authority, the Government of the whole, the Rule of which is humour and caprice.*

SURELY if People were more watchful over their own Hearts and Ways, they would have less of the *leaven* of the *Pharisees*, that is, of their *proud separating Disposition* from others, less of their *Sourness* and *Severity* in censuring of others, for not *Tything Mint* and *Annis* and *Cummin*, for not being so good as they are forsooth, or even fit to converse with them. Hear how the Almighty speaks of such, (Isa. lxxv. 2, 3, 5.) *I have spread out my Hands all the Day, unto a rebellious People, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own Thoughts; a People that provoketh me to anger continually to my Face; which say stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou: Those are a smoke in my Nose, a fire that burneth all the Day.*

UPON which Mr. Henry glosseth justly as follows, “ The most provoking Iniquity of the *Jews*, in our Saviour’s Time, was their *Pride* and *Hypocrisy*, that Sin of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, against which CHRIST denounceth so many Woes. They say, stand by thy self, keep off, get thee to thine, so the original is, keep to thine own Companions, but come not near to me, least thou pollute me; touch me not, I will not allow thee any familiarity with me, for I am holier than thou, and therefore thou art not good enough to converse with me, *I am not as other Men, nor even as this Publican*. They thought themselves holier than any, better than any of their Neighbours. These are a *Smoke* in my *Nose* saith GOD, such a *Smoke* as comes not from a quick *Fire* which soon becomes glowing and pleasant, but from a *Fire* of *wet Wood*, that burns all the Day, and is nothing but *Smoke*. Note, nothing in Men is more Odious, and Offensive to GOD, then a *Proud Conceit* of themselves, and Contempt of others, for commonly those are most *Unholy* of all, that think themselves *Holier* than any.

THERE were many Corruptions in the Churches at *Corinth*, *Galatia* and *Laodoea*, but we read of no Command to separate from them on account thereof.

GIVE me leave to consider one *Objection* more, which is this, *viz.* That our Brethren of the present *Synod* of *Philadelphia*, have oppos’d the *whole* of the late *Work* of GOD in this Land, and ascribed it to the *Devil*; in support of which, these Things following are alledg’d, *viz.*

A *Satyrical Lampoon*, entitled, *the Wandering Spirit*. But seeing that *Peice* was *Anonymous*, (had no Name affix’d to it) and was never own’d by our Brethren, *as a Body*, it cannot, without manifest *Injustice*, be ascrib’d to them, as such; nor is there any certain or sufficient *Proof*, that ever it was own’d and approv’d of (in all its Parts) by any one of them, so far as I know: And if there was, it can’t affect the whole, unless the like *Proof* can be offered against them.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, The *Querists* are produc'd as another Proof, in Confirmation of the Charge; to which it may be reply'd, That notwithstanding of some slight Representations of the late religious Commotions, interpers'd in some Passages of those Writings; yet I know not that they assign any of them, and much less all of them, to the *Devil*: Moreover it should be considered, that these Books were *Anonymus*, and never approv'd by the *Synod of Philadelphia*, by any authoritative judicial Act, nor, so far as I know, by any of their inferior Judicatures, as such, and therefore cannot be justly charged upon that *Body* as their Act and Deed.

BUT the following Paragraph of the *Protest*, page 11. is tho't by some to be a sufficient Evidence of the Charge. The Words are these ' 6. Their preaching the Terrors of the Law in such Manner and Dialect as has no precedent in the Word of God, but rather appears to be borrow'd from a worse Dialect, and so industriously working on the Passions and Affections of weak Minds, so as to cause them to cry out in a hideous Manner, and fall down in Convulsion-like Fits, to the marring of the profiting both of themselves and others, who are so taken up in seeing and hearing these odd Symptoms, that they cannot attend to, or hear what the Preacher says; and then after all, boasting of these Things as the *Work of God*, which we are perswaded do proceed from an inferior or worse Cause.'

The insufficiency of this Evidence, may be plainly perceived by considering, that it is only some exceptionable particulars that are oppos'd in the preceding Paragraph, *viz.* an unscriptural *Mode of preaching the Terrors of the Law*, an industrious *working on the Passions of weak Minds*, causing hideous *out cries*, and *falling down in Convulsion-like Fits*, and *boasting of these Things as the Work of God*. Now are any of these Things a Part, or all of them together, the *Work of God* we have been contending for, or any Part of it, any necessary Apendage of it, or any Evidence of it? If we say *Yea*, we ourselves brand the *Work of God* with Scandal and Ridicule, if *nay*, then these Things come from an inferior or worse *Cause*. Pray is not Nature, a Cause inferior to GOD, and worse then him? And does not *Charity* oblige us, to put the most mild Construction upon others Words, that they can in Reason bear? The Sense I have given of th Words, is easy and natural, but the other is a Force upon them; pray does it not look more like the strength of Prejudice then Argument, to turn Particulars into Generals or Universals, and put the hardest Interpretation upon Words, that they can possibly bear. The Words of the Paragrah are particular and limited, *boasting of THESE THINGS, as the work of GOD*, if any were Guilty hereof, (as doubtless our Brethren were so inform'd) they were to be pitied for their Weakness, and if any of the younger Ministers, imprudently aggravated to an excessive pitch, the Passions of the distress'd, by an unscriptural or unseasonable Inculcation of Terrors, (at any Time) it was certainly very wrong; but whether there was

any Foundation for this Charge, in any Degree, it is not my Business at present to Inquire?

In a Word, whatever unadvised Expressions, in private Conversation, might possibly drop from the Lips of some of our Brethren in a heat of *Passion*, or *ferment of Dispute*, (in disparagement of the Work of God) many Years ago, which Methinks it is now high Time to forget, yet upon Enquiry I cannot find any UNITED TESTIMONY of their BODY upon Record against the late REVIVAL of RELIGION, (truly so called) not one by which they deny the *Reality* of it, and far less ascribe it to the *Devil*. Now whither it is Reasonable or Charitable, for any to suffer their Minds to be inflamed with prejudice against their Brethren, by unprov'd reports, judge ye? It never was, nor I believe ever can or will be prov'd, against the present Synod of *Philadelphia*, That they have generally, univ'rsally, or as a Body ascrib'd the late *revival of Religion* (truly and properly so call'd) to the *Devil*, and therefore however Pious our Designs are. it is no Act of *Friendship* to *Truth*, to *Justice*, to *Charity*, or to the *Peace* and *Weal* of CHRIST'S visible *Kingdom*, to receive or spread such Charges, as directly tend to create, encrease, and confirm *Prejudices*, and enflame resentments against our Brethren, widen the *Breaches of Zion* as the *Sea*, and make her *Wounds* bleed a fresh, and reject a Remedy: May GOD in Mercy to his poor Church, Pardon and Reform such unaccountable Conduct!

PRAY may not an Acknowledgement be as reasonably desir'd of us, for LICENCING and ORDAINING contrary to the Act of the Synod, as we can desire an Acknowledgement, upon the Account of the PROTEST? But can we make such an Acknowledgment? No! for whither we did right or wrong in Licencing &c. we did it in the integrity of our Hearts, as believing it to be our Duty; & if we wou'd exercise the same Charity towards our Brethren, as we desire towards ourselves, in this Case, wou'd not we believe that they protested against us with the like Integrity, from an Apprehension "that the Church was in no small Danger of expiring out right, "and that quickly as to the Form, Order and Constitution of "an Organiz'd Church". (As they themselves express it in the 5th Page of the Protest) and if so whither their view of Things was right or wrong, if they remain of the same Judgment how can they acknowledge without Sinning against Conscience? And thus by insisting on Acknowledgments, the way to Union is as effectually, as uncharitably, unscripturally, and unreasonably shut up, without any probability of an Alteration; and is not this a lamentable Case? Surely it is!

