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MR JOHN GILB.

Founder of the sect of the Glaciers

Printed for the New York Press

T H E

W O R K S

O F

Mr J O H N G L A S.

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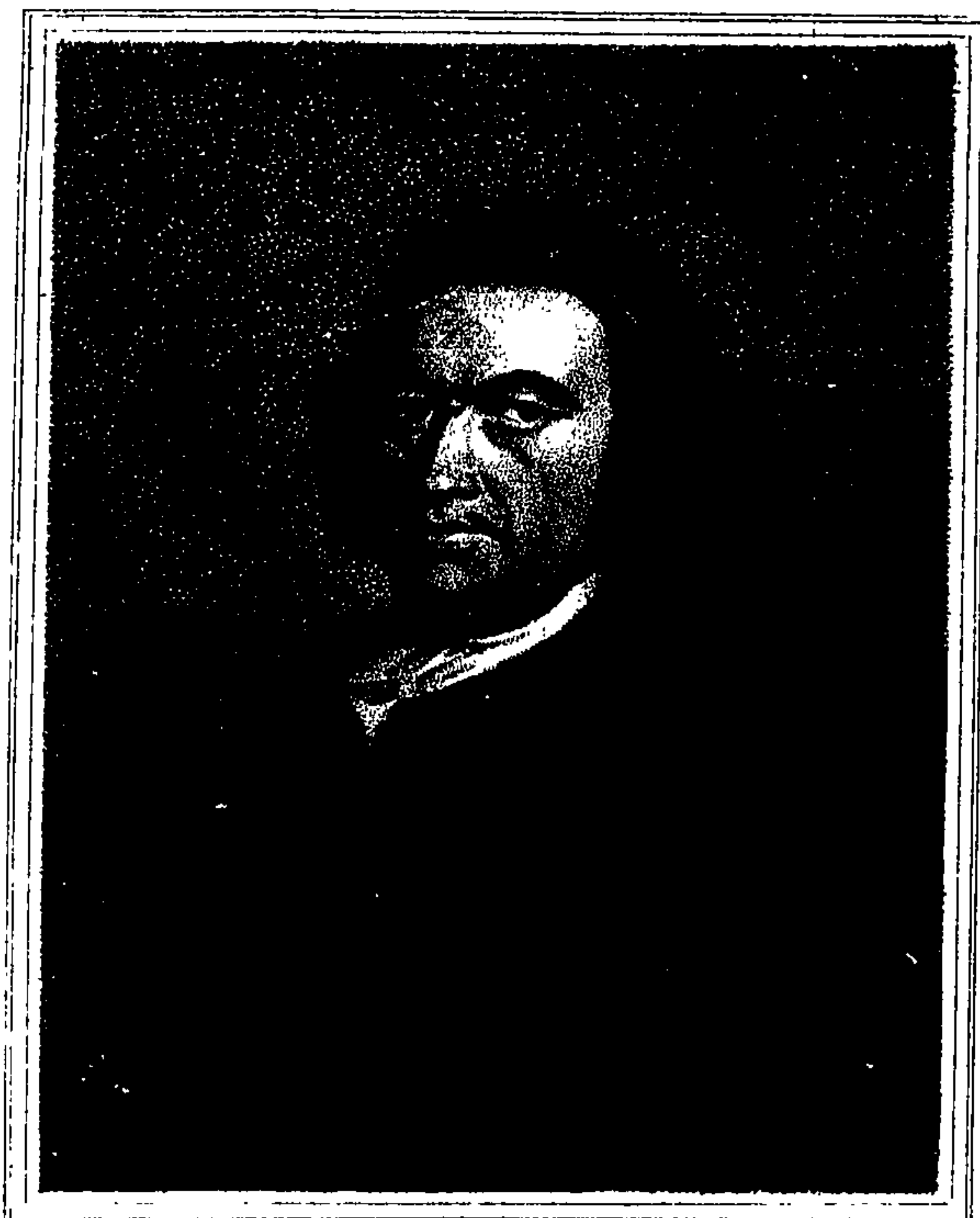
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Founder of the sect of the Glasites.

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T H E

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T H E

W O R K S

O F

Mr J O H N G L A S.

The Testimony of the KING OF MARTYRS
concerning his Kingdom, John xviii. 36. 37.
explained and illustrated in scripture-light.

John i. 46.—*Come and see.*

Rev. xvi. 10. *And the fifth angel poured out his vial on
the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of
darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.*

[First published in the year 1729.]

The P R E F A C E.

WHEN there is so much regard paid to the testimony of men, which can never be the ground of our faith, it cannot be questioned, but that more regard is due to the testimony of the Author and Finisher of faith: *For if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.* At least it may be expected, that as many as would *fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life,* will give a fair hearing to this good confession which Jesus Christ witnessed before Pontius Pilate. And certainly no true
Christian

Christian will find reason to be ashamed of this testimony of our Lord, even though it will make all them that are not ashamed to confess it in all its parts, partakers of the afflictions of the gospel: *For God hath not given them the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

The true cause of my sufferings is the open confession of this testimony of Jesus Christ, as I understand it: and no man can confess any part of divine revelation, but according to the understanding he has of it; otherwise it is not his own confession, but another man's; or, he confesses not truths, but words. For this cause I suffer in my name, by cruel mockings and reproaches; and in my ministry, being rejected, as the *head of the corner* himself was, by them that pretend to be *builders*: and for this cause I suffer the loss of my living in the world, as far as lies in the power of my persecutors; and it will be owing to the good providence of God, and the equity of the magistrate, if my sufferings do not proceed yet further. Yet, in all this, the enemies of my cause persuade themselves and their followers, that *they are doing God good service*: and I am persuaded, that I ought not to think this *strange, as though some strange thing had happened to me.*

But being thus debarred from that access I once had to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and declare the testimony of Jesus Christ in a public manner, I thought it my duty to do my best to make it manifest, according to my measure, by means of the press, (which is yet free, and has been, by the good providence of him that is *head over all things to the church*, made very useful in the recovery of Christianity from the corruption of it by antichrist); and so to offer my testimony against the prevailing errors of the day, and vindicate the present truth, *the word of Christ's patience*, that has been condemned and rejected by *our builders.*

I am very sensible, that, as it was never designed
to

to please any faction or party of this world, no party will be altogether pleased with it. But there are two sorts of men from which the gospel met with opposition at the first, and which remain unto this day, though perhaps under other names: and from both I expect heavy censures.

1. They that affect a temporal kingdom to Christ, and a worldly church. Thus, *minding earthly things*, and professing dissatisfaction with the Christian doctrine of *patient bearing the cross after Christ*, they would have the nations of this earth (now brought under the Christian name, not by the influence of the gospel, by which men were made Christians at first, but by those means which served unto the treading of the outer court of God's house under the feet of the Gentiles) to come in the room of God's ancient nation Israel; and they would have the powers of the earth, and kings of the nations, to be successors to the rulers of that kingdom of God, especially to the kings that sat on the throne of David. These men are much offended it should be now said, that as there was a constant prefiguration of Christ, as a prophet and priest, in that earthly church, so it had a constant prefiguration of his kingdom. Their chief arguments are, signs, the fathers and martyrs, and the authority of the church, or of the clergy; but the strength of their cause lies in deceit and violence: and from them, and those that will be stirred up by them; they that will not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, may expect the treatment of which he forewarns his followers, John xvi. 2.

2. Those that are for natural religion new dressed, and having on the Christian name, but really set up in opposition to Christianity. These are the wise men, the orators, the *disputers of this world*. If any of them shall condescend to take notice of what is here said, it will be treated by them with scorn and contempt, and with them it will pass for nonsense, mysticism, and enthusiasm; and, notwithstanding all
their

their pretences to the generous principles of humanity, and liberty of conscience, some of them can also persecute.

The charge of enthusiasm was some time brought by the Episcopal faction, against the men of the established church; for when that faction, for the support of their cause, embraced the English forms, and those of the church spake of the spirituality of God's worship, and of praying in the spirit, there was a mighty cry among them against enthusiasm: and for a recompence of their contempt of the Spirit of Christ and his gifts, there came a sort of spirit upon some of that faction, and they became downright enthusiasts, according to the word of our Lord, John v. 43. And it is also very remarkable, that the Lord hath, at this day, so far confounded the language of the builders of natural religion and morality, in opposition to true Christianity, that they cannot understand one another about the very foundation of their building.

For my part I cannot understand what should be the design of the present cry against enthusiasm, if it be not to make us conclude, that because there are false spirits, therefore there are none true; and so to fright us out of all spirituality, and every thing that's above nature in religion; and this in an age that does not seem to be in an humour for any thing like spirituality. But it is surprising to see the men of the established church, who were sometimes sufferers under the reproach of enthusiasm, beginning to talk in that same style wherein their party has been reproached. And even the Judaisers will now agree in the accusation of enthusiasm against the truths of Christ by me confessed, though themselves shew full as great regard in some things, to their own experience, and that of their fathers and their prophecies, as they do to the written word of God.

Yet Christians must not reject all spirits, lest they sin against the Spirit of Christ; and they must *try the spirits, whether they be of God; because many false prophets*

phets are gone out into the world. And if, upon trial, they find any of the marks of an antichristian, or false spirit, upon the doctrine that I teach, I am content it be rejected. If I deny, that *Christ is come in the flesh*; if I set up any thing that he came in the flesh to destroy; if I seek to destroy any thing that he came in the flesh to establish; and if that wherein I differ from others do not carry in it a confession, that he *is come in the flesh*: then let my doctrine be rejected as coming from a false spirit. If it favour not of that Spirit who *speaks not of himself*, but glorifies Christ, taking the things of Christ, and shewing them unto his people; and if I confess not *that Jesus is the Christ*, or deny *the Father and the Son*; let me pass for a liar, a deceiver, and an antichrist. If I speak of the world, and if the world hear me, let me be rejected, as one of those false prophets that *are gone out into the world*. If I hear not the word of the apostles of Christ, and if I reject or add any thing to their explication of the Old Testament prophecies, and use a private interpretation of my own, or of any set of men; if I speak not according to the Old Testament and the New; let it be declared there is no light in my doctrine: and if I speak any thing against the merciful spirit of the gospel, or the gospel-commandment of brotherly love, then let it be said, that my *doctrine is not of God*. See 1 John iv. 1—8. But if it shall be found otherwise, let them that cry me down, and persecute me, as a deceiver, and false teacher, &c. take care what manner of spirit they themselves are of, and how they will answer to the Judge that stands before the door; unto whom I commit my cause.

12

THE
T E S T I M O N Y
O F T H E
K I N G O F M A R T Y R S
Concerning his KINGDOM.

J O H N xviii. 36, 37.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: But now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth, heareth my voice.

C H A P. I.

Of the Prophecies of Christ's Kingdom:

OUR LORD stands here before the Roman governor, accused of making himself the *King of the Jews*; and so being against Cæsar; Luke xxiii. 1, 2. This accusation is brought against him by men that were offended in him, because he came not to them, in a temporal kingdom, against Cæsar, as they themselves desired and expected; so it came very ill from them. And Pilate, who could not but know their expectations of the Messiah, might well understand, that "For envy they had delivered him," Math. xxvii. 18.

In answer to this charge, our Lord denies not, but confesses himself to be the promised King, and owns his kingdom. Pilate had asked him, vers. 33.

“Art thou the King of the Jews?” He answers, “Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?” Pilate being touched with this, as respecting his method of procedure in judgment, answers with a disdain of the Jewish nation, and casts the blame on the nation and the chief priests, who had *delivered him to him*. Here is an instance of church-rulers, their delivering men to the civil magistrate to be punished. Christ has forewarned his followers of this treatment, and this has been abundantly practised upon the saints and martyrs of Jesus, by Antichrist: but he has never given any encouragement to his churches, or their overseers, to take this course. Pilate enquires again, what he had done. Jesus in his answer owns his kingdom, *My kingdom, and my servants*. From which Pilate infers that question; *Art thou a King then?* Jesus answers, ‘Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,’ &c.

It would seem, he shuns to own himself now the King of that nation of the Jews, who were denying him to be their King; neither does he own himself to be such a King as the Jews were looking for, or as Pilate was now enquiring about. But he confesses that he is THAT King who was promised to the Jews, spoken of by their prophets, and that was to come of the Jews, Mat. xxvii. 11. Mark xv. 2. Luke xxiii. 3. “Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus said, Thou sayest.”

SECTION I.

JACOB, when blessing Judah, spake thus of him, Gen. xlix. 10. “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and to him shall the gathering of the people be.”

This prophecy imports, 1. That the chief government

ment among the children of Israel, who were to become a great nation, should be in the tribe of Judah, of whom that Shiloh should come: "For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him the chief Ruler, or Prince." 1 Chron. v. 2.

2. That this government should have its end and issue in that Shiloh to come; and when this government should be utterly at an end, that Shiloh should then certainly be come.

3. That this Shiloh should have a collection of people under him obeying him; and when this should take place, the sceptre would depart from Judah.