Now in order to avoid uncharitable *Divisions*, and *Tumults*; it is necessary to beware of *Pride*; for as *Solomon* observes, *It is only by Pride that Contention comes*, (Prov. xiii. 10.) And elsewhere he declareth, that a *proud Spirit stirreth up Strife*; this makes Men easy to be provok'd, and hard to be reconciled, the proud Man is always aiming at some higher Mark of Honour; and

and if Peace and Union won't answer that, War and Division shall; what else but Ambition made War in Heaven itself? Pride inclines us to obtrude with Violence our Opinion even in lesser Things upon others, and unjustly deny them the Liberty we desire for ourselves. And therefore we are told, that the Overseer or Pastor of a particular *Flock*, or Bishop should be no *Novice*, *least being lifted up, or puffed up with Pride, he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil.* (1 Tim. iii. 6.) it was doubtless upon the Account of *Pride*, that the Apostle *John* complains of *Diotrephes*, who thro' Love to *Prebeminence*, refused to receive the *Brethren*, and forbid them that would, *yea, and cast them out of the Church; prating against them with malicious Words,* (3 John 9, 10.) But on the contrary *Humility* will incline us to dwell at home, and think ourselves unworthy of the *Communion* of our *Brethren*, and to be most quarrelsome against our own *Corruptions*; it will encline us to do nothing in *Strife and Vain-glory*, but in *lowliness of Mind*, each to esteem the other, better than himself. It will incline us to reckon ourselves, the *Chief of Sinners*, and far less than the least of all *Saints*.

O, how precious and amiable is this Grace, in the esteem of GOD and good Men! This should be our constant *Garb*, our constant *Ornament*, with which we should be *cloathed*, and without which we are indeed *naked*, and deform'd; *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, (but Pride goes before a Fall, and a high Mind before Destruction.)* In such, GOD dwells; to such he gives Increase of Grace; and such he guides in his Way, but the *Proud* he looks on afar off: And hence the Apostle cautions us against being *wise in our own Conceits, and minding high Things,* (Rom. xii. 16.) i. e. Things above our Capacities and Callings, and that we should not think over highly of ourselves, but soberly as we ought to think, (Rom. xii. 3.) *alla phronein, eis to sopronein*; which was the Psalmist's Sentiment and Practice. (Ps. cxxxi 1.)\*

NOR is it less necessary, to beware of narrowness of Soul; which not only the *Warmth* of some Men's *Tempers*, disposes them to, as well as their *conversing* with such only who are of their turn of Mind, and *small Stature* in respect of *Knowledge*; but especially their *Unacquaintedness* with the *History* of the *Church* of CHRIST in past Ages, as well as with its present *State* throughout the World. If religious People did but know the great *Mischief* that Divisions have done in former Times, to the *Church* of CHRIST, they would not pretend to *reform* her, by that which has almost proved her *Ruin*: Or uncharitably confine the *Church* of CHRIST within the narrow *Compass* of a *Nut-shell*, I mean a few *Societies* of their own *superfine Cast* or *Party*; and so rob the *Redeemer*, of his visible *Kingdom* on Earth almost altogether.

FARTHER it is likewise exceeding necessary, in order to preserve the *UNION* of the visible *Church*, to *AVOID ALTERING* the *TERMS* of *COMMUNION* which CHRIST has *FIX'D*; we should

\* So Chryostom, Erasmus, Beza, Grotius.

let Matters stand as our Lord has left them, and not pretend to make any new *Terms of Communion*, or make any thing necessary to the UNION of the Church, which CHRIST has not made necessary.\* *Ministers* are but *Servants*, as their Name signifies, and therefore should not *Lord it* over their *Brethren*, and usurp the *Legislator's* Place, or attempt to be *Masters* of our *Faith*, No! CHRIST, and none but CHRIST, is our KING, in Matters purely religious; tho' the *Church* it is true, has an executive, yet she has no *legislative Authority*, nor is there any Need of it, the holy *Scriptures* are a compleat *Rule*, able to make the *Mind of God* perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good *Work*. And if there was Need, the *Church* has no *Capacity* equal to that *Province*; her *Business* is to obey the *Precepts* already issued forth, by the royal *Authority* of *Zion's King*, and not to obtrude new ones of her own *Invention*, which serve only to enslave the *Consciences* of Men to a *human Authority*, to divide the *Mediator's Kingdom* into numberless *Parts*, and draw his *Subjects* from their *Allegiance*, to their rightful Lord and *Sovereign*.

IT is also necessary, *Sirs*, to beware of enslaving ourselves, to any *Party* of Men, by confining all our *Respect* to them, to the *Neglect* of others; and making them *Masters* of our *Consciences*, because of their *Piety*; so as to take for granted what they say, by an *implicit Faith*, without examining it; or so as to be slavishly afraid to contradict them: No! my *Brethren*, we must not judge of *Doctrines* by the *Persons* that hold them; tho' this is, alas, almost as common, as it is perverse and fatal; but by the *Word of God*, which is our only *Rule*; sometimes it happens that a bad *Man* is in the *Right*, and a good *Man* in the *Wrong*.

NEVERTHELESS the *Judgment* of the aged and experienced, in whom the fierce *Fires* of *Youth* are abated, (which some call *Zeal*, but falsely) not only by the Influence of *Years*, but by farther Acquaintance with themselves, (in a great *Variety* of *Vicissitudes*, and *Tossings* upon this turbulent *Ocean*) as well as with the rest of *Mankind*, and by more deep and calm *Searches*, into the *Meaning* of the *Scriptures*, and *History* of *past Ages*: I say the *Judgment* of such, is more to be valu'd, and especially in Matters that concern the *Peace* of the *Church of God*, than the indigested *Notions* of *rash-headed*, fiery and unexperienced *Youth*: Yet the *Judgment* of none should be taken without *Trial*, as the great *Apostle Paul* humbly acknowledges concerning himself, that when he was a *Child*, he spake as a *Child*; so had others his *Humility* they would acknowledge the same Thing; but it seems, as if many imagined themselves Men in *Knowledge*, without ever passing thro' the *Infant Age*; contrary to the *Order of Nature*, and of *God*; and consequently conceit that their *Knowledge* is miraculous, in an *Age* long after *Miracles* have ceased; but can give no *Proof* of this extraordinary *Attainment*, excepting vain  
and

\* To the aforesaid Purpose speaks Dr. *Stillingsfleet*

and strong Confidence in their own Opinion, (respecting little Things) and a Contempt of the Opinion of others, who had the Misfortune not to know so much at first as afterwards; both which are insufficient Vouchers; but when the Apostle grew to the Stature of a *Man*, he was not ashamed to *put away Childish Things*; nor should others, to follow his Example, how much soever they may suffer for it, by such, who would seem to have it understood, that they are infallible, and that Wisdom must die with them.

FARTHER any that desire, to promote the *Peace and Union* of CHRIST'S Kingdom, shou'd beware of meddling with the *Faults* of the *Ministers* of it, in such a Way as tends to *Disparage* them and *Obstruct* their usefulness; no doubt they may and ought to be reprov'd, when there is need of it, but this ought to be in their presence, with *Humility, Meekness and Love*, so as tends to promote their *Cure*; (and hence we are directed to *entreat an Elder as a Father*.) Not by *Backbiting* and *Slandering* of them in their absence, or threatening and reviling them in their presence, which has no other Tendency but to express our sinful *Resentments*, inflame theirs, and render both *Contemptible*!

NOR should we forget, what the sacred Scriptures inform us, of the *Mutiny* of *Corah* and his numerous *Companions*, who gather'd themselves together, against *Moses and Aaron*, and said unto them, *ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation are Holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them, wherefore then, list ye up yourselves, above the Congregation of the LORD?* The issue of which *Mutiny* was exceeding dreadful! (See *Num. xvi.*) My Brethren saith the Apostle *James*, *be not many Masters, (Didascaloï, teachers) knowing that ye shall receive the greater Condemnation,* (*Jam. iii.*)

AND shou'd not such as are desirous of *Peace*, and *Union* beware of looking with an *envious Eye*, upon the *Conduct* of others, only to *carp* and *accuse*? Yes Surely, we shou'd be more ready to observe, what is good and commend it; let us imitate the *Bee*, that feeds on *fragrant Flowers*, and not the *Crow*, that passes over them with a *fordid neglect*, and feeds only on *Garrion*. And when we observe any *Corruption* in the *Church*, we ought to take notice of the contrary extream, least while we shun one Evil, we run into another, which is as natural as it is fatal.

ENVY my Brethren, basely Spites every Thing that is Excellent and truly Noble: But is the most direct and sworn Enemy to *Peace and Union*: 'Twas the *Envy* of the *Devil*, that first disturb'd the *Peace and Order* of the *World*; that set Men in *Battle Array* against *GOD*, and one another: And it is the same that foments all the *Jars Confusions and Divisions* of the *Church and State*, so that *Satan* may be justly call'd the *Father of Discords and Divisions*, as well as of *Lies*; indeed the *envious Man* is a *Universal Enemy*.

NOR should we keep at a *Distance* from those we differ with? Hearing of their *Reasons* calmly, has an excellent tendency to remove *Prejudices*, and unite Mens *Minds* and *Affections*, but the contrary Method, which too much obtains among *Parties* generally, *viz.* keeping at a great distance from each other and conversing only with those of their own *Sentiments*; together with a ready *Reception* of bad *Reports* of one another, and spreading them about with *speed* and *diligence*, and perhaps with the Addition of some *aggravating Circumstance*, or stronger *Point of Light*, the *Omission* of some *favourable one* and ascribing the whole *Charge* to a secret bad *Design*; without hearing the accused Persons *Apology*; or having any certain *Proof* of the Accusation, or making any kind Interpretations in his *favour*, is most unjust and barbarous, and tends to turn all into *Flame* and *Uproar*!

AGAIN my Brethren, it is no more prejudicial to *Peace* and *Unity*, then it is base and degenerate in itself, for Persons of either Side of the Question in *Debate*, to make a fordid *Triumph* over, to *lampoon*, *redicule*, and *burlesque*, suppos'd or real *Condescensions*, in order to *Peace* and *Union*, without which they are not like to be attain'd; such who thus sit in the scorners Chair, and labour to oppress with *Scandal* and *Contempt*, what is truly virtuous and commendable; do thereby declare themselves to be *Enemies* to the *Peace* of *Christ's Kingdom*; and that they prefer their *Party-Passions*, and *Prejudices* before it; nor do they less manifest their own *inconsistency*, for if they suppose that any have chang'd their *Sentiments* for the better, in any Instance, why do they reproach it? If for the worse, why did they not approve their former *Sentiments*? It is inglorious to *Deride*, or *Triumph* over the suppos'd or real *Mistake*, or *Disgrace*, even of an *Enemy*, how much more then of a *Friend*? In a Word, such *Men* if they may be call'd so; (seeing they bid defiance to the *Sentiments* of *Humanity*,) like brute *Beasts* speak Evil of what they understand not, publish their own *shame*, and instead of exposing others, do contrary to their *Design*, (in Effect) pronounce a *Panegyrick* upon them, and a just *Satire* upon themselves!

On the Contrary, dear Sirs, let us with sincerity, speed and steadfastness, comply with the positive *Means* of *Peace* and *Union* before hinted. O! let us entertain kind Thoughts of the Speech and Actions of our Brethren. Dr. H. More observes justly, "That it would do much more good in the World, if all Parties instead of severe Censure, were ready to find out and commend what is good in the Doctrine and Worship of those that differ from them; that this would encline them to listen to advice for Reformation, and keep up the Credit of the common Truths and Duties of Religion; when this envious snarling at all that others do, tends to bring Mankind to Atheism, and banish all reverence of Religion, together with Christian Charity, from the Earth."

DID not our LORD use this Method when he reprov'd the Churches of *Ephesus*, *Pergamus* and *Thyatira*? to soften their native Obstinacy and Reluctance against *Reproof*, and to make it efficacious to answer its Design: The blessed JESUS introduced it with a *Commendation* of what was Praise worthy in them, (Rev. ii.) This is an *Example* truly rational, and well worthy of Imitation.

O! let us not believe every bad Story we hear of our *Brethren*. *Scultetus* (from *Tossinus*) relates this Passage of Prince *Frederick* of *Montpelgard*, who had been prejudiced against the *Protestants* by a *Papal Tuition*, that when he was at *Geneva* and *Helvetia*, he was wont to say, “ *Geneve et in Helvetia, vidi multa, de quibus, nihil, pauca eorum de quibus sepe audivi.*” *i. e.* At *Geneva* and *Helvetia*, I have seen many Things of which I heard nothing before, and few of those Things which I have often heard of. It was likewise a just and generous saying of Lord *Verulam*, in his *Essays*, worthy of a good Mind, “ That the GOD above, who knoweth the Heart, doth discern, that frail Men in some of their Contradictions, intend the same Thing, and accepteth both.” This is in Substance the same with the *Apostles* truly *Catholick Sentiments* expressed in the *fourteenth* Chapter of his *Epistle* to the *Romans*, a Chapter exceeding necessary to be well understood, and seriously considered at this Juncture.