Moses, in blessing Judah, Deut. xxxiii. 7. referring unto Jacob's prophecy, says, "Hear the voice of Judah, and bring him (*i. e. Shiloh*) unto his people."

But the most notable promise of this king, the Messiah, is that made to David, which we have recorded, 2 Sam. vii. 11,---16. "And as since the time, that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies; also the Lord telleth thee, that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chastise him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee. Thy throne shall be established for ever. And 1 Chron. xvii 10,---14. And since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel. Moreover



The TESTIMONY of the

I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore, I tell thee, that the Lord will build thee an house, And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired, that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee; which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will establish his throne for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be my son, and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before thee. But I will settle him in mine house, and in my kingdom for ever, and his throne shall be established for evermore."

We may see in the following verses, how much David was affected with that promise, when he received it. This is the word upon which God caused him to hope, the covenant that God made with him. This great promise is much insisted on in the Psalms, where it is several times particularly mentioned; as in Psal. lxxxix. 19,---36. and cxxxii. 11. yea; throughout the Psalms. And in the prophecies of the prophets, that followed after David, this promise is explained upon and unfolded; as for instance, Isa. ix. 6, 7. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. and xxxiii. from the 15th verse to the end. We find this promise also pointed at by the angel foretelling the birth of Christ to his mother, Luke i. 31, 32, 33. and in the song of Zacharias, Luke i. 69, 70. And that designation, THE SON OF DAVID, given to the promised Messiah by the Jews, and to Jesus by them that believed in him, was taken from this promise. And it is to be noticed, that the great scope and sense of this promise and the fulfilment of it in Jesus Christ, is declared in the first gospel-sermon after his ascension, Acts ii. 30---35. "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne," &c.

Now, if we consider that promise made unto David,
we

we will find it was twofold, or had a twofold aspect. First, towards David's successors in the throne of that same kingdom where David reigned in Jerusalem on earth, 1 Chron. xxviii. 4,---7. 2 Kings, viii. 19. 1 Kings xi. 36. 2 Chron. xxi. 7. and then chiefly to the Messiah, for whose sake the promise respecting David's temporal house was given. In the first respect, this promise was some way conditional, in the second, it was absolute; in the first respect, it was but temporal, reaching the full end of it, and having its issue in the Messiah; but as it respected him it was eternal. "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, thy throne shall be established for ever. I will settle him in mine house, and in my kingdom for ever, and his throne shall be established for evermore."

And it is evident, that the promise of establishing David's temporal house and his sons upon that throne, had a reference to that which is eternal, and that seed of David, eminently so called, even *Him* who was to be settled in God's house and kingdom for evermore. That promise spake of him through these; and David's temporal house and kingdom, with his successors on that throne, are set up in this promise as a pledge and a prefiguration of the Messiah in his throne and kingdom, which was the great thing intended in the promise. Thus God foreshewed this great event by things as well as words. And there is no reason why God may not set up some things as pledges, and signs, and prefigurations, or types of great events, and then plainly declare, that these events were intended in these signs and prefigurations of them.

David himself understood this promise as intending the Messiah, and his eternal kingdom, through his temporal kingdom: for, when he was a-dying, and could not have much satisfaction in the promise, as it was temporal, he ventures his departing soul with satisfaction on the eternal part of it, whereto he says,
 "He

“ He has all his salvation, and all his desire, whatever should become of his temporal house.” It will not be amiss here to consider those dying words of David, which we have recorded in 2 Sam. xxiii. from the beginning to the 8th ver. There is a translation of the first verse, which I suspect is not alien from the sense of the text. It is to this purpose, “ David, the man, who was raised up, to be instead of the Messiah of the God of Jacob, in the sweet Psalms of Israel.”

But, whatever be in that, by the designations given unto him, and the intimation, that these are his last words, it appears, that we are called to take special notice of what follows as a thing most remarkable, and worthy of all attention; and the more, if we consider the solemn preface he himself puts to these his last words: for he plainly says, that they are not his own words, but the words of God; and insinuates that he is about to speak of that, which was the scope of what he had delivered as an inspired prophet; yea, it is more than probable, that he delivers his dying words, in the name of the glorious persons of the Godhead, as the word of all the Three. “ The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me.” He is to speak of that great business, wherein these three divine persons are all gloriously manifested, and he mentions the *Rock of Israel*, the Son, in the last place, because what follows immediately is of him. For it cannot be imagined, that all this solemnity was designed to no other purpose, but to usher in a description of the duty of ordinary rulers in the kingdoms of this earth; and of the happiness of their subjects under their right administration. And therefore those interpreters have done best, who have taken it for a prophecy of the Messiah; reckoning, that whatever be said here with respect to the government of the house of David, it chiefly points to the Messiah’s kingdom. The words
are

are variously rendered*; but however they be translated; the kingdom of the Messiah is their scope. And there is no reason that I know of, why they may not be translated thus: ‘To me spake the “Rock of Israel, the Ruler over men, just, the Ruler of the fear of God.” Or, “The Rock of Israel that is to rule in or over men, just, that shall rule the fear of God.”’

Thus it is a prophecy of David’s Lord, the Rock of Israel himself, his ruling in the church and kingdom of God. Of this Ruler it is said, that he is or shall be *Just*, which may be explained by the words of Jeremiah, chap. xxiii. ver. 5, 6. “I will raise unto David a righteous branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth.---And this is his name, whereby he shall be called, The LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Thus he is the true Melchisedec, and a priest on his throne, Psa. cx. 4. Zech. vi. 13. Next it is said, *That he ruleth the fear of God*; the worship and service of God, or the whole of religion. To this purpose speaks the prophet Isaiah, chap. xi. ver. 1, 2, 3. and the apostle, Heb. xii, 28. where he says, “Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom, that cannot be moved, let us have grace to serve

* Our translation is thus; *The Rock of Israel spake to me. He that ruleth over men must be just, &c.* taking it, as would seem, for a description of the duty of rulers, yet, even according to this rendering, it may be a description of him that should rule in the church. *Junius* and *Tremelius* have it thus: *Mihi locuta est rupes Israelis, qui dominatur hominibus istis, justus esto, dominans in timore Dei*: and for explication of *hominibus istis*, say *Israelitis*. On our margin, it is thus, *Be thou ruler over men.* And some render the foregoing words thus, *The Rock of Israel spake of me, i. e. David, who was a type of the Messiah.* The Dutch translation has it thus: *The Rock of Israel spake to me, there shall be a Ruler, &c.* And the notes say, this Ruler is the Messiah. The vulgar version runs thus: *Locutus est fortis Israel dominator hominum, justus dominator in timore Dei.* And that of *Arias Montanus* is, *Mihi locutus petra Israel dominans in hominibus, justus dominator timoris Dei.*

God

God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Such is his government, and the nature of his kingdom; and so it is distinguished from all the kingdoms of this world.

David proceeds in the next verse, to describe by similitudes, the government and kingdom of this ruler of the fear of God, which is as light out of darkness increasing from small beginnings unto much greatness and glory, most benign and comfortable, and very beautiful and glorious; *As the light of the morning, &c.* And, then in the 5th verse, he professes his full satisfaction in the faith and hope of this; whatever should become of his temporal house, and the earthly kingdom in his family.

Although my house (my temporal house, and the kingdom in it, which also was spoke of in the promise) *be not so with God,* (as this kingdom of which I have been speaking shall be; and though it do not answer to the description I have given of God's ruler in the church; or do not behave suitably before God, as a type of that ruler and kingdom, and so do not abide with God); *yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.* (He hath promised to me that of the fruit of my body, he will raise up that glorious King, the Messiah, to sit on my throne; and that he will establish his kingdom before me for ever. This is the everlasting part of his covenant made with me, establishing an eternal relation betwixt him and me), *ordered in all things,* (to answer all the ends of God's glory, and all the necessities of the church), *and sure,* (depending on no condition that should any way make it void, as the promise respecting my temporal house and kingdom; and so it can by no means fail): *For this is all my Salvation, and all my Desire,* (I seek no other salvation, no other happiness, but what is contained in this promise; and now, when leaving all Time's things, and having no more place in the earthly Israel, I have full satisfaction in the expectation of this heavenly and eternal kingdom, which shall be established

blished before me; Heb. xi. 13. 14. 16.) *although he make it not to grow*: (though my typical house shall be diminished, till it be cut off; though the sceptre depart from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet, yet it is enough to me, that Shiloh will come: though the tree of my royal family should be cut down to the ground; yet out of the roots shall spring *that branch* of Righteousness: and in this am I satisfied, though this shall be the final end of my temporal house, that it may never more flourish.

In the two following verses, which conclude those last words of David, he describes the enemies of this glorious King, and his kingdom, their power, wicked enmity and stubbornness, and their fearful end; showing also, that the wicked shall have no abode in this kingdom of the Messiah. “But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands,” &c. These are the last words of David; from which we may be satisfied, that the promise made to him did not only respect the temporal kingdom in his house, but, through that, refer unto the eternal kingdom of the Messiah, the Rock of Israel: for now, when he is leaving the world, he lets go the *temporal part* of the promise, and expects eternal salvation and happiness by that *eternal part* of it, that was the chief thing to which every other thing in it had a reference; and, in comparison of which, the raising of David and his house to rule in that earthly kingdom, was indeed but a small thing; as he says, 2 Sam. vii. 19. “And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast also spoken of thy servant’s house for a great while to come; and is this the manner of man, O Lord God?”

And this is that promise made to David, of Messiah the King, so much insisted on in the Psalms, and all the writings of the prophets, that followed after David; which raised the expectations of the Jews, and of the accomplishment of which they were still the

more desirous, after they saw David's temporal house brought low: but they wofully mistook it, imagining it to be a promise of a glorious earthly Prince, and a splendid worldly kingdom. Unto this purpose they made use of these figures taken from David's temporal kingdom, and such other figures as the prophets made use of, to set forth, before hand, the spiritual and eternal things of the kingdom of Christ. Under the influence of this fatal mistake, they rejected Jesus, and delivered him up to Pilate.

S E C T. II.

JESUS being questioned, denies not, but confesses, that he is that same King promised to the Jews; and by this we may know, from the prophecies, who he is.

For, 1. It behoved the Messiah, according to the prophets, to be of the fruit of David's body, a true man of the seed of David. The Jews knew well from the prophecies, that the Christ was to be David's Son; as appears from their answer to our Lord's question, "What think ye of Christ, whose Son is he?" "For they say unto him, the son of David," Matth. xxii. 41, 42.; and they that believed Jesus to be the Messiah, designed him the Son of David.

The prophecies pointed him out as thus to be of David, when David's family should be diminished, and brought very low. They represented him as a *branch* springing out of the root of Jesse, Is. xi. 1.; so that when he should come, he should be "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, having nothing of that form or comeliness," that his despisers were looking after, Is. liii. 2.

The New Testament testifies of Jesus, that he is of the fruit of David's loins according to the flesh, and of the seed of David according to the flesh; and thus explains the prophecies, declaring their accomplishment in him, Acts ii. 30. Rom. i. 3. This phrase,
according

according to the flesh, seems to have more than one import, when applied to Jesus Christ. For, 1. It plainly points out his human nature, as distinguished from his divine. 2. It also denotes human nature in its mortal state, with the miseries and infirmities of that state: for he took part with us in flesh and blood, that he might die, and was tempted in all things like us, yet without sin. 3. It further imports his being a Jew; for he “was a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” In this sense the apostle says, 2 Cor. v. 16. “Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” Thus flesh is opposed to spirit, Gal. iii. 3. “Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” 1 Tim. iii. 16. God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit.” 1 Pet. iii. 18. “Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit.”

Thus now, our Lord was made of the seed of David, and so of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh; and thus the promises made unto the fathers have their confirmation in him, the true promised seed. But the prophecies spake of his coming into the world, as something very extraordinary, Is. vii. 14. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name IMMANUEL.” Compare Jer. xxxi. 22. “The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.” There are difficulties moved about this prophecy; but if we can believe, that men may be encouraged under present distress, to expect relief, and engaged in their duty, by the faith of future things, upon which their eternal salvation depends, especially when these things to come have a necessary influence upon that relief, and upon their doing present duty, Heb. xi. 1. &c. there will be no reason to question, that it is a prophecy of the birth of Christ; and it ill becomes them to question it, who own the authority of the New Testament. Mat. 1. 22, 23.

“ Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name EMANUEL, which being interpreted, is, *God with us.*” So it behoved Christ to be a man conceived, and born by a woman, a virgin. This was pointed at in the first promise of him, Gen. iii. 15. *The woman's seed.* And some of the learned have thought the same thing intended in the name *Shiloh*, given to the Messiah in Jacob's prophecy. (See Rivet upon the place.)

This great thing is declared by the angel, who told Mary the mother of Jesus, that she should bring forth the great Son of David, the King of Israel, Luke i. 34. 35. “ Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered, and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.”