IF we would but defend an accused *Brother* in his absence, as far as Reason directs, as far as we would desire him to defend us in the like Circumstances, and be hardly induced to believe what is bad of them; and even when we are constrained to it by sufficient and credible Evidence, to yield an unwilling assent; and in the mean time to impute the faulty *Sentiment*, the criminal *Conduct* to good Design, or to Ignorance, Oversight and Inconsideration, rather than *Malignity*, as far as we reasonably can, it would probably have a happy Influence to promote *Peace* and *Union*. And

FARTHER, if to kind Thoughts, we add *condid courteous Speech*, and *friendly Behaviour* and *Action*, it will crown the Scene, soften their Prejudices, invite mutual Respect, from all that are not entirely lost to a Sense of Ingenuity and Gratitude, and so preserve *Peace* and *Union* where they are, and at least prepare the Way for them where they are not. If such a *Conduct* is like to have Influence upon an *Enemy*, surely much more upon a displeas'd *Friend* and *Brother*. But that is the Case, and hence we are advis'd to it by the *Apostle*, (Rom. xii. 20.) *Therefore if thy Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his Head, i. e.* instead of returning *Evil for Evil* to thine *Adversary*, do him kind Offices, which have a noble Tendency to make him *relent*; this will *heap Coals of Fire upon his Head*, not of *wrath*, but *love*, not to *burn* him, but to *soften* his obstinate *Resentments*: This will

will excite him to reciprocal Respect, say *Augustine* and *Erasmus*, The Apostle probably alludes to some *hard Metals*, which are softened by Fire, not only put under, but sometimes cast on the Top of the Crucible. "To love Friends (*or those that are kind to us*) is common to all, saith *Tertulian*, but to love Enemies, "is peculiar to Christians." \* And therefore we should not be overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with good. He that revenges himself (i. e. privately) is overcome by the Evil of his Enemy, and the Passion of his own Mind; but he that shews Kindness for Cruelty, carries the *Lawrels of Victory and Triumph*! Not to recompence Evil for Evil, or retaliate Injuries by private Resentment, which is as natural to us as it is prejudicial to Society, as it is truly excellent in itself, so it is often beneficial to those that observe it: For, as *Valerius Maximus* nobly observes, "Injuries "are more beautifully conquer'd with Kindnesses, than requited "by the obstinacy of mutual hatred" †

WITHOUT Beneficence, our in-offensive Carriage will be look'd upon as a suspicious Strangeness, rather than a peaceable Demeanour, especially if when press'd with Necessity, we do not relieve them, they will look upon themselves to be slighted and wronged; for Need, in the Opinion of those that feel it, begets a title to competent relief, which if they be deny'd, they think they are injur'd.

DEARLY beloved avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto Wrath, for Vengeance is the Lord's, and he will repay it. Because this Duty of abstaining from private Revenge is so difficult to Flesh and Blood, the Apostle repeats it with a friendly Compelation, that his intreaty might prevail the more, he counsels the believing *Romans* to restrain their Anger from Resistance, and to leave the Part of Judgment and Punishment to GOD, and commit their Cause to him, who judgeth righteously, and will in due Time vindicate the Innocent.

BE of the same Mind one towards another, in respect of Concord and Affection in your Councils and Actions. Let not Mercy and Truth forsake thee, bind them about thy neck, write them upon the Table of thine Heart, so shalt thou find favour in the sight of God and Man. (Pro. iii. 3. 4.) If it be possible, as much as lyeth in you, live peaceably with all Men. The Apostle here supposeth, that it may so happen, by Reason of the frowardness of some Mens Tempers, and the unreasonableness of the Conditions of Peace they propose, that it will be impracticable to live in Peace with them, it may be inconsistent with Truth and Holiness to comply with their Demands; nevertheless as much as lyeth in us, we should carefully avoid offering Occasion of Disturbance, and

\* Amicos enim diligere omnium est, inimicos solorum christianorum. *Tertul. Contra Scapulam.*

† Speciosius injurie beneficiis vincuntur, quam mutui odii pertinacia pensantur. *Valer. Max.*

and Endeavour (*Provirili*) Studiously, with all our Might, those Things that tend to procure Peace, where it is not, and preserve it where it is, by a peaceable Temper and Behaviour, by peaceable Desires, Designs, Councils, Proposals, Pleadings, Condescensions; to this Purpose speak *Camero, Gomarus, Pareus, Toletus, Erasmus, Grotius.*

LET us do Justice and love Mercy, we should be just in our Dealings to all Men, punctually observing our Contracts, impartially deciding Controversies, equally distributing Rewards. JUSTICE in its own Nature, and by the common Agreement of Men, is design'd to be the *Guardian of Peace and Union*, and sovereign Remedy of Contentions.

NOR is it less necessary, to remit our right in nice, rigorous and doubtful Points, to avoid as much as we can, hard Measures, and Extremities, especially in smaller Matters; for such Severities shew little kindness to our Neighbours, or Regard to their Good; which tends to exasperate them and make them, believe we are their Enemies, and so excite them to be ours; but on the contrary some rebatement of Right, will induce them to have an honourable Opinion of us, and a sincere Affection to us.

As *Money* is the *Sinew of War*, so is *Peace of Society*; without which it is so far from obtaining any of its just and valuable Ends, that perfect *Solitude* is preferable to it, for in that we only want the Help of Friends, but in this we receive Injury from them; it is *Peace* that makes *Society* a *Defence*, and distinguishes the *Congresses of Men* from the Herds of *Beasts*: As *Union* strengthens every Thing, so *Peace* cements *Union* and holds all together; this gives Beauty, Order, Proportion, Decency and Agreeableness to *Society*; this inclines every Man to keep within his proper *Sphere*, and not to aspire after another's Business; the *Hand* does not affect the Place of the *Eye*, nor the *Foot* of the *Head*; the Result of which must be the most consummate Beauty, and perfect Harmony: This derives an innocent and great Delight to the whole Body; for who can express the noble Pleasures of sincere Affection? The Sweetnesses that issue from mutual Kindness, entire Confidence, and a firm Union of Minds?

SEEING we are here in a *State* of Imperfection, where the most *Intelligent* know but in Part, and consequently where difference of Sentiment about Circumstantials, or Matters of lesser Moment, wherein the Interest of vital and practical Christianity is little concerned; it is unreasonable to suffer the Vigour of our mutual Affections to abate, and much more so when we indulge an Alienation of them!

THE great Things of Religion wherein we are happily agreed, should suffice to maintain mutual Respect, and be an enduring *Bond of Affection and Union* among us.

FORASMUCH as we have no Reason to believe that lesser Differences of Sentiment, do exclude Persons from the *Love* of our common Lord, they should not from ours; and doubtless it is on

this Account, that our dear Saviour and his Apostles, have so frequently inculcated the great Duties of mutual *Forbearance*, *Patience* and *Love*; which we would be more ready inviolably to observe, if we had a just and humble Sense of the *Weakness* of our *Understandings*, and great Deficiency of our Knowledge, in this mutable, mortal, miserable and imperfect State? We need the *Mantle* of other's *Charity*, to vail our *Mistakes* and *Failures* in *Sentiment* and *Practice*, and can we consistently deny the same to others? Our great *Master* and compassionate *Redeemer* overlooks many *Mistakes* and *Imperfections* in his sincere *Servants*, and why should not we do so likewise? *Should not the same Mind that was in him be in us?* Should not we in imitation of his glorious *Example*, *Receive others as he hath received us*, (Rom. xv. 7.) *Should not such as are strong, bear with the Infirmities of the Weak?* *And not please themselves, but their Neighbour for his Good and Edification, even as CHRIST pleased not himself?* (Rom. xv. 3, 12.)

DEAR Sirs! Why should not we make such due *Allowances*, and charitable *Apologies* for our Brethren's Misapprehension in *Opinion*, and Indiscretions in *Practice*, and for their unhappy *By-esses* of *Prejudice* and *Passion*, the true Source of the former, as we are or should be *conscious*, we need for our own? And be ready to exercise the same *Forbearance* towards them, that we desire and expect? If not, how can we love our Neighbour as ourselves? The Observance of which *Precept*, you know, Sirs, as it is highly rational in itself, so it is of the last Importance in all Societies, both civil and religious; why therefore should we not stoop to the humblest Offices of *Kindness* towards them? *And if any of them are overtaken with a Fault, to restore such with the Spirit of Meekness, considering ourselves, lest we also should be tempted.*

THE *Vindication* of Misdemeanours committed against us, does not belong to us, for indeed we are not competent *Judges* of them; it being (our own Cause) nor rightful *Executors* of the *Punishment* due for them; and therefore GOD has reasonably reserved this difficult *Province* to himself, *Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it.*

INSTEAD of exciting *Revenge*, to which we have naturally such a wild, fierce and ungovernable *Proness*, we are obliged by the *Religion* of JESUS, to interpret our Neighbour's *Offences* in the mildest Sense they are capable of, as flowing from *Infirmity* or *Mistake*, and to forgive them, in imitation of the blessed GOD, who is *gracious and merciful, and slow to anger.*

WE ourselves being subject to the same, or greater Faults, do need *Pardon* from others; and therefore should extend the same to them: And if GOD has forgiven us a *Thousand Talents* shall we take our *Brother* by the *Throat* for a few *Pence*? And indeed the Almighty has made our forgiving others, a necessary Condition of our obtaining *Pardon* ourselves. (Matt. vi.) *If ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your heavenly*

*Father.*

Father forgive your Trespases. Nor does private Revenge do any Service, but on the contrary, provoke to greater Injuries.

BUT the Example of our LORD, should especially enduce us to Meekness and Patience; and hence we are commanded to learn of him, who is meek and lowly in Heart, (and assured that in this way) we shall find rest to our Souls. And elsewhere we are enjoin'd, to consider him who endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our Minds.

THE Example of our LORD, my Brethren, was the most perfect, amiable and glorious of this Kind that ever was presented to human View; he was above all Expression, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief; his whole Life was a continued train of Miseries; and therein shone forth with unclouded and inexpressible Brightness, the unstain'd, uninterrupted exercise of Meekness and Patience, in all their amiable Oriency, Charms and Attractives.

HIS Parentage was, to appearance, obscure and mean. His Life was spent not only in continual Labour and hard Travel, but in extreme Poverty; and hence it is said of him, that the Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Nests, but that the Son of Man hath no where to lay his Head. Sometimes he fed upon coarse fare, and sometimes was destitute of ordinary Food, and sometimes was indebted for it, even to Strangers of the humblest Order and Character; yet we find no shadow of murmur by our LORD's Conduct in that humble situation, or any Endeavour after a change of it.

NOR was he only in a low and poor Estate, but environ'd round with the most formidable Dangers, and expos'd to all the Darts of Envy in their utmost virulence and malignity, the World hated him because he was not of it, and sought to slay him; and this in return for the most important unparallel'd and condescending Kindness and Mercy that ever was or can be expressed to the Sons of Men! Yet he was grievously aspers'd and inhumanly persecuted, without committing the least Offence; these Things our LORD bore with an undisturb'd calm of Mind, and instead of Revenge, pour'd down Blessings on his Enemies: He instructed their Minds, forgave their Offences, sympathiz'd with them in their Straits, their Sorrows, healed their Diseases and supplicated his Father in their favour, Father forgive them!

WHEN his Countrymen and Kindred shew'd him ungrateful disrespect, instead of complaining, he excus'd their Rudeness, by observing, that a Prophet was not without Honour save in his own Country, and in his own House. And when the Samaritan Strangers treated him with indecency and contempt, and his forward Disciples were fir'd with unhallow'd Indignation, for the Indignity and Affront that was shewn to their Master, he gently labour'd to soften their Severity, and calm their Resentment, by observing, that they knew not what Spirit they were of, and that he came not into the World to destroy Mens lives, but to save them.

WHEN the *Disciples* indulg'd an unreasonable *incredulity* in the midst of the most powerful *Arguments* to the Contrary, the blessed JESUS only gave a gentle *Admonition*, *why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith?*

WHEN *Judas* in the most ungrateful and treacherous Manner betray'd him, he saluted him with gentleness and courtesy, *Friend wherefore art thou come?*

WHEN his *Disciples*, in the *Juncture* of his extreme *Distress*, were sleepy and slothful, notwithstanding of his affectionate warnings and moving entreaties to the Contrary; yet the meek JESUS only gave them a gentle *Rebuke*, and immediately added to it, a charitable *Apology* in their favour, lest the *Reproof* should make too deep *Impression* upon their Minds, *could ye not watch with me one Hour? The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak.* Blessed Lord JESUS, how dear and amiable, and yet how amazing are thy Meekness and Patience! O send down thy holy *Dove-like Spirit* into this wretched World, from which *Meekness* and *Patience* have almost taken their final flight, and make, O make thy People like thyself.

WHEN his zealous overconfident Apostle (*Peter*) deny'd him, in a very scandalous and dreadful Manner, with *Oaths* and *Curses*, did our LORD storm at him, and reject him? No! but look'd him into CONTRITION by his LOVE, and ordered the first *TYDINGS* of his RESURRECTION to be told to him in particular, *go and tell the Disciples, and tell Peter*; poor *Peter* that has deny'd me, yet I know him, I remember him, I love him still; tell him this for his Comfort, that his *Friend* and *Saviour* has risen from the Dead. O! the amazing *Meekness*! O the inexpressible incomparable *Tenderness* of the *Mercy* and *Love* of our dear, dear Lord JESUS CHRIST! The *Heavens* and the *Earth* may be astonished at it! Surely our blessed *High Priest* is tenderly touch'd with the feeling of our *Infirmities*! His *Bowels* found seasonable *Succour* to the *Distressed* and *Indigent*, his *Bowels* bleed over them in their *Calamities*.

WHEN the *High Priests* Officers did injuriously strike him, he only return'd a mild *Expostulation*, *If I have spoken Evil, bear Witness of the Evil, if well, why smitest thou me?*

OUR LORD protected from harm the very *Instruments* of his *Sufferings*, as appears in the *Cure* of the *High-Priest's* Servant, whose Ear *Peter* had rashly struck off. *Suffer me thus far*, said the meek JESUS, *i. e.* suffer me to do this Thing, (*says Ludovicus de diu*) unbind my Hands for a little moment, that I may heal this poor Man. Our LORD was more zealous for the safety of his Enemies than his own! All his *Behaviour* at the Time of his *Trial* and last *Sufferings*, was a perfect calm; he was led as a *Lamb to the Slaughter*, so he opened not his Mouth. All the load of *Calumny* that was cast upon him, and *cruel Treatment* he endur'd, did not extort one *angry Word*, No! Instead thereof, he pray'd his Father to forgive their *Offences*, and labour'd to

extenuate them, to apologize for them on the Account of their Ignorance and Mistake: They know not what they do! O the kindness of CHRIST! O glorious Example! It was a just Observation of Eliphaz, that Affliction comes not out of the Dust. The Almighty has a right to dispose of our Condition, and manages the Government of the Universe with infinite Wisdom, and inflexible Righteousness; with irresistible Power and unexhausted Goodness: There is the exactest Harmony, the noblest Tendency, the firmest Union and strictest Adjustment, in and among all the Parts of the grand System of Providence, which shall be made fully manifest, to the whole intelligent Creation, at the End of Time: When the Deep and at present impenetrable Plot of this surprising Drama, shall be opened: Then shall every one be satisfy'd with its Beauty, Conduct and Design, tho' now to us who sit in a dark Corner of this vast Theatre, some of its Parts seem cloudy and perplex'd, GOD's ways are (often) in the great Deep, and his footsteps are not known; he covers with Darknes his Pavilion, and hides the Face of his Throne: He gives no account of his Matters, does not open the Springs, Connection, and particular Scope of the several Parts of Providence, to the Sons of Men; No! there is a wheel, within a wheel; which makes good Men think, that many Things are against them, and against the Church, which really tend to and shall issue in the good of both, as in the Advancement of Joseph in Egypt, which was compass'd by a series of seemingly contrary Events, each of which was so necessary to carry on the Design, that the removal of it would have effectually marr'd the whole; or like the misty veil of the Morning, which tho' for a while by an unfriendly Aspect, it clouds the grateful Light, yet soon ushers in a brighter Day; hence the great Doctor of the Gentiles, exclaims upon this stupendous Subject of Providence, with humble Rapturous, but just Astonishment, in the following noble Language, O the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out?