There is a threefold miracle wrought here, by the power of the Highest, working in a most holy and mysterious manner. 1. The making the womb of the virgin fruitful, so that she conceived and brought forth a son. 2. The bringing of that holy thing, the human nature, the soul and body of Jesus Christ, out of a sinful woman. This man came not into the world, by virtue of that command to our first parents before the fall, “ Be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth;” for all that have come into the world, that way, have been partakers with Adam in his sin; but he came into the world, by virtue of that promise made for the recovery of sinners, “ The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.” According to this promise, that *holy thing* was born of the virgin, by his power with whom nothing shall be impossible; and by this means he is related unto
his

his people, that are reckoned with him in that promise, in opposition to the serpent's seed; and by virtue of their relation to this *Holy One*, they are sanctified by him. Heb. ii. 11, 14. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil." 3. But the greatest wonder of all is, that this *holy thing*, the soul and body, or human nature of Christ, should be no other person but the Son of God, who took to himself this holy thing, that it might be as verily his soul and body, as our souls and bodies are ours. "Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." The human nature of Christ is not a person by itself; the person is the Son of God: for, says the angel, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh; of which Reason says, "How can this be?" because it can find nothing like unto it, nothing wherewith to compare it, either in the heights above, or in the depths below; but faith credits God's testimony in the gospel, and says, "Jesus is the Son of God;" and blessed are they that believe. This wonderful union of the divine and human nature in the person of the Son of God, may be some way represented to us, in his conception in the womb of the virgin without a man, by the Holy Ghost, the power of the Highest overshadowing her.

But this leads to another thing spoken of Messiah the King, by the prophets. For,

2. They also set him forth as God, and foretell, that this man, this Son of David, should be a truly divine person: even that person of the Godhead, who is stiled, *The Rock of Israel*, by David, in making mention

mention of all the three. Of this, it seems, these Jews knew not so much, who could not answer that question, Mat. xxii. 42, ---45. "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" They knew not how he could be David's God and his King, and yet his son. But the high priest, and they that proposed that question to him, *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, the Son of God?* and condemned him for blasphemy, when he confessed it, (Mat. xxvi. 63, 64, 65. Mark xiv. 61, ---64. Luke xxii. 67---71, John xix. 7, 8.) seemed to have some notion, from the prophecies, of the Messiah's being God.

The prophets give him the highest names and titles of the supreme God, such as, *Jehovah*, Jer. xxiii. 6. Psal. xcvii. 1. &c. *The Lord God*, Isa. xl. 10, 11. *The Lord of Hosts*, Isa. viii. 13, 14. See also for this, Pf. xxiv. 10. which psalm is a prophecy of the Messiah and his kingdom, who is there designed, *The King of glory*; and his solemn entrance into heaven, the seat of his kingdom, is there described; as it is also, Pf. xlvii. from ver. 5. and Pf. lxviii. 18. The question is made concerning this King of glory, Who he is? And the answer to this question is, *The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory*. The King of glory is a title of the Messiah, importing his glorious dominion and kingdom: And if this title, *The Lord of hosts*, imported no more than this dominion, the question, in that case, would not be answered; for all that is expressed fully by the title, *The King of glory*: and therefore that title, *The Lord of hosts*, imports more, even his supreme Godhead, and that he is, *That most High God*, besides whom there is no God.

He is set forth in the prophecies, as the Creator of the world: so we have him in the beginning of that xxivth Psalm; and the cii. Psalm, which is also a prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom, declares him, "The eternal and unchangeable creator of the heavens and the earth." See ver. 25, 26, 27. and compare Heb.

ſ. 10. 11. 12. and many other Old-Testament ſcrip-
tures might be cited to this purpoſe. Now, the crea-
tion of the world is that work, whereby the moſt
High God, beſides whom there is no god, is every
where diſtinguiſhed in his word; and it is expreſsly
declared, that he “ ſtretched forth the heavens alone,
“ and ſpread abroad the earth by himſelf,” Iſa. xliv. 24.

The adverſaries of the true Godhead of Jeſus Chriſt,
inſiſt much upon the manner of ſpeaking of him as
creator in the New-Testament, where they would have
the world’s being ſaid to be created by him, to import
his being only a ſubordinate cauſe, or his acting as an
inſtrument only, in that great work. But though it
ſhould be allowed that he acted in that work, as being
ſet up from everlaſting, to be Mediator, and Head over
all things to the church, and preparing, as it were, a
ſcene for acting that glorious work of redemption,
and laying all things that were made, in a ſubſerviency
unto his glorious kingdom, Prov. viii. Eph. iii.
9. Heb i. Col. i.; yet ſtill there was none beſide
the *moſt High God* employed in that work. Whatever
was the capacity therefore in which he acted, the
work he did, abundantly demonſtrates his *eternal
power and Godhead*; and that the Father hath no other
Godhead, but that very ſame which he alſo hath, and
can challenge as his own, even as the Father.

His work of creation is not that which makes him
God; but it clearly manifeſts him to be the only true
God. It is not the reaſon, for which he is God; but
it doth evidently diſcover unto the reaſon of creatures,
that whoever wrought it, is the *only true God*, Rom.
i. 20.; and ſcripture-revelation ſhews, that there was
none but that God employed in that work; and that
the ſame perſon, who is the Chriſt, the King of the
church, wrought that ſame work: ſo that, whatever
was the capacity wherein he acted in the creation, it
clearly ſhews, that he is, and was before the world,
the only eternal and almighty Lord God.

And when this Divine Perſon condeſcends to act in
ſubordination

subordination to the Father, with a view to the redemption of sinners of mankind, yet so as his true Godhead appears gloriously in all the works, to which he thus condescends! it is the highest ingratitude in men, to go about to disparage him, on account of that same condescension. Neither will it excuse them, that they are moved unto this, by this reason, that they cannot satisfy their understandings, how three truly distinct persons, can have the same very Godhead; so that of everyone of them it may be truly said, He is the only true God, beside whom there is no God. For this is to say, that the incomprehensible God can reveal nothing of himself, but what they can understand; and they are concerned to credit the divine testimony no further, than they can satisfy themselves about the reasonableness of that which he testifies.

Yet they have never been able to shew an inconsistency in this mystery, no not such, as appears in many things, of the truth of which they are satisfied by nature's light. And even the inconsistencies, of which they are not able to rid their own notions, of the divine eternity, omnipresence, and omniscience, do not oblige them to quit those notions. But whatever appears in scripture-revelation with the least air of inconsistency, puts them immediately upon that old enquiry, *Hath God said so?* And by this he that first proposed that question, can easily "Blind the minds of them, that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ," the image of God, "should shine unto them," while he fills their minds with the fancy of being or becoming as gods for knowledge.

Now, while they look down upon us, with pity or disdain, as an inferior kind of creatures, that for lack of understanding, or being imposed upon by some crafty spirit, and enthusiasts, believe mysteries, and credit contradictions; if we enquire for the contradiction in that which we believe, they tell us, It is a plain principle in nature and reason, "That God is
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but one intelligent agent, and that intelligent agent and person are one and the same; and so it is impossible, that one, and but one intelligent agent and person, can yet be three intelligent agents or persons."

But we are not yet satisfied, by all those words thus set together, that personality enters at all into the idea we have of the Deity by Nature's light. The eternal power and Godhead of the First Cause is clearly seen by the things that are made, and the wisdom of the Godhead is conspicuous in them: but since the idea of personality serves to distinguish to us those intelligent agents that we cannot distinguish by the ideas we have of their natures, as intelligent agents; which, tho' we repeat them ever so oft, are the same; and since the divine Being is infinitely distinguished from all other beings, in the notion we have of it by Nature's light; the idea of personality is of no manner of use here. And, seeing the idea of personality includes distinct mutual relations and offices, whereby we distinguish these, that cannot be distinguished by the idea of their nature, common to both, (and there is something real at the bottom of this distinction, whereof we have no idea); it is evident, that as the idea of one human person necessarily infers another human person, and the idea of one angelick person necessarily infers another angelick person, with whom he is one way or other related, and from whom he is distinguished in and by that relation, when he cannot be distinguished from him by the common idea of their nature; so if we think of one divine person, this necessarily infers another divine person. Of this Nature's light discovers nothing, but shews one Godhead, and but one, infinitely distinguished from all other beings by itself, and that another God is impossible. Scripture-revelation leaves this entire and full, and asserts it fully; but unto this it adds, the idea of personality, which implies in it more such persons than one, and reveals three persons in this

one Godhead, mutually related, and acting distinct parts, with relation unto one another, (which could not have been acted by one single person, or by any but divine persons); and that in a work, wherein the one Godhead and divine attributes shine forth more than in any other work of God, and unto which all the other works of God are subservient. Nature's light could not discover this, but cannot contradict it: for though we use to infer distinct natures from distinct persons among men, finite creatures, among whom also there is no necessity for one's being two persons, seeing another may be made to answer all the purposes, for which that man could be supposed to be two persons; yet such an inference cannot be applied unto the Deity, without measuring infinite by finite, and intruding into those things which we have not seen, and using Nature's light unto a purpose, unto which it was not designed, and which it cannot answer; yea, and without a contempt of this glorious discovery of the Godhead made in this revelation.

Thus it is evident, that whatever notions we have of the Deity naturally, "he that denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father," and he that knoweth not that divine person the Son, knows as little of the Father. The Jews esteemed themselves free in the house, or church of God, and held themselves for the children of God, which yet they could not be any otherwise, but by being the children of the Father of Jesus Christ; and his children they were not, as appeared by their unbelief and enmity against his Son the Christ: yea, they did not know the Father; though by calling themselves the children of God, they called the Father of Jesus Christ their God; since none are the children of God, but they that have the Father of Christ for their father; and God is not the God of any, but them to whom the Father of Christ is a father, John viii. 41, 42. and 54.-----"It is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say that
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that he is your God." Ver. 55. "Yet ye have not known him." The same thing, with the same view, may be said to the adversaries of the true Godhead of Jesus Christ; they pretend mightily to honour the Father, and claim interest in him, and in his church; while, in the mean time, they dishonour the Son, whom the Father honoureth, and would have all men to honour, even as they honour him; and hereby it is evident they have not known the Father, and that they really honour the Father as little as they honour the Son.

And thus they do indeed make void scripture-revelation, while they pretend to receive it, by subjecting it to Nature's light, and holding themselves for masters of that light. But here they tell us, we can, upon occasion, use as much freedom with the scriptures, and make as much use of reason in explaining them as they, in some cases; and so fall under our own censure: and they insist much on these two instances, God's speaking of himself as having bodily parts, and the matter of transubstantiation.

As to the first of these: That manner of speaking, as if God had bodily parts, is abundantly justified in the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, and has a sufficient foundation in his taking part with us in flesh and blood. And it was no way unbecoming God, to speak thus of himself, after the manner of man, with a view to this great mystery, in the revelation of which he is most gloriously manifested.

And as for transubstantiation, it had never entered into the minds of men, if it had not been upon occasion of the revelation of that spiritual mystery, of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. The Jews, who took up that spiritual saying of our Lord in a carnal sense, conceiving that he spake of his body in the same manner as the Israelites eated the manna, the type of it, thought this impossible, and so rejected the revelation. But others came after them, who professing to own the revelation, found themselves obliged to

own, that there is an eating of Christ's body, and drinking of his blood, in his supper. They knew nothing of the spiritual mystery of faith in this matter; and so were forced to have recourse to the notion of the unbelieving Jews, about eating this flesh, though against our Lord's express declaration, John vi. 63. For they could not make a better of it: they were obliged either to reject the revelation, as the Jews; or embrace that carnal notion, (which is indeed inconsistent), for want of a spiritual discerning of the truth. Even as they that believe not the true Godhead of Jesus Christ, not having faith's discerning of the mystery of the Trinity, are forced to maintain a superior and inferior God, superior and inferior divine worship, a superior and inferior Creator, and to imagine something between God and the creature, which is neither the most high independent God, nor a creature; or to ascribe the divine properties to a creature: all which is repugnant both to scripture and reason. For what can they do? They find themselves some way obliged to own the truth of the scriptures; they have not, or will not have the faith of this mystery, and so they must take up with such notions about it as they have. Thus they that will not believe divine mysteries, because they cannot reach them with their reason, are forced to take up with more unreasonable inconsistent opinions, receiving therein the recompense of their error; so *professing themselves to be wise, they become fools.*

When those men harden themselves in their unbelief, or seek to diminish the great importance of this article of our faith, by signifying, that this doctrine is not expressly declared in scripture-revelation, and that it is such a doctrine, that unless it were very expressly revealed, they cannot be so much condemned for not believing it, they bring to mind that passage which we have John x. 24. 25. "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered

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ed them, I told you, and ye believed not." It was a very hard matter for the Jews, considering their prejudices, to believe that such a man as Jesus was their Christ, and a matter of the utmost importance it was for them to know him to be the Christ; and when they got signs, they wanted clearer, more evident signs; when it was told them, they wanted to be more plainly told; they complained of the darkness of the revelation of a point so important, so shocking to them, and that it was never told them plainly, so as they could not, by interpreting words and phrases, have it to say, that the words wherein it was told them were capable of some other meaning; yet they died in their sins, because they believed it not. God hath revealed this great doctrine sufficiently for enlightening the minds of his people, and making unbelievers inexcuseable; though not in such terms as such unbelievers would have proposed unto them, nor with that sort of evidence which they would desire who slight and oppose the evidence that God thought fit to give. *Jesus answered, I told you, and ye believed not.* When he answered the chief priest and his company as plainly as they desired, they condemned him for a blasphemer. And though this doctrine be revealed in the most suitable manner, for begetting and increasing the faith of it in the minds of them that are ordained to eternal life; yet if it were revealed in any way wherein it could be now supposed to be declared, we might promise upon these men continuing in the disposition wherein they seem to be, that they would either distinguish away the sense of that revelation, and cry for a clearer still, or utterly reject the revelation. But we may yet have a farther view of the person of the Messiah from the prophecies of the Old Testament. For,

These prophecies also set him forth as the object of religious worship; so that Jesus confessing himself to be that promised King, does thereby acknowledge, that he is the object of that worship; and therefore
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the only true God. We find the angels, that sort of creatures that (in the regard of idolaters) possessed the room only due to him, the Mediator, who is indeed God, and who are therefore called Gods, are commanded "to worship him," who is Jehovah, the true God, the glorious King of the church, Pſal. xcvi. 1.---7. compare Heb. i. 6. And in Pſal. cii. where he is declared to be the creator of the world, we have him also pointed out to us as the object of religious worship, prayer, and praise in the church, on account of the glory of his Godhead, appearing in his great work of redemption, and in his building of the church, and in the glorious acts of his reign, from ver. 15. to ver. 23. See to this purpose Pſal. xcvi. xcvi. xcvi. xcvi. xcvi. c. all prophecies of the Messiah and his kingdom. See likewise Pſal. ciii. 19.---22. Pſal. lxxv. 1.---5. and Pſal. xlvii. &c. &c.

The scripture makes no distinction in the business of religious worship, but ascribes it only and wholly to God, on account of the Godhead manifested in the glorious works of creation and redemption. And if there are not higher expressions of religious worship in scripture, than those that are used in the prophetic calls, to worship this glorious King, the Messiah; his glorious Godhead, manifesting itself in his works of creation and redemption, and in his glorious kingdom to be set up in the fulness of time, is plainly given as the reason why he should be worshipped in his kingdom the church by angels and men. The typical redemption of the nation of Israel out of Egypt, and bringing of that nation through the wilderness into the promised land, carried in it such a distinguishing discovery of the glorious Godhead of the worker of it, as intitled him to the religious worship of Israel, and made them wholly without excuse in worshipping any other God besides that God, that so fulfilled his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore this God spake thus from Sinai: "I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out

out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This voice was the voice of the same, whose blood speaketh to us from heaven, Heb. xii. 24, 25, 26.

The Father never appeared, never spake, but in and by the Son; his word, and his Spirit was with him, Is. lxiii. 9. 10. 11. Hag. ii. 5. Of old the Father appeared, and spake by him more darkly, while he was only foreshewing his incarnation in his appearances, and in divers figures, and shewing beforehand in dark promises, and manifold earthly types, the glorious heavenly things of the New Testament; but now, being incarnate, and having come in his kingdom, the Father is more clearly manifest, and speaks more clearly in him, *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*; and being partaker with us in flesh and blood, he is also to us instead of the prophets, by whom he spake of old to the people of Israel, Heb. i. 1, 2.

It was he then that appeared of old, and the Father never but in him, *the angel of his presence, or his face*. Moses knew well to distinguish this face of God, this angel of God's presence, from any created angel. See Exod. xxxiii. Thus the angel in whom is God's name is the same that spake to Moses in the bush, saying, *I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and that spake to him in Mount Sinai, Acts vii. 38. and whose voice was conveyed to the people of Israel by the ministry of angels that ministered to him there. And he said, *I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods besides me*. Neither was it any idolatry in the Israelites to say to him, *Thou art the Lord our God that brought us out of Egypt; we will have no other god besides thee*. And there was no fear of worshipping another beside the only God, in worshipping him, as there would be in worshipping any created angel, however commissioned by God, however speaking in his name. This is he that led Israel out
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of Egypt into Canaan, and therein manifested himself to be the only true God, besides whom Israel was to have no other god: for "the Lord alone led Israel, and there was no strange god with him," Deut. xxxii. 12.

Now, if that typical and earthly redemption of the nation Israel, so manifested the divine glory of the worker of it, as to give him just title to inherit Israel's praise; how much more does the glory of his true Godhead appear in the spiritual and eternal redemption wrought by him for the true Israel, the heavenly nation, and in *bringing many sons unto glory*, and in all the glorious acts of his reign in his heavenly kingdom, and calls for the worship and adoration of angels and men? He receives this worship from the redeemed, and from all the angels of God, ascribing to him the infinite dignity and worth of his Godhead that appears to them in that glorious redemption which is by his blood, Rev. v. 9: ---12.

For whatever they may think who know not the holiness, infinite justice, and terrible majesty of God, and the unspeakable evil of sin, as it is against him, and that most desperate condition, and dreadful complication of innumerable evils, flowing from the guilt of sin, and the curse of a broken law, out of which we are redeemed by the blood of Christ; yet the self-condemned sinner, that has some true apprehension of these things, and so sees the great vanity and folly of all attempts to make an amends to the majesty of God for the exceeding sinfulness of his sin, or any way to relieve himself from his desperate condition, and weeps because he cannot find worth enough in any creature wherewith to present himself, and appear with confidence before the Most High; such a sinner cannot put confidence in the blood of Christ, nor be relieved from his fears, so as to come confidently before God by it, till he be persuaded in very deed, that it is the blood of God, and that the blood of that man is the blood of no other but that glorious

glorious and divine person, who is worthy, with all the independent eternal worth that is in the only Godhead. Such a sinner being persuaded, by the Holy Ghost, that dwells in the slain Lamb, to come unto the Father by this blood, will give divine worship and glory to the Lamb, without any fear of his honouring a person who is not the only true God; besides whom there is no god, and will count him worthy to reign in his glorious kingdom, on account of that his Godhead appearing in redeeming us by his blood. While men are utter strangers to these things, they may have fruitless philosophical notions about the Godhead of Jesus Christ; but they will “hold the truth in unrighteousness;” and may, by a suitable temptation, be prevailed with to part with it at a cheaper rate than they that have come by it in such a way as this.

The kingdom of the Messiah is founded in his redemption; as the prophets declare, Isa. liii. toward the close, Psal. cx. 7. Psal. xxii. &c. And his Godhead is set forth as appearing in his kingdom, and calling for divine worship from all his subjects. It is true, in his kingdom he hath condescended to reign by commission from the Father, even as he gave himself for his church to redeem it at the Father’s appointment; and he is in his kingdom the Father’s representative; for how otherwise should the Father and the divine glory in his person appear unto us? But as he could not fully represent him in the church, his kingdom, if he were not an equal person to him, and truly distinct from him, in one and the same Godhead; so, by this very commission, the Father gives his glory into his hands, which yet he will not give to another god. So we find in that prophecy where he is appointed the Father’s servant, Isa. xlii. from the beginning; that work which he calls his glory, and for which he is praised, even the bringing forth of judgment to the Gentiles, opening the blind eyes, and bringing the prisoners from the prison, is given into

the hand of this his servant to be accomplished by him: and then he declares, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." This servant of his therefore must be the same God with him, who will not give his glory to another, and yet gives it to him.

Thus the Father hath committed all judgement unto the Son, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him," John v. 22. 23.

Whatever be the capacity wherein this glorious person acts, whatever condescension he use for our sakes, as Mediator, we ought nevertheless to honour him; and religious worship is declared to be his due on account of his divine glory manifesting itself in his acting in that same capacity to which he thus condescends. And since the only true God appropriates all religious worship, without any distinction, to himself, and discharges us to give any part or portion of it, or any sense of it, unto any other, on any account, or to hearken to any prophet, though working miracles, to induce us to give this worship to another, Deut, xiii. 1.---5.; and since we are called to give religious worship to this King, the Messiah, it is manifest, that he is the only true God, *beside whom there is no God.*

Upon the whole, we may see in the prophecies, some of which have been pointed at, that this glorious King, the Messiah, is set forth as the fruit of David's body, a real man of the seed of David; yet not a human, but a truly divine person, Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, the Lord God, the almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the blessed object of the religious worship and adoration of angels and men. So he is the child born to us, the son given to us, who is the mighty God; the son conceived, and brought forth by a virgin, whose name

is Immanuel, God with us: the seed of the woman, who is able to bruise the head of the serpent; the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth may find eternal blessedness; and David's son, who yet is his Lord, his God, and his everlasting King. Jesus confesses all this of himself, and acknowledges, that he is that same glorious person, in whom the divine and human natures are thus marvelously united, by his owning, before Pilate, that he is *that promised King*. And when he says, *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world*, he seems to point to that prophecy of the Messiah, Isa. ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder," &c. Thus the eternal God reigns as King, the church's maker is her husband, and her Redeemer the Lord of Hosts, and her God is her glory.

Whosoever confesses Jesus to be Christ, confesses this same great truth concerning his person: and it is a vain thing to pretend to confess that he is the Christ, and yet deny his true Godhead, or not truly own him to be the Son of God; as it is to pretend to confess him the Christ, and yet deny him to be the son of David. It is true, the word *Messiah*, or *Christ*, signifying anointed, respects his office; but we mistake that office, and cannot see the glory of it, nor improve it unto its proper ends, so as to find all salvation and all desire in it, if we do not see him to be God in that office; and if we view him rightly by faith in his saving office, we will find all the persons of the Godhead therein manifested, and concerned in our salvation thereby. It is only in Jesus the Christ, that we know the Father; for he *is the image of the invisible God*; and it is only in him that we find the Holy Ghost, *that dwells in him*. It has been an old observation, that we cannot think rightly of the Christ, without thinking of the glorious person anointing, and the Holy Ghost, wherewith he was anointed, Psal. xiv. 6. 7, Heb. i. 8. 9. And it may be observed, that something of the

Godhead, including all the divine attributes, seems to be peculiarly represented to us in each of these persons, as they appear in and by the saving office of Christ. The majesty of the Godhead in the person of the Father, who is therefore stiled God; the infinite worth and dignity of the same very Godhead, in the person of the Son; and the infinite sufficiency and power of that same very Godhead in the person of the Holy Ghost.

Now, the saving office of Christ is threefold. He is prophet, priest, and king. And though these three offices be truly distinct, and ought not to be confounded; yet we cannot rightly conceive of him as king, and of his kingdom, without the other two offices; as may appear afterward; and his anointing is much spoke of in the prophecies with respect unto his kingdom, P^{sal.} ii. P^{sal.} xlv. It is of this that we now speak, and this anointing of Christ the King has a manifest reference unto the anointing of David, and those kings that were but earthly signs of this heavenly King.

S E C T. III.

ACcording to the promise made to David, wherein we observed, that the kingdom, in his earthly house, was set up as a pledge, sign, and figure of that great kingdom of the Messiah; when Jesus confesses, that he is that promised King, he owns himself to be the antitype of those kings, and that he is unto his subjects instead of them, and that his kingdom is the thing we have now instead of that kingdom, which hath its end and issue in this.

This seems pretty clear from Jacob's prophecy, and from the promise to David, as it has been explained; and that same prophecy, to which we noticed a little before that our Lord here refers, speaks this to Christians very clearly, Isa. ix. 6. 7. "Unto us a child is born.--Of the increase of his government and

and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it," &c. It is manifest David's sons succeeded him, and sat for several ages on his throne in the kingdom of Judah, Jer. xxii. 30; and it is also manifest, that the kingdom wherein Christ rules, and the throne upon which he sits, is not that same very throne and kingdom where David and his successors sat and ruled, and can be no otherwise called that throne and kingdom, but as it is the thing typified thereby, according to God's promise, and the only thing that we have now instead of it, when the earthly shadows of heavenly things have their end and issue in the heavenly things themselves that are come in place of them.

The kingdom wherein David and his successors ruled was God's kingdom, or the church; the throne of that kingdom was the throne of the Lord; the people were God's flock; and David's successors were pastors of that flock; their office, however they misbehaved in it, was to *feed the sheep of his pasture*, Jer. xxiii. 1. 2.