BUT to Forebearance, Meekness and Patience, let us add the glorious Grace and Vertue of Love: This is essential to the Nature of true Christianity; this is the grand Characteristick of its sincere Professors; this is their great Preparative for its promised Rewards.

LOVE, Dear Sirs, is essential to the Nature of Christianity; and hence it's called by our Lord himself, the first and great Command, (Mat. xxii. 37, 38, 39.) and truly so it is, in respect of its Object, its Order, its Obligation, its Extent, its Excellency, its End.

THE Supreme Object of Love, is the highest and best of Beings, the blessed God, who is the Supreme Excellency and the chief Good. Augustine esteemed it as an inestimable Privilege, that he had Liberty to Love. "Who am I, saith he, that thou

“commandest me to love, and threatnest me with Misery if I do not love thee.”

THE *order and dignity of Love*, is such, that we must place it before all other *Graces and Duties*, as the *Foundation of Piety*: Whatsoever is taught in the *Law*, and the *Prophets*, flows from this as a *Fountain*, and grows upon this as a *Root*, and hence we are commanded to be *rooted and grounded in Love*.

THE *Obligation of Love*, is indispensable, and perpetual. As *Jehovah* first bestows his *Love* upon us, and then whatever he confers afterwards, he gives in *Love*, so the blessed *God* requires, that we first give him our *Love*, and then do all from that Principle. No *Duty* can warrant the Intermision of our *Love* one Moment; divers other *Duties* may be dispens'd with for a *Time*, but the *Almighty* can no more dispense with this then deny himself!

THE *extent of Love*, is exceeding large, in respect of its *Object, Subject, Duration*; it regards its supreme *Object* the blessed *God*, with a supreme respect, in the *Unity* of his *Essence*, and *Trinity* of *Persons*, in all his *attributes*, both incommunicable and communicable, and in all the *Discoveries* he has given of them in his *Word* and *Works of Creation, Redemption and Providence*: It is likewise carry'd out to its inferior *OBJECT* the whole *Human race*, with *Benignity and Benevolence*, and towards the visible *Children of the Kingdom*, or *Saints of God* (according to the Sentiment of *Charity*) with peculiar *Complacence*! As to its *SUBJECT*, it requires the harmonious Concurrence of all our *Powers*, the whole *Man, the whole Heart and Soul, the whole Mind, the whole Strength*, as the great *Prophet of the Church* informs us. As to its *DURATION* it is *Everlasting*. Most of the other *Commands* shall expire with this *World*, but this endures forever, when *Repentance and Mortification* which do or ought to employ, a considerable Part of our *Time* expire, when *Faith* turns into *vision*, and *Hope* into *fruition*, *Love* will live, and burn in all its *Beauty and Brightness*, with an unmix'd, undeminis'd, uninterrupted and eternal *Flame*. Here it is weakned and diverted by a variety of sensible *Objects*, and strong *Temptations*, but there it will run in one continu'd *Current* towards its glorious *Object and Center*, without *fear or jealousy* forever: *Charity* saith the *Apostle*, never faileth; but whether there be *Prophecies*, they shall fail; whether there be *Knowledge* it shall vanish away, for we know in part, and *Prophecy* in part: But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

THE *Excellency of Love* is transcendent, in regard of its *Matter*. *Love* to *God*, and consequently *Love* to *Man*, (which in the Judgment of our *Saviour* is like to it) is the most excellent of all *Graces*. *Love* among the *Graces*, is like the *Sun* among the *Stars*, which not only enlightens the lower *World*, but illuminates the *Stars* themselves: *Love* does not only do its own *Office* but it enlivens the other *Graces*, and gives fresh springs

to all the Offices of Devotion, to all the Duties of Obedience; both active and passive, it makes us ready to run, in the Path of the one, and glad to endure the Yoke of the other: When our Hearts are enlarg'd by Love, with the devout Psalmist, *we run in the Way of GOD's Commandments*: When our Bosoms beat with Love, we will not with blessed Paul, count our Lives Dear, that we may finish our course with Joy; but on the contrary, with the primitive Christians, rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer Reproach for CHRIST's Name sake. Love does not behave itself unceasingly but beareth all Things, beliveth all Things. Love is a conformity to the Nature of the blessed GOD, who is not only loving, but Love. Love is as it were a grateful requital of GOD, with something like the Kindness he Vouchsafes: *Jehovah* may require many Things of us, but he requires nothing like this of Love; because this is the only thing by which we can answer GOD in kind; in other Things we cannot render alike for alike. The Almighty created us, preserves us, and confers many benefits upon us, but we can do nothing like these Things for GOD, he is infinitely above our returns, but by Love, we render something like his Love to us. Love contains all the Divine Precepts of the Law and Gospel in its Bosom; partly because no Endeavour to obey any of them without it will be accepted, but every honest Endeavour will be accepted with it; and partly because it really inclines us to obey them all, and therefore virtually contains in it obedience to them all: And thus it may be truly call'd the Fullfillment of the Law: For it is really so in the sight of GOD, in Design, Disposition and Principle. Tho' David did not actually build the Temple, yet because he sincerely intended it and was strongly inclined to it, it is therefore said by GOD himself, to be done. Farther, Love appears to be the first and great Command, if it be consider'd as an End, all the Commands are refer'd to it, as their last Subordinate End and Scope: Upon the Account of which, or to promote which is the End of the Commandment; or rather Promise, as the Word *Evangeliæ* generally signifies, that is the Gospel which includes, and recommends the Law; (See 1 Tim. i. 5.) *The End of the Commandment is Charity*: As if the Apostle had said the Design and Perfection of the whole Christian Institution, is not Strife and Contention, which curious Questions create, but love to God and Man, and godly Edification, the proper Fruit thereof. Our Doctrine tends to love, but their's to Contention: \*

I may add, that as LOVE is the End of the Law and Gospel, so it is of all the Christian Graces, e. g. spiritual Knowledge tends to it, terminates in it, and is vain without it; the more we know of God, and divine Things, the more we are induced to love them

\* To the aforesaid Purpose speak many learned Interpreters, particularly *Augustine, Beza, Piscator, Aquinas, Erasmus, Daneus, Vorstius, Magalianus, Simachus, Tirinus, Scylæus, Vatabulus, Grotius.*

them, because of their Excellency, and of Consequence to *love* our Brethren, and in the next Life, our Knowledge in Part, will be done away. (1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.) Indeed without LOVE Knowledge is but a sounding Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal.

FARTHER, as Love is the End of Knowledge, so it is of Faith and Hope; Faith leads to it by giving us a realizing view of the most excellent Objects, which naturally, when beheld in proper Points of Light, command Veneration, and excite Desire: And as Faith leads to love as a principle of Action, so it works by it as a Mean or Instrument of Action, and excites to earnest and universal Obedience from that principle, and by that mean, (Gal. v. 6.) for in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any Thing, nor uncircumcision (i. e. to Salvation) but Faith that worketh by love.

THUS love is the End of Hope; we rejoice, saith the Apostle, in the Hope of the Glory of God, with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. Now what is rejoicing, but a love of Delight in the Object of Desire, either apprehended or possessed? This Hope promotes, and therefore is referred to it as its End. The Apostle farther confirms what I have been observing, by these Words, (1 Cor. xiii. 13.) And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, but the greatest of these is Charity. Grotius observes, "That the Apostle enumerates these three Graces, according to the Order of their Generation, first Faith, by which we believe God. 2d. Hope by which we expect the Promises from him. 3d. Charity by which we love God as our chief Good." "The Beginning of Life is Faith, and the End of Life is Charity, saith Ignatius." \* The Apostle prefers Charity to Faith, say Sclaterus, Beza, Erasmus, because of its Utility, it profits more, it expands itself far and wide in its Fruits to our Neighbour, when Faith and Hope are confin'd to our own Bosoms; and because Faith and Hope lead to love, unite us to God, and make us like him, without which Faith and Hope would be unfruitful, (1 John iv. 8. Gal. v. 6. Jam. ii. 14.)

AND thus we may say, that LOVE is the subordinate End of all the Parts, which each Person of the sacred Trinity bore in the Business of Redemption. Hence the Apostle John makes mention of the LOVE of GOD the FATHER therein to us, that ours may be thereby excited to our Brethren. (1 John iv. 10, 11.) Herein is Love, not that we loved GOD, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins, beloved if GOD so loved us, we ought also to Love one another.

MOREOVER the SON of GOD declares of himself, that when he is lifted up, he will draw all Men after him. i. e. by the Magnet of his Dying Love for them, allure their Love to him; for GOD commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners

CHRIST

\* Arche et c. Initium vite fides, finis autem charitas. Ignat. in epistola ad ephesios.

CHRIST dyed for us: And hence we are exhorted to walk in Love, as CHRIST also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a Sacrifice to GOD, for a sweet smelling Savour. (Rom. v. 8. Ephes. v. 2.)

Now as the procuring and promoting of the Love of Men to GOD, and one another, was the Design of GOD the Father in projecting the Plan of Man's Redemption, and giving his Son out of his Bosom to a State of the greatest Abasement and Suffering, to purchase it, as well as of the Son of GOD in the whole of his mediatorial Office and Character; so likewise it is of the blessed SPIRIT, in his Function of COMFORTER; for according to the Order of the divine Oeconomy, he produces by his omnipotent Influence, all Grace in the redeemed, and this of Love among the rest, which is a principal Part of the new Creation; and hence it is said to be the Fruit of the Spirit, and has the Precedence given it, to all the other Fruits thereof; to all the Train of Graces, which constitute the new Man, (Gal. v. 22.) to promote which is doubtless the Design of all his convincing, converting, sanctifying, comforting and sealing Influences, for to this they all have a direct Tendency.

BUT Love, my Brethren, is not only essential to the Nature of true Christianity, but it is the grand Characteristick of its sincere Professors, it is indeed a satisfying Evidence to ourselves of our Integrity when it is sincere, chiefly for the sake of other's Piety, proportioned to the Degrees of it, that is, if we love those most that we apprehend to be the most holy, whether of our Sentiments or not in lesser Things; and if it be universal to all that we have Reason to think are really religious, and effectual, shewing itself in Deed and in Truth as Occasion requires, and we are capable; for we know, saith the Apostle John, that we have passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren, (1 John iii. 14.) Beloved, let us love one another, for Love is of GOD, and every one that loveth is born of GOD, and knoweth GOD, (1 John iv. 7.) He that loveth his Brother, abideth in the Light, and there is no Occasion of stumbling in him, (1 John ii. 10.)

BUT on the contrary, the Apostle John in his first Epistle, assures us, that he that saith he is in the Light, and hateth his Brother, is in Darkness, even until now: That he that hateth his Brother is in Darkness, and walketh in Darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth; because Darkness has blinded his Eyes; and that in this the Children of GOD are manifest, and the Children of the Devil, whosoever doth not Righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother: He that loveth not his Brother, abideth in Death; whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murderer; and ye know that no Murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him. He that loveth not, knoweth not GOD, for GOD is Love. If any Man say, I love GOD, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar; for he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love GOD whom he hath not seen.

BUT *Love* is not only a satisfactory Evidence to ourselves, of our *Sincerity* in *Religion*, but it is made by our great Redeemer, the *Badge* and Cognizance of our DISCIPLESHIP the visible *Mark of Distinction*, between those that profess Christianity, and those that do not, *By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* LOVE, my Brethren, is the LIVERY, which the King of the Church has appointed his Subjects and Servants to wear, that thereby they may manifest to others, who they belong to, who is their Prince and Master; and indeed when this blessed *Grace* is exercis'd, in all its amiable Extent of *Patience, Meekness, Kindness, Sympathy, Beneficence*, and that at Times in the midst of *Temptations* to the contrary, when we bear with the Weaknesses of our Brethren, which we must expect to meet with in a World of Imperfection; (for *Grace* in the Heart, in this Life is like *Gold* in the Oar,) when we readily forgive their Offences against us, and really befriend their Characters in their Absence, as well as all their Interests civil and religious; when we sympathize with them in their Sorrows; are pleased with, and commend the Gifts that God has graciously given them, and their other desirable Qualities; when we answer their angry Speeches with *Meekness* and Gentleness, and relieve them in their Wants and Necessities, as we have Opportunity, doing Good to all Men, but especially to the Household of Faith; and not suffering our Love to consist altogether in Word and in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth, herein imitating the blessed JESUS; who went about doing Good; it is a convincing Proof, to the World about us, that the Religion we profess is from God, and that we are sincere in the Profession of it, and is like to have a powerful Influence upon them, in alluring them to embrace so excellent, so amiable, so useful an Institution; by this good Temper and Conversation, many are like to be won to Christianity, and therefore as the Apostle exhorts us, let our Adorning not consist in gay Dress, but let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is, in the Sight of GOD, of great Price, (1 Pet. iii.)

NOW if LOVE; as has been observed, be essential to true Christianity; the most eminent of all the Graces, and the grand Characteristick of our Profession; then these Things do necessarily follow, viz;

THAT our Profession of, and Stature in Christianity, is to be measured by our Love; the Reality of the former by the Sincerity of it; and the Progress of the latter by the Degree of it; while Persons have but little love for those that differ from them in smaller Things, and are inclined to fierce Controversies, strong Prejudices, Schisms and Factions, about circumstantial Matters, it is Sign they have learned but little of the Gospel of CHRIST, and are of small Stature in Christianity; see 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. And I, Brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but

as unto carnal, even as unto Babes in CHRIST. I have fed you with Milk, and not with Meat: For hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: For whereas there is among you Envy and Strife, and Divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as Men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not Carnal.