That flock of God brought up out of Egypt by a temporal and typical redemption, and made a peculiar people unto God, was no more but a typical flock of God, the antitype of which is that spiritual flock, gathered out of all nations as the Jews were brought back from Babylon, and gathered out of the places where they had been scattered and in captivity; even the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. And the pastors of that typical flock, of whose wicked miscarriages the Lord complains, were types of the true Shepherd, who is one for all, and is better unto the flock of God than them all, even the righteous Branch that the Lord hath now raised up unto David. I confess I cannot otherwise explain Jer. xxiii. 1.---5. and apply the prophecy, as Christians will own it must be applied, unto the Messiah and his kingdom;

dom; nor will it be easy otherwise to explain the most part of the prophecies concerning Christ and his kingdom, speaking almost constantly of the antitype by the types. And I question not but it was inadvertency to this that stood in the way, and does unto this day stand in the way of the Jews, their acknowledging Jesus to be the promised Messiah, the King of Israel.

Christians generally acknowledge now, (though neither was that altogether so clear to the Jews who first believed), that Christ, our priest, is in that his office the antitype of the priests that were in the Old-Testament church, and that their office has its end and issue in his, which is now to us instead of it: and this seems to be plainly signified in that prophecy, Jer. xxxiii. 18. "Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually." And it is as plainly signified in the foregoing verses with which this is connected, that Christ in his throne and kingdom is the antitype of David, and his successors in his throne and kingdom. See ver. 17. "For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want" (or there shall never be cut off from David) "a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." "Neither shall," &c. If we make use of the New Testament, which is the infallible guide unto the explanation of the Old Testament prophecies, which are not of any private interpretation, we will find Jesus Christ declared the antitype of the kings as well as of the priests.

It is observed, that Mount Zion had two tops, one of which bore the temple, and the other the city of David, and David's throne, for that was set in Zion. In being come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, we are come to both these in the antitype, Heb. xii. 22. *Ye are come to Mount Zion.* In that context, the Apostle is speaking as much at least of the kingdom of Christ as of his priesthood. Let us
but

but confider thefe places of the New Testament, and we may fee this truth concerning the kingdom of Chrift afferted, even as that concerning his priesthood. See the angel's message to his mother, Luke i. 31. 32. 33. "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a fon, and shalt call his name Jefus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." [See Gualter on the place.] See the fong of Zacharias, ver. 67. 70. "And Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, faying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath raised up a Horn of falvation for us in the house of his fervant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began."

See that remarkable confession of the faith by Nathanael, approved by our Lord, John i. 49. 50. "Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. Jefus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou?"

See the first gospel sermon after the Lord's ascension, Acts ii. 30. 31. "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would raise up Chrift to fit on his throne: he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Chrift." And, ver. 34. 35. 36. "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he himself faith, The Lord did say unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jefus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chrift."

The glory of the kingdom of David, in the earthly Israel, waxed faint, even as did the glory of the temple and priesthood, and became less and less still, as the antitype drew nigh; and for the wickedness of
them

them that sat upon that throne, it was overturned; till he came whose right it was; so that when he came, he was as a branch out of David's roots, according to the prophecies, Ezek. xxi. 25. 26. 27. "And thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end: Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him." And as the Jews were comforted in their dejection, upon the ruins of the first temple, and its being no way equalled by the second, by the promise of Christ to that temple, and of his glorious house, the antitype of that temple, Hag. ii.; so they were encouraged by all the prophets, under the mischiefs that befel their kingdom, and the ruins of the house of David, with manifold promises of the kingdom of Christ the antitype. See Amos ix. 8.----12. referred to Acts xv. 16. "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called."

David himself might be many ways a type of Christ; but it appears that he was a type of Christ in respect of his throne and kingdom. Now, whatever was peculiar to David, that throne and kingdom was common to him and his successors. If, therefore, in that respect he was a type of Jesus Christ in his kingdom, as is clear from what is said, his successors in that office, whatever they were otherwise, must, in respect of that office, be accounted types of Christ in his kingly office. Joshua the son of Josedeck the high-priest was, perhaps in more respects than one, a type of Christ, and some things were peculiar to him: but the priesthood, common to him with others

thers that bore that office, was typical of Christ's priesthood in them, as well as in him. And Zerubabel's government was as much typical of Christ's government, as Joshua's priesthood was of his priesthood. There were wicked kings, as we see from Ezek. xxi. forecited, and there were wicked priests; but the offices were both sacred, which indeed did aggravate their wickedness; but so far as they exercised their offices with approbation, and acted in these offices suitably unto the nature and end of them, so far they prefigured Christ in them.

It is true, these offices were distinct, so that it appertained not to the kings to do the peculiar distinguishing acts of the priestly office; even as the priestly and kingly offices, though both lodged in the person of Jesus Christ, are truly distinct; and it would be a great abuse of his kingly office, to put it unto the peculiar use of his priesthood, as we are very ready to do, and it would destroy the use of both these offices unto us, and dishonour them greatly, whatever honour we may think to put upon one of them thereby, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16.----21. It is also true, that the matters of the Lord's immediate worship in the temple, were distinct from the matters of the king's government in the kingdom; and that the matters of the Lord's worship in the temple were sacred, and the most sacred matters: but the matters of the king were also sacred; the nation or kingdom itself where they ruled was sacred, "a holy nation." The kings that sat on the throne of David were a light alway before God in Jerusalem, "the city which he had chosen him to put his name there," 1 Kings xi. 36. They were church-officers as well as the prophets and priests. See Lam. ii. 8. 9. where we see Zion's king and her princes, as well as her prophets. And chap. iv. 20. it is said of the king, "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the Heathen."

See likewise Ezek. xxii. 26. 27. 28. “ Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things.-----Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey.---And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar.” And Micah iii. 10. 11. “ They build up Zion with blood, and Jerufalem with iniquity. The heads thereof (*i. e.* of Zion) judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money.” Heads of Zion is a strong expression. See likewise Zeph. iii. 2.---5. “ She trusted not in the Lord, she drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions, her judges are evening wolves.-----Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. The just Lord is in the midst thereof, he will not do iniquity.” And the following part of that chapter will afford us a view of the difference betwixt this state of things and the New-Testament church promised there, and of the excellency of that church, with respect unto the persons of whom it doth consist. But by these texts cited it appears, that the kings were church-officers, though they were not priests, even as were the prophets; and these were standing types of Christ in that typical church. Christ’s kingly office is not his priestly; but no man would thence infer, that it is not an office in the church: neither would any declare, that the office of deacon in New-Testament churches, which respects the relief of the poor in their temporal straits, is no church office, for this reason, because it is not the office of bishop or elder, which more immediately respects the matters of the Lord’s worship. The matters of the Lord and of the king were distinct; but the same court judged in both, Levites and others being joined in it; and it had distinct presidents for these distinct matters, but both set to judge by the king, who gave them charges and directions, 2 Chron. xix. 8. 9. 10. 11. And not only David and Solomon,

Solomon, who were prophets, but Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, and the good kings, ruled in things pertaining to the temple, and the worship of God. Such as contend earnestly for those kings being only civil officers, will not allow the kings of the earth such power in church matters now, as the kings of Judah exercised with approbation about the temple, and the matters of the Lord's worship, if they think consistently with their notions about the intrinsic power of the church; unless perhaps they were some way secured as to this, that the king's power should be at their devotion, and under their direction. After all, it will not be easy to shew why the spiritual kingdom of Christ might not be typified by a worldly kingdom, as well as the heavenly sanctuary was prefigured by a worldly sanctuary.

But against this it is objected, That whatever power the kings of the house of David had in Israel, and about the matters of the Lord, such like is attributed to the kings of the earth, with respect to the New-Testament church; and so that was not peculiar to them: nor is Christ's government in the church the only thing we have now instead of theirs; because it is said, Isa. xlix. 23. "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers."

Because the very letter of this prophecy has been vehemently urged, as expressing fully the strange sense that has been put upon it; and things foreign to the scriptures have been built upon these words, by men indulging themselves in private interpretations of the prophecies, without attending to the certain light afforded by the Holy Ghost, the author of them, in the New Testament, for explaining them; it will be needful particularly to consider that prophecy, and see what light the New Testament affords for the explication of it.

And, *first*, It is plain there is a great deal of metaphor in that prophecy of which these words are a part. For instance, (ver. 22.), "The lifting up of

the Lord's hand, the setting up of his standard to the Gentiles and people, their bringing Zion's sons in their arms, and carrying her daughters upon their shoulders." And ver. 23. "The kings and queens of the Gentiles bowing down to the church, with their face towards the earth, and licking up the dust of her feet." If there were not much metaphor here, the *whore sitting on many waters* would bid fairest for it.

There is not one expression here, then, but what is metaphorical; and that there should be no metaphor in that of "kings nursing fathers" will not be easily granted. For nurses nourish the child: and what is the proper nourishment of the church, and of Zion's children? Do the kings of the earth afford that nourishment? Do they administer the word and sacraments? Have they the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven? No; this cannot be the sense. The officers of the church claim this as their privilege, which the New Testament gives them, and which the kings of the earth must not meddle with. But then, they will beg their own sense of the words: for after this, it is but begging; and it cannot be thought unmerciful, to grant them no more than the New Testament gives us leave to grant.

2dly, We must consider what is that church unto which this promise says, "The kings and queens shall be nursing fathers and mothers." And here we have some help from the New Testament. See Rev. xxi. 24.-----27. "And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

These words seem to declare the full accomplishment of this promise, and of all the Old-Testament promises

promises of this kind: for they contain a description of the church in its perfection, at “the restitution of all things;” and a further declaration of the same thing that is declared Rev. xi. 15. where it is said, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

This is a part of the short sum which that context gives of the issue of the voice of the seventh angel; of which voice it was said, chap. x. 7. “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

Now, the voice of this seventh angel issues in the kingdoms of this world their becoming the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, where he is to reign for ever and ever; the coming of God’s wrath, the raising of the dead, the rewarding of the prophets, saints, and them that fear God, both small and great, and the destruction of them that destroy the earth, Rev. xi. 15.---18.

This is the sum of the things more fully declared from chap. xiv. to the end of the book. And for a more full declaration of that 15th verse of chap. xi. we have what is said in the end of chap. xxi. which represents the glorious state of the church after Christ’s second coming, when he hath put down all rule, and authority, and power: *And when the fulness of the elect of all nations is brought into the church.* And what church is that there spoken of? Surely no other but that which consists of all them, and in no wise of any other but them that are saved, and are written in the Lamb’s book of life: for where it is said, “The glory and honour of the nations shall be brought into it,” it is also said, “There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.”

Of this holy catholic church, and not so much of any particular church, does this Old-Testament promise speak, as is evident from the context.

Now,

Now, let it be declared, in what sense kings are nursing fathers to this church. Do they bestow worldly privileges upon it? and have they any other to bestow? Do they save and defend this Mount Zion from its enemies by their power? and is all their power sufficient for this task? Are they to look upon this church as a father does on a child nursed by him? And is this church to regard the kings of the earth as a child regards its nursing father? They that would have it thought, from these words, that the kings of the earth are nursing fathers to the church, as they are to the nations where they rule, must find some difficulty in reconciling this with the following words, "They shall bow down to thee with their faces towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet."

3dly, It is easy to understand, how kings are nursing fathers to the nations where they rule, and to their subjects in those nations: and as it is the duty of their subjects to regard them as their nursing fathers, so it is their duty to behave toward their subjects suitably to this designation, and particularly to protect them in their natural and civil rights, of which the liberty of their consciences ought to be looked upon as a very valuable one. And if the kings of the earth had but maintained this, there had never been such a thing seen in the world, as the *whore sitting on the beast, drunk with the blood of the saints*.

But it is not so easily understood, how kings and queens, in that capacity, are nurses unto any but their subjects; and that as they are their subjects, and as of the nations and kingdoms where they rule. If these nations be churches, the king of the nation is the king of the church, and so nurses the church. But this promise speaks of the holy catholic church, and not of a national church; and the New Testament speaks nothing of a national church: so that there is no such thing instituted by Christ, to be nursed by any king or queen; and therefore this cannot be the sense of the promise, that the kings and queens of the nations shall nurse national churches.

Neither

Neither is there any encouragement given in the New Testament unto that way wherein some would have the kings to be the church's nursing fathers. For they think, the kings should nurse the church, by providing abundant maintenance for the clergy, and so making it needless for all them that are taught in the word to give obedience to Christ, commanding them to communicate to him that teacheth in all good things; and further, by supporting their authority over the people, and employing the kingly power against all them that submit not to it; and by bestowing worldly privileges upon the church, and defending her in the possession of these: thus making a worldly kingdom for Christ and his ministers, like the lords of the Gentiles. But, especially, the kings must nurse the church, by defending her from the arguments of such teachers as the dignified clergy judge heretics or schismatics, and by their authority pronounce them such, while they either cannot stop their mouths by convincing arguments, or will not be at pains to do it; and the king is to defend the church from such false teachers, by cutting them off, or some way effectually restraining them from speaking. Yet heretical teaching (however evil it be before God and his church, and however Christians, in a private capacity, may shew their abhorrence of it, without disturbing civil society) is none of those evil deeds that the New-Testament subjects to the wrath and punishment inflicted by the magistrate: for these are open immoralities, and breaches of the second table of the law; as is very evident from Rom. xiii. which speaks only of the second table; and from 1 Pet. ii. 12.-----16. It is not easy to be believed, that the church of Christ is nursed by the very same means whereby the anti-christian church is nursed, and by which more of Zion's children have been sufferers than of heretics or false teachers. Our Lord, foreseeing heresies and heretics would go along with his gospel, and the pure profession of it in the world, and that many of his faithful

faithful servants would be cut off out of the world, under pretence of cutting off heretics and schismatics has given in this caution against it, in the parable of the tares and wheat, Matth. xiii. 29, 30. "Let both grow together until the harvest, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them."

4thly, It must be noticed, that these words, Isa. xlix. 23. come as an answer to that question, ver. 21. (which follows promises of a numerous church upon the rejection of the Jews, ver. 19. 20.), "Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone, these, where had they been?"

If the Jews should be cast off, it is supposed to be matter of wonder, whence Zion should have so many children as the 19th and 20th verses import; and the New Testament declares what difficulty there was about this, and how astonishing it was when it came to pass: therefore there is a question about it in the prophecy, as a mysterious thing, puzzling to the minds of men. So that the scope of the prophecy is the increase of the church, by the calling of the Gentiles, when the children of the Jerusalem that was on earth are cast out, and the bringing of the elect of all nations unto Christ, and into that new Jerusalem which is above, and is the mother of them all. This prophecy speaks not of the defence and protection of any church by the powers of the earth, nor of their bestowing worldly privileges upon it; but it speaks clearly of the erection and increase of that church which is the glorious antitype of the church of Israel; and it must be explained according to this scope. The New Testament gives us abundant direction in this, and shews how this promise began to be fulfilled in the days of the apostles, but signifies no other accomplishment of it to the end of the world. And if we compare

pare 2 Cor. vi. 1. 2. with the 8th verse of this chapter, which is wholly a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles, we will see that we are to seek the beginning of the accomplishment of this whole prophecy in the time of the apostles.

Lastly, Therefore this promise contains not a description of any office that the kings of the earth are to exercise about the church; but it is a description of those of whom the church should consist upon the casting out of the Jews: for when inquiry is made by Zion, "Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children?" the Lord answers, "I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms." And whereas it is inquired, "Who brought up these? Behold I was left alone, these, where had they been?" or, What are they? and whence came they? the Lord answers, "The kings of the Gentiles shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers:" They brought up these, they were nursed by them, as their subjects. And thus the kingdoms of the world, where, of old, there were no children of Zion, are now as so many nurseries, from whence Zion's children are brought to her. The kings of the earth nurse their subjects, and Zion has many children of them who are nursed by the kings of the earth, that is, their subjects. Thus the answer is suited unto the question; and it is no other but a metaphorical description of the calling of the Gentiles, which began in the days of the apostles, to continue through the whole accepted time, the whole day of salvation, till the Lord's second coming, when it shall be said, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

As to what is said in the latter part of the verse, *of the king's bowing down to the church, and licking up the dust of her feet*; we know that the Lord Christ has power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to his

people; and that he is exalted far above all power in this world, and that which is to come, and is *head over all things to the church*, making all things, even the greatest enemies of the church, work together for its good, in a way of holy providence, while he rules in the midst of his enemies, till, at length, when he comes the second time, he put down all rule, and authority, and power, and all his enemies under the feet of the church.

So that it cannot easily be made evident from this, yea, nor from any other text of the Old or New Testament, that the kings of the nations may be unto the New-Testament church, Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, or to the dwelling-place and assemblies of this Mount Zion, gospel-churches, instead of the kings of the house of David, or that they shall have the same power there that they had in that earthly nation and kingdom which was then the church of God.

Yet neither was it only the government of the kings of David's house in that nation that was typical of the kingdom of Christ: for the government of Christ in his kingdom is the antitype of all the rule and government in that nation, under its several forms of government, from the time of its being a nation, even as he is also the antitype of all the first-born in the family-state of the church before that.

For that people became a nation by virtue of a divine promise, and its becoming a nation was the accomplishment of a promise proposed to the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and this promise was subservient to the great promise of the seed Christ, for the sake of which it was given, as may be afterward more fully declared. And when the house of Jacob did become a nation, it was unto God a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, *Exod. xix. 5. 6.* That nation was his people separated from all the people upon the face of the earth, *Exod. xxxiii. 13. 16.*

The whole ruling power in this nation was first

in the hands of Moses, and his government was ecclesiastic. When the government was too great a burden for him alone, and the seventy elders were first set apart to bear the burden with him, and to judge in that commonwealth of Israel, they partook of the spirit that was upon Moses for that purpose, Numb. xi.

This nation, in all its forms of government, was a theocracy. God was the very King of the nation; and therefore he was offended with his people for desiring a king like the rest of the nations. And though he allowed them a king, as he had given directions about this before, Deut. xvii. from ver. 14. to the end; yet that king was to be of his choosing, and the manner of the kingdom was declared by him, 1 Sam. viii. ix. & x. The king was to be under his express command and direction in the matters of government, and of war and peace. So that they were not kings like the kings of the nations: for the Lord remained still the king of that nation, and the government of it was his; so it was a sacred thing.

The judges that the Lord raised up to judge Israel were plainly sacred rulers, and types of the Christ; and the Lord refers to them, when he makes the promise to David of building him an house, and of the Messiah's kingdom, 1 Chron. xvii. 6.---11.

There were several occasional types of the Messiah's kingdom and government, and several instances and acts of temporal rule and government some way relating to Israel, and several temporal rulers that prefigured Christ's kingdom, as Joseph, Mordecai, Esth. x. and Cyrus, Isa. xlv. and xlv. and the like. But the rule and government in Israel, the church of God, was a standing type and constant prefiguration of the kingdom of Christ. It was for his sake that Israel became a nation and kingdom; and when it was determined clearly in David's promise, that he should spring of Judah, and David's kingdom was set up in Judah, (1 Chron. xxviii. 4. 5.), as an especial type of

the Messiah to come of his house, the rest of the tribes were suffered to apostatise from the covenant at Sinai; and that apostate kingdom, if it was typical of any thing, it was rather antichrist: but the whole government in Judah prefigured the Messiah, our Judge, Lawgiver, and King, Isa. xxxiii. 22. There was an especial presence of God therefore among those rulers beyond other rulers; and Jehoshaphat, when setting judges in the land, tells them, “Ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgement:” He stood in their congregation, and judged among them.

Something to this purpose seems to be intended in Psal. lxxxii. It is agreed, that magistrates and rulers are there spoke of, and called *gods* and *sons of the Highest*. But it is not of all rulers that this is spoken; for they are plainly distinguished from other princes, and called gods on that account wherein they are distinguished from them. Yea, it is manifest, that they are the rulers in God’s nation: for they were rulers, as our Lord tells us, “to whom the word of God came,” John x. 35. And such were only the rulers in Jacob: “God did not make known his statutes, and the doctrine of his word, to other nations.” Or if we may understand “the Word” that our Lord says came to them, or was with them, the same way as John i. 1.; that is, if we take it for the Son of God himself, whose name is the Word of God; then we may explain the first verse of that Psalm of him, and his presence among the rulers of God’s nation: “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty, he judgeth among the gods. If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came.” (πρὸς ἕς ὁ λόγος τῷ Θεῷ ἰσθίνετο) [See Bisterfield upon the place against Crellius]. The duties of their office are pointed out to them, and these are the same wherein Solomon is made a type of the Messiah, Psal. lxxii. 12. 13. 14. And they are complained of as not understanding their great office, nor suitably exercising it, but
but

acting contrary to the design of it; so that the church was in a lamentable condition under their government, ver. 2.---5. Then the Psalmist concludes thus concerning them, ver. 6. 7. "I said, Ye are gods, and all of you sons of the Highest. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." After this great account of their office, beyond that of other princes, and grievous complaint of their wickedness, and of their weakness and infirmity as dying men, whose eminence ended with their life, he cries out in the last verse, "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations." This is he from whom these rulers had the designation *gods*, and *sons of the Highest*, even the Messiah, the Son of God, who is indeed the true God. It was their excellency above other princes, that they were rulers in God's nation, and that in this their office they were types of him who is indeed God; and thus they are called gods in a way very agreeable to scripture; and this that is said of the types is abundantly verified in the antitype, so the scripture is not broken. The Psalmist, complaining of the types, cries for the glorious antitype; even as, Jer. xxiii. and Ezek. xxxvi. the types are complained of, and Christ, the antitype, promised. These rulers were called gods, yet they were but mere men; and he desires that he should take the kingdom who is God in reality, from whom they borrowed that name, and in whom that designation of theirs is verified. They judged unjustly and weakly, like men; but righteous judgement is expected from him: they were dying men, and their government ended with their life; but the Messiah, the Son of God, arises from the dead, and takes the kingdom: their government was in that nation; but his kingdom extends to every kindred, tongue, people, and nation: "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations."

In this view of that Psalm, we perceive our Lord's reference to it, John x. 32.---36. carries in it a strong argument

argument for his Godhead, and what is ordinarily pleaded against it from that head is entirely taken off.

C H A P. II.

Of the distinction between the Old-Testament and the New with respect unto the church, and of the nature of the kingdom of Christ.

WE have been considering some things imported in our Lord's confession, that he is the King promised to the Jews. We shall next see what he says of his kingdom. And here he gives us a short sum of his doctrine concerning his kingdom; and delivers it so as at once to point against the Jewish mistake, and to satisfy Pilate, that he was falsely accused of being against Cæsar.

My kingdom, says he, is not of this world.----Now is my kingdom not from hence.

Both John Baptist, his forerunner, and he himself, preaching of his kingdom, designed it *the kingdom of heaven*. Thus they stripped the prophecies of the vail of similitudes, taken from that worldly kingdom of God in Israel, which was an earthly prefiguration of this heavenly thing. So they explained the prophecies. And this their explication of them had a foundation in the prophecies themselves. For in these such things are said of this kingdom, as could neither agree to that old kingdom of Israel, nor to any kingdom of this world: for this was the promise to David: "When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee.---And I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.---And thine house, and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee. Thy throne shall be established for ever." It could not be established before David in this world after his days in it were fulfilled; but after David is no more in
this

this world, it is promised that his kingdom, and the throne of his son, shall be established before him; and in this David professes his full satisfaction, when leaving this world. This kingdom must therefore be of another world, where David is, and where the King reigns for ever gloriously *before his ancients* that have their days on earth fulfilled, Isa. xxiv. 23. and not of this world. David himself says, in spirit, that his *Lord should sit*, ruling, on the right hand of God, Psal. cx. 1. compare Psal. xlvii. and lxviii. 18. and ciii. 19.---22. A kingdom that hath its king sitting on his throne in the heavens, and reigning before his ancients that are in heaven; a kingdom that is established for ever, and of which there shall be no end, is neither the old kingdom of Israel that was on earth, and is done away, nor any kingdom of this world; but must be of another world, and the kingdom of heaven. It is only in this heavenly kingdom that what is said of the eternity of the Old-Testament church, the type of it, is verified: for if it were of this world, or from hence, it could not be eternal; but now is David's throne and kingdom not of this world, now it is not from hence. Consider Psal. lxxxix. 35.---52.

This *now* supposes another state of things before, with respect to what is here spoke of; and imports, that what is here said of this kingdom was not before, but is now to take place. This that our Lord says of his kingdom, is opposed unto the kingdom of God, as it had been before this in the nation of Israel. That was a worldly kingdom, until he came, and put an end to that state of things by his death, wherein he also laid the foundation of this his kingdom, which is not of this world. This present time wherein he speaks before Pilate, is that time when this change was a-making, and immediately to be done in his death, setting aside the old covenant or testament, whereby that worldly kingdom was erected, and sealing the new covenant or testament, whereby

whereby the kingdom of heaven is erected and established for ever.

S E C T. I.

FOR clearing the distinction between the New Testament and the Old, as to this point, and establishing what is now said, in order to make way for a view of this kingdom of Jesus Christ, it will be necessary that we consider God's promise and covenants from the fall of man.

The first intimation of Christ and the covenant of grace that was made to sinners, is owned by Christians to be in that word of the Lord, Gen. iii. 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." There the whole revelation of this covenant of grace was, as it were, in embryo, to be afterward extended; and this light shining in a dark place guided them that were saved by the faith of Christ for several ages. Under the influence of this light, Abel worshipped God, in the faith of Christ, the promised seed, and obtained witness that he was righteous; and Enoch walked with God, and pleased him, Heb. xi. 4. 5. When this promise was given out, sacrifices were appointed; as appears from Abel's sacrificing in faith, and being accepted in it: and it is very likely, that the beasts of whose skins the Lord made coats to cover the nakedness of our first parents were the first sacrifices; and that therein was a figure of the righteousness of Christ covering our nakedness before God, Rom. iv. 6. 7. xiii. 14. Rev. iii. 17. 18. Thus the worship of God among sinful men, and their acceptance therein, took its rise from that promise of Christ; and the true worship of God was never without sacrifice since the fall of man; nor were there wanting, from that time, types of Christ, and of good things to come by him.