THE Apostle Means, that they were not so *Spiritual* as others, but BABES or INFANTS in *Spiritual STATURE*, tho' they were really pious, yet it was but in a small Degree, they were rude in Faith and divine Knowledge, such whom he elsewhere calls NOVICES, (1 Tim. iii. 6.) - *Homer* and *Hesiod* term Men of little Knowledge and Conduct, *Nepious*, Infants; agreeable to the Language of this Epistle, and the *Hebrews*, were wont to term them generally *Children at School*: They were in a great Degree *fleshly*, governed much by their *Passions* and *Prejudices*, yea often Times were more rul'd by their *Affections*, than by sober *Reason* and sound *Judgment*, and therefore were prone to uncharitable *Ferments* and *Factions*, which are hateful to GOD, and contrary to his *Spirit* and *Religion*; they walk'd as Men, i. e. in those *Divisions*, agreeable to the *Dictates* and *Byass* of human and carnal *Affections*, not according to the divine *Prescription*, but as Men behave, who are destitute of the *Spirit of GOD*, and therefore the Apostle could not speak unto them as unto *Spiritual*, i. e. as to adult and grown Christians, the *sublimier Truths* of the *Religion of Jesus* (Heb. v. 11.) but was constrained to feed them as a Nurse does Children with *Milk*, which is of easy *Digestion*, soft, nourishing and Pleasant, our first *food*: That is, to preach to them the first *Principles* or *Elements* of *Religion*, in a simple way. "We prefer, says *Origen*, the profounder Truths of Religion, when we have intelligent and skillful Hearers, otherwise we are silent about them."\* But such sublime Truths the *Corinthians* could not bear; to this Effect speak many learned Interpreters upon the Place. †

FARTHER, as we may judge of our *Stature* in Christianity, by the Degree of our *LOVE*, so we may conclude that all *CONTRORSIES* in *RELIGION*, manag'd with a *bitter Zeal*, are prejudicial to our religious *PROGRESS*, but especially *fierce Contentions*, *cruel Judgings*, and needless *schismatical Separations*, either made (or contentedly continued in, which are substantially the very same) on Account of smaller Matters in Religion, oppose the very Life of Christianity, and are like to bring People under *spiritual decays*, and *leaness of Souls*; they directly tend to bring the *Mind* into a *Hellick Fever*, which is an awful *Symptom*.

T 2

IT

\* Ta en hemin malista, cala, et c. dogmata nostra prestantissima et profundissima proferimus, cum auditores nacti simus peritos, alioquin de iis tacemus, *Origen*, contra cellum. L. 3.

† *Ambrose*, *Theophylact*, *Calvin*, *Grotius*, *Erasmus*, *Beza*, *Pareus*, *Gataker*, *Lightfoot*, *Sclaterus*, *Simachus*, *Voristius*.

It is true, *Zeal* is excellent and advantageous, when directed by *Knowledge* and *Discretion*, temper'd with *Humility*, *Meekness* and *Mercy*, and *proportioned* in *Degree* to the Importance of Things: But when it springs from *Ignorance*, is attended with *uncharitableness* and *bitterness*, and *disproportioned* to the Importance of Things, runs out in a high Degree, and with great *Flame*, upon small and doubtful Matters, it is exceeding pernicious to the Peace and Weal of CHRIST'S *Kingdom* in general, and the Souls of Men in particular. Hot and violent *Zeal* in an Ignorant Man, especially about Circumstantials, is like a drawn *Sword* in a blind or a Madman's Hand, exceeding dangerous to himself and others. *Knowledge* without *Love*, is cold and ineffectual, like the light of the *Moon*: And *Zeal* without *Love* is like a fierce *Flame*, which scorches and devours all before it. But *Knowledge* and *Zeal*, with *Love*, are like the *Light* of the *Sun* which yields a gentle, warming, refreshing and fruitful Influence. O! how lovely is this Disposition and Conduct! This puts Honour upon Christianity: This enlarges and establishes the *Kingdom* of CHRIST upon Earth, and makes it firm, beautiful and illustrious! But what an indelible Scandal and Reproach, what complicated, pregnant, permanent and unspeakable Injury does the Contrary hereto produce and Occasion?

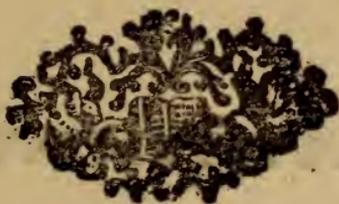
It was justly observed by *Alphonso Turretine*, in his Speech to the Council of *Geneva*, "That in Things indifferent there ought to be no restraint. 'Tis not an indifferent Thing to burden Consciences, in Things as to which God has not burden'd them. It is not an Indifferent Thing to impose a *Yoke* which *Jesus Christ* hath not imposed. 'Tis no Indifferent Matter, to put a Wall of Separation, between Protestants at a Time, when it is so much their Interest to Unite.

"It is extremely hard, we must be allow'd to affirm it, that a Society that doth its Duty, and that speaks what in conscience it believes to be for the good of the Church, should thus see itself torn to pieces by calumny, and for what? Because they are for *Moderation* as to those Points that are indifferent, for in short, this is all their Crime — One must be blind not to see, that there is a growing *Moderation* on all Sides as to these Matters, (in *Germany*, *England* and *Switzerland*, of which he had spoken before,) and that this *Moderation* is infinitely for our Advantage, for the Honour of our Churches, and the Union of Protestants."

ONCE more Dear Sirs! *Love* is the most suitable *Prelude* to, and *Preparative* for the Heavenly State before us; we are *expectants* of a glorious *Immortality*, in which there will be no discordant *Sentiments*, no jar in *Affection*: Perfect *Light* will prevent the former, and perfect *Purity* the latter. Indeed a view of the melancholy Contentions of the *Church militant*, may reasonably incite our longing to be with the *Church Triumphant*; where we shall enjoy a compleat and eternal *Rest* from *Sin*, *Strife* and

and Sorrow, which may God of his infinite Mercy for CHRIST'S sake, grant to us all in due Time. I shall add no more at present, but the Advice of the Apostle Paul to the Philipians and Corinthians (Philp ii. 1---6. 2 Cor. xiii. 11.) *If there be therefore any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fullfil ye my Joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one Mind. Let nothing be done thro' Strife or vain Glory. Let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every Man on his own Things, but every Man also on the Things of others. Let this Mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Finally, Brethren, farewell: Be Perfect, be of good Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you. Amen and Amen.*

F I N I S.



## E R R A T A.

**P**REFATORY Address, page 5. line 29. *for* as is, *read* as it is:  
 p. 8. line 2, *for* Thessalonians *r.* Thessalonians. p. 24. l. 16.  
*for* Fan in *r.* Fan is in. p. 29. l. 37, *for* inventions *r.* invention.  
 p. 44. l. 21. *for* proceeds *r.* proceed. p. 51. l. 1. *for* encourageth  
*r.* encourage. p. 55. l. 10. *for* incidmus *r.* incidimus. p. 66.  
 l. last, *for* domeni *r.* domini. p. 72. l. 31. *for* enpectation *r.*  
 expectation. p. 75. l. 15. *for* fumbibaz omenon *r.* fumbibazo-  
 menon. p. 86. l. 10. *for* give *r.* gave. p. 116. l. 38. *for* the to  
 g. to the.