In that first promise, it is remarkable, that the Lord, laying the whole of the recovery and salvation of lost sinners upon his own sovereign will, and not upon the will of man, declares it is his will, to establish a division in the earth, by reconciling some unto himself in Christ, the promised seed, their head, and so setting them at odds with Satan, and the rest of mankind, his seed, to be conquered by the sufferings of the seed of the woman. It seems also to have been his mind, in that promise, that this division and controversy should be one way or other visible in the world. So it appeared very early in the case of Cain and Abel; and, lest the controversy should fail upon Abel's death, the Lord raised up another son to Adam in the room of Abel, whom Cain slew, Gen. iv. 25.; so that it was kept up some way between the posterity of Seth, and the apostate race of Cain, till such time as the posterity of Seth, except Noah, mingled themselves with Cain's race, and joined with them in their apostacy and wickedness.

This was the cause of the flood; from which Noah and his family were preserved in the ark; which was another figure of salvation by Christ's righteousness in the church: and God's covenant with Noah, and every living thing, having the rainbow for the sign of it, was subservient unto God's design of grace revealed in the promise. There seems also to be something of the gospel in that saying of Noah, Gen. ix. 26, 27. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem," &c. "God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Something is here intimated of Israel, the posterity of Shem, their being the church and people of God, and of the promised seed his coming of Shem; and then of the Gentiles their becoming fellow-heirs with the Jews, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel.

But, lest the controversy that the Lord had established in the earth should fail, when the world of the ungodly are thus destroyed, Adam is preserved in

the ark, and so it broke out again in Noah's family. After some time the posterity of Japhet, and perhaps many of the seed of Shem, joined with the cursed apostate race of Ham, in that matter of building the tower. That which they proposed was a firm union among themselves, and greatness in the earth, a great name. Thus, as the race of Seth mingled themselves with Cain's seed, to fulfill the lust of the flesh, or sensuality; so the posterity of Shem and Japhet joined themselves with the race of Ham, to fulfill the pride of life, to make themselves great and famous in the earth. And this union also displeased the Lord, so that he gives it as the reason of his confounding their language, Gen. xi. 4. 6. "Behold, the people is one."

This confounding their language was a dreadful judgement upon that generation; for, as it utterly disappointed their worldly designs, so it put an effectual stop to the continuance and propagation of the knowledge of the true God, and the promised seed among them: and from that time God suffered their posterity, the nations, to walk in their own ways; they became vain in their imaginations, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into images made like to corruptible things, and worshipped the creature. This became soon so universal, that, when God called Abraham, he was serving other gods, Jos. xxiv. 2. Thus God straitened them by the confounding of their language, and straitened Japhet not to be enlarged till the time of giving the gift of languages. But the Lord would not thus suffer the controversy that he had established by his promise utterly to fail in the earth; so he called Abraham, of the seed of Shem, and gave him the promise of Christ, and separated him, and his seed Isaac and Jacob, and the children of Israel, from the nations, till Christ the promised seed should come of him.

We must carefully consider the promise made to Abraham; for now the revelation of Christ the seed became more clear, and the distinction betwixt the
Old

Old Testament and the New, must be understood in a great measure by the due understanding of this.

It must be agreed among Christians, that own the authority of the New Testament, that Christ is that seed promised to Abraham, *in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed*, Gen. xii. 3. and xxii. 18. compare Gal. iii. 6. So that here the gospel is preached before unto Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. By the nations in this promise we cannot understand all and every one in the nations; nor can we consider them as such political bodies of men in the earth; but, according to the New-Testament explication, "It is a great multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," Rev. vii. 9. and v. 9. For otherwise, if that promise should be accomplished before the coming of Christ, there would be an end of all visible controversy between the seed of the woman and of the serpent; which we have ground to think cannot be. See Luke xii. 49.---53. John xvii. 20. 21. Matth. xxiv. and xvi. 24. 1 Cor. xv. 19. 2 Tim: iii. 12. The apostles shew plainly, that this promise to Abraham had the beginning of its accomplishment in their day, and that to a wonder; and yet there was then no whole nation, nor any one nation, in a national capacity, blessed in Christ. But this will be evident, if we consider, that the blessedness spoken of in this promise is spiritual and eternal, and must be acknowledged so to be by them that take the New-Testament account of it, Gal. iii. 8. 9. 14. "And the scripture foreseeing, that God would justify the Heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.---That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." It is manifest, no nation of this world can, in a national capacity, be the subject of justification by faith; and of the promise of

the Spirit, which we receive through faith; and it is as certain, that every person in the nations of the world is not to partake of this blessedness. What remains, therefore, but that it should be those who are redeemed by Christ out of every nation? And thus we find out the intent of the writings of the prophets about the nations: for these are enlargements upon this promise to Abraham.

Thus far, then, God's promise to Abraham was spiritual and eternal. And here lay the object of that faith whereby Abraham was justified, and eternally saved; even as his spiritual seed of all nations are blessed with him, in the faith of the same thing, that was then to be found in the promise, but now in the accomplishment of that promise, as is declared in the gospel.

Yet there was something in this promise peculiar to Abraham, and not common to him with all believers; and that was, that Christ should come of his seed, Gal. iii. 16. Heb. ii. 16. That this might be evidently fulfilled, it was necessary that Abraham's seed according to the flesh, of whom Christ was to come, should be preserved distinct from other people, till the promised seed, Christ, should come of them. And of this that was peculiar to Abraham in the promise of Christ, there came another promise, which we may see Gen. xii. 2. 7. *I will make of thee a great nation.--Unto thy seed will I give this land.* See likewise Gen. xiii. 14. 15. and Gen. xv. from ver. 13. It is evident this promise was temporal, as the other is spiritual and eternal, and fell to be accomplished before that other. And this temporal promise was given as a pledge of the accomplishment of the eternal promise, and carried in it a type, or earthly pattern, of the heavenly things of that promise. For the land of Canaan, promised as an inheritance to his seed according to the flesh, was a type of the heavenly inheritance: and so Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, took it to be, Heb. xi. 8. 9. 10. 14. 15. 16. And the seed of Abraham according

according to the flesh, that became a nation, and inherited Canaan's land, is evidently a type of Abraham's spiritual seed of all nations, the heavenly nation, that inherits the heavenly country. And the difference betwixt these two was typified by Ishmael, the son of the bond woman, and Isaac, the son of the free woman, in Abraham's family, Gal. iv. 21.---31.

This twofold promise laid the foundation of a twofold relation to God; the one spiritual and eternal, betwixt God and them that believed the spiritual promise, and all the children of Abraham according to the spirit, in all the nations of the earth; the other earthly and temporal, betwixt God and the seed of Abraham according to the flesh; which it behoved so far to continue till Christ came, as the end designed by it required. Of both these God speaks to Abraham, Gen. xvii. when he gives him the covenant of circumcision, to be kept by him, and his seed after him, in their generations. This circumcision was a sign of Christ's being to come of Abraham's seed according to the flesh; and it represented the shedding the blood of that promised seed, and the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and was a seal of the righteousness of faith to them that believed in the seed to come: so that, by the nature of it, it fell to be done away by the coming of that promised seed: and therefore it belonged to the temporal promise, and the temporal relation betwixt God and Abraham's seed according to the flesh, as that promise and relation was subservient, and had a reference unto the eternal promise, and the relation arising therefrom. And thus God made the covenant of circumcision with Abraham, to be a God unto him, and to his seed after him, in their generations (Gen. xvii. 7.---11. &c.); by this means separating Abraham and his seed, that were to be a nation, and inherit Canaan, to be a peculiar people to him above all people, and inclosing the promise of Christ among this circumcised people, till that promised seed should come.

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But hitherto Abraham's twofold promise was not accomplished: therefore when God gave him the covenant of circumcision, he made himself known to him only by the name of *God Almighty*, able to accomplish all that he had promised. Abraham's faith was exercised with many seeming impossibilities standing in the way of the accomplishment of both the promises; yet it was victorious; and he became therein a noble pattern to all that should believe; and *died in faith, not having received the promises*, as did also Isaac and Jacob after him; the temporal promise not being yet fulfilled; and it behoved it to be fulfilled before that which is spiritual and eternal.

Now, when the Lord proceeded to fulfill the temporal promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to make their seed a nation, and give them the promised land, he did it by means of a covenant, even that which he made with them *when he took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt*, by the mediation of Moses, Exod. xix. 3.---8. This is called the *old covenant*, Heb. viii. on account of the temporal relation between the Lord and that nation, which is done away. It is also called the *law*, Gal. iii. 17. Heb. x. 1. because of the law therein given to the nation of Israel; and the *first testament*, Heb. ix. 15. on account of the typical adoption, and the temporal inheritance, which was first given before the promise of the eternal inheritance was fulfilled. And when he proceeded, in the fullness of time, to fulfill that great spiritual and eternal promise, of blessing all nations in Christ, he does it by means of another covenant, even that which he makes by the mediation of Jesus Christ with Abraham's spiritual seed of all nations, redeemed from spiritual bondage and the wrath to come, by the blood of the Lamb, the truly holy and heavenly nation. This is called the *new covenant*, Heb. viii. because of the new spiritual and eternal relation betwixt God and this new nation, made up of all the nations of the earth; which

which could not be, without making old that covenant whereby he stood peculiarly related to one nation, and whereby the uncircumcised nations *were without God in the world*, Eph. ii. from ver. 13. And it is called the *new testament*, on account of the true adoption, Gal. iv. 1.---7. and the eternal inheritance therein given to as many of all nations as the Lord calls, now when the first inheritance is done away, Heb. ix. 15. This is the better covenant; as much better, as the sure promises of spiritual and eternal blessedness to all nations in heavenly places in Christ, upon which it is established, are better than the promises of temporal blessings in earthly places to the nation of Israel, upon which that first covenant was established; as much better, as the whole people within the bond of this covenant, whose sins God remembers no more, who all of them know him, and in whose hearts his law is written, that they may never depart from him, are better than that covenanted nation, which continued not in that same covenant whereby it was related to God, and was cast off by him; and as much better, as the blood of the Son of God sealing this covenant, is better than the blood of beasts dedicating the first, and as his mediation is better than the mediation of Moses. And these are the two covenants or testaments of which the Apostle speaks, Gal. iv. Heb. viii. and ix.

Our divines are very shy to use the scripture-expression in this case, and shun to call them two covenants, but think they express the thing better, when they call them two dispensations of the covenant of grace. And they take this way to establish this great truth, That none were saved since the fall but through Christ, by faith in him. Their design is good; but why should they shun to use the scripture-language, and think they express the thing better than the Spirit of God, who knew best the fittest words, and thereby reflect on him, as if his words were not fit for the purpose? Yet his words have a
plain

plain sense, and are better fitted to the purpose than those they have put in the place of them. He calls them *two covenants*; and so they are indeed, as much distinct as heaven and earth are; and shews plainly, that all the covenanted in that first covenant were not saved, yea that none were saved but by faith in the promises of Christ, upon which the new covenant is established. Thus all the saints from Adam to Christ obtain eternal life, and never one of them was saved by that national covenant with Israel, which is done away; though, having a shadow of good things to come, it was subservient to the promise of Christ, and to the faith of that promise, and was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith.

S E C T. II.

THAT we may have some further view of these two covenants, with the different states of things established by them, and of the kingdom of Christ established by the new covenant, we may consider Heb. xii. from ver. 18. to the end; where we have a short account of the difference betwixt the covenant at Sinai and the new covenant, the different states of things under them, the excellency of the new, and the state of things established thereby; the doing away of that covenant, with what pertained to it; the remaining of the things pertaining to the new covenant; and the conclusion of all is, *Wherefore we receive a kingdom that cannot be moved, &c.* which is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, of which we speak.

The apostle is upon an exhortation to holiness: and whereas the Jews objected against the New Testament way of it, that it made void the law, and encouraged men in sin; he pleads strongly for holiness, 1. From the grace of the new covenant bringing us near to God, in opposition to the terrible voice of the law, injecting slavish fear, and keeping sinners

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at a distance. 2. From the glorious holy society established by the new covenant, into which we are brought by the voice of the new covenant, in opposition to the voice of Sinai, erecting an earthly nation. 3. From the greater majesty and glory of the voice of the new covenant, which is from heaven, than of that voice which spake on earth. And, 4. From the greater vengeance upon them that turn away from this voice speaking from heaven; vengeance from heaven being more dreadful than vengeance from earth. Other things might be noticed here to this purpose; but I shall confine myself to my present scope.

The apostle speaks here of the two covenants; calls them both a *voice*; and both that covenant, and this that we have now, are the voice of God: Yea, that voice at Sinai was the voice of the same person who is the Mediator of the new covenant: for he appeared on Sinai, and gave the law, by the disposition of angels, and the ministry of Moses, the typical mediator, and entered into that covenant with his typical people, whom he redeemed with a typical redemption out of Egypt; so that he is the God of Israel. He speaks now in a more condescending manner, not keeping sinners at such a distance, being incarnate; and his voice now is the *voice of his blood, which speaketh better things than that of Abel*; but still he is the same person that spake of old. And it is to be observed, that his voice then *shook the earth*, but now he himself is notably at work, as Mediator of the new covenant, *shaking not the earth only, but also heaven*.

Observe how the apostle distinguishes these two speakings of his, or his voice in the old covenant and in the new. 1. As to the time of them: *then*, at Sinai, when he brought the children of Israel out of Egypt; and *now*, in the day of the gospel. 2. He distinguishes them by the place of speaking: *Then he spake on earth, from the top of the mount that might be*

touched, after he had redeemed that people out of Egypt; but now he speaketh *from heaven, from mount Zion the heavenly Jerusalem*, having finished his work of redemption upon the earth. 3. He distinguishes them by the effects of them: "His voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." And this word, *Yet once more*, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom," &c.

There was a great earthquake at Sinai when the first covenant was made; but, by the strain of the text, it appears, that this shaking of the earth was significant of a notable alteration of the state of things with respect unto the church then; even as the earthquake, and rending of the vail of the temple, was significant of a notable alteration of the state of things about the church. I shall lay forth what I take to be the apostle's scope, in the following observations.

Obs. 1. *There was a notable alteration and change of things with respect to the church on earth, by the Lord's voice in the covenant with Israel at Sinai.*

What this change and alteration was, we may see in the following instances.

1. Then was the Lord accomplishing the promise made to the patriarchs, that was first to be accomplished before the promise of the seed in whom all the nations should be blessed, Gen. xii. 1. 2. 6. 7. and xiii. 14. 15. and xv. &c.

Then was he known by the name *Jehovah*, the independent, unchangeable God, keeping and performing his word against all that stood in the way. Thus he was known in the performance of his word to the patriarchs, to whom he was only known by the name *Almighty*, able to perform in due time what he had promised; for they lived not to know him in the performance of his promise, Exod. vi. 2.---8.

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2. The church, or God's covenanted people, the seed of Israel, who were the Lord's people by the covenant of circumcision, did then pass out of the family state, wherein the church had been from the beginning, into the state of a nation, and became a nation and kingdom of God, he being now related unto them as a nation by that national covenant, Exod. xix. 3. 4. 5. "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." Read also ver. 7. 8. 9. This was not before. God was not related to his people from the fall, nor to the house of Jacob in the capacity of a nation; for before the church was in families.

3. The worship of God, and his special presence, was then settled in the sanctuary, and all the ordinances of worship were fixed and established; whereas that presence of God and his worship had not a fixed abode before: for they built altars to the Lord in the several places where the Son of God appeared to them, when sojourning in the land of promise, as in a strange country. But now there is a settled place of the worship of God; as we see Exod. xxix. 42.---46. "This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord; where I will meet with you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the

congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister unto me in the priest's office. And I will dwell amongst the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongst them: I am the Lord their God."

4. By the covenant at Sinai, there was a separation made betwixt all the nations of the earth, and Israel, now brought out of the land of Egypt, to be settled by themselves in a land and kingdom of their own, where they had been strangers before among other people.

Unto this separation served the law of commandments contained in ordinances delivered to that nation in the covenant at Sinai. The apostle calls this *the enmity*, and *the wall of partition* betwixt them and all other people. And by the covenant containing this law, the nation of Israel was God's peculiar people; all that were not within the bond of that covenant being thereby excluded the church of God, as all that came within the bond of that covenant were of that nation and church; there being *one law for the stranger and the home-born*, Eph. ii. 11. 12. &c. Exod. xix. 5. "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is mine."

Obs. 2. *This great alteration in the church left the state of it earthly, and did not extend to heaven to make any change there.*

He spoke on earth; his voice shook the earth; but now he shaketh also heaven.

The eternal promise of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ to all nations, was not yet performed by the voice that *shook only the earth*: for by that voice, the Lord was doing no more but fulfilling that promise made to the patriarchs, which was temporal and earthly; so he then shook only the earth.

However

However great this shaking was, heaven was not moved by it. All things remained there as they were after the giving out of the first promise of Christ to fallen man: for from that time, it became the receptacle of the departing souls of them that died in the faith of the promised seed; and those spirits of just men were there with the angels, expecting the full accomplishment of that great promise; even as the saints in heaven now are expecting, till the enemies of Christ's kingdom be made his footstool, and looking for the glorious day of the complete redemption and perfection of the whole church, according to that promise, in the faith of which they have died. Enoch was translated into heaven without death, long before this voice that shook the earth; so that it did not extend to heaven to make any alteration there.

But all the earthly shadows of heavenly things to come by Christ, that were instituted from the fall, were ingrossed in this covenant, and delivered to Israel, with many others added in the law of commandments contained in ordinances. Thus sacrifices, instituted at the giving of the first promise, and a holy place of worship on earth, and an altar, and circumcision, were all carried into the covenant at Sinai: so that whatever was earthly in the church, typifying heavenly things to come, belongs to that covenant made with Israel; and all the earthly ordinances that were before, together with many more now appointed, were now delivered to Israel, as rudiments by which they might come to the knowledge of Christ, like children beginning to learn; and the apostle calls them the *rudiments of the world*. These rudiments the law put into the hands of the Israelites: and this is one way wherein the law was their *schoolmaster to bring them to Christ*, that they who believed might be justified by the faith of the promised seed.

So the state of the church erected and established by this shaking, was no more but earthly, and there was nothing heavenly in it, abstracted from the typical

pical referencè it had to heavenly things to come by the promised seed.

For the people that were brought within the bond of that covenant, and of whom the kingdom of God, established thereby, did consist, were an earthly seed, born after the flesh, even Israel according to the flesh. And though there were some among them *born of the Spirit*, yet this belonged unto the New-Testament kingdom, and was their preparation for it, according to God's purpose, by means of the promise of Christ. This was of the promise of Christ not yet accomplished, and not of that covenant made with all the seed of Israel according to the flesh. The earthly birth, or that birth after the flesh, availed much in the state of the church erected at Sinai, as to the enjoyment of the privileges of it. But now our Lord says to Nicodemus, *Except a man be born again, or born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God*; and Gal. iv. 26. *Jerusalem which is above is the mother of us all.*

That covenant had also a worldly sanctuary, and ordinances of divine service, the way into the holiest of all not being yet manifest, as the apostle shews, Heb. ix. And he declares them no more but *earthly patterns of heavenly things to come.*

The Lord's kingdom in that nation was earthly. It was set up, established, and defended, by earthly power, as an instrument in the Lord's mighty hand. When Joshua was leading the people into the promised land, the Lord appeared unto him with a sword in his hand, as the captain of the Lord's host; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon men in that kingdom to enable them to fight. It is not so in the New-Testament kingdom, which is distinguished from that, by being called *the kingdom of heaven*: and in opposition to that way of doing, of which we have instances, Heb. xi. we are called "to run the race set before us with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who endured the cross, despising the
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the shame." That kingdom of God was managed in an earthly way; and, because of the sins of that nation against their covenanted God and king, it was subject to earthly changes and disorders, wasting and captivity, and many evils of that kind, from within themselves, and from the nations about. In opposition to this, the New Jerusalem is said to be "a quiet habitation," and "violence no more heard in it, wasting nor destruction in its borders," Isa. xxxiii. 20. and lx. 18. This heavenly nation can receive no damage by earthly violence.

The inheritance of that church was an earthly inheritance. The promised land was a spot of this earth, though a type of the heavenly inheritance. The blessings promised to that nation in that covenant, were earthly blessings, *the good things of this life*; and the evils contained in the curses of it, were earthly miseries, Levit. xxvi. And it is not easy to conceive how a nation, as such, can be the object of other sort of blessings or curses. Thus, according to their national keeping of that covenant, they enjoyed this blessedness in the promised land, and according to this the Lord explained his providences about them by his prophets. He does not so to other nations of the world. Now matters are far otherwise with the heavenly nation typified by this: "For if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable;" and, "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." But setting aside the promise of Christ given before this covenant, and the typical relation that these things had to Christ, and good things to come by him, we will find nothing heavenly and eternal in them. Our Lord says to the Jews, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me." And his saying seems to import this, If you find them not testifying of me, you will find nothing of eternal life in them.

S E C T.

S E C T. III.

Obs. 3. **I**N the New Testament, there is another and more notable change and alteration of things on earth, and also in heaven, with respect unto the church.

Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

The Son of God, who, by his voice in the covenant at Sinai, shook only the earth, now shakes again the earth, and also heaven, by the mediation in the new covenant. Then he was fulfilling earthly promises made to the patriarchs, as we have heard; so he shook only the earth: but now he appears in the accomplishment of the better promises of heavenly blessings to sinners of all nations of the earth, for the sake of which the other promises were given; and so he shakes not the earth only, but also the heavens.

How he shakes the earth and also heaven, by his mediation in this new covenant, established on better promises, we may see in the following instances.

First, As to the earth, there is a remarkable shaking of it again, by the Mediator of the new covenant.

1. He descended into the lower parts of the earth, Eph. iv. 9. He became the seed of the woman, and took on him the seed of Abraham and of David, according to the promises. “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of it, and deliver us. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

This

This is the new thing that the Lord hath created in the earth, the performance of that good thing promised to the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah, which was not performed before. The promises had been long pregnant with it, and now they began to bring forth, when the fulness of time was come.

This notable new thing is the foundation of all the alterations on earth, and also in heaven; of which we here speak.

2. He hath hereby abolished the temporal covenant made with the nation of Israel, and set aside all the earthly things thereby established; and, in consequence of this, he brought desolation on Jerusalem and the temple. But this is in the removing of the things that are shaken, of which the Apostle speaks, ver. 27. and therefore we shall not stay on it here.

3. By the doing away of that covenant, sinners of all nations, formerly excluded by that *wall of partition*; are brought into the church by faith in Christ, the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; and so they become *a people that were not a people*. Thus the earth and all nations are shaken, Haggai ii. 6. 7. "Every valley is exalted, and every mountain brought low, that the glory of the Lord might be revealed, and all flesh see it together," Isa. xl. 4.---9. This great alteration is much insisted on in the New Testament; for instance, see Gal. iii. & iv. Eph. ii. & iii.

4. By this means the church hath passed out of the state of an earthly nation, like that established by the shaking of the earth at Sinai, and is now a glorious general assembly out of all nations; typified by that national assembly: for it is also a nation; but not earthly, not of this world; and so it very far excels the earthly nation.

The Apostle calls it *the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*. Which points out to us, 1. That the New-Testament church

consists not of any one nation or sort of men, as of old; but is a general assembly of all nations and kinds of people, "where there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, male nor female; for they are all one in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 28. "And Christ is all unto them, and is in them all," Col. iii. 11. For this is a church raised, not upon the temporal promise of making Abraham's seed, according to the flesh, a great nation; but upon that promise, *In thy seed* (which is Christ) *shall all nations of the earth be blessed.* And, according to this promise, it consists neither of one nation only, nor of any whole nation; but is a general assembly gathered out of the nations into one in Christ, and blessed in him. 2. That all true members of this church are the children of God, Gal. iii. 25. 26. And this is opposed to the condition of the church of Israel under the law, or Sinaitic covenant, which gendered unto bondage. For though to Israel, according to the flesh, pertained the typical adoption; yet they were in bondage, and had not the true adoption, John viii. 33.---36.: and though they that believed on Christ in the Old-Testament promises, got *power* or right *to become the sons of God,* or to be members of the church of the first-born, John i. 12.; yet that was not by the temporal covenant making all Israel the church of God; nor was this the common privilege of the whole church, erected by that covenant, as it is of this church; neither was the spirit of adoption given to believers themselves under that covenant, as it is now, Gal. iv. 1.---6. Rom. viii. 14.---17. This is the common privilege of this whole general assembly and church: they are all joint-heirs with Christ, the first-born from the dead, and so they are an assembly of first-born. There was never such a church as this before. 3. The Apostle says, *They are written in heaven;* inrolled there, as being citizens of that heavenly Jerusalem, and as having their nativity from thence:

thence: for they are all the children of that "Jerusalem which is above," Gal. iv. 26. This is opposed to the earthly Jerusalem, and a citizenship therein, the old earthly church.

Unto this church New-Testament believers on earth are come; now this state of things, this church, hath taken place, and they are highly privileged beyond all expression, in being members of this church. And this is what we have now in the place of the old national church of Israel; so that there is no more any such national covenant, or national church, as was before this general assembly and church of the first-born.

Secondly, Heaven is also shaken by the Mediator of the new covenant. And how is that?

1. "He that descended first into the lower parts of the earth, is the same also that hath ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," Eph. iv. 9. 10.

He hath ascended above the first heaven, the air, the seat of Satan's kingdom, who is therefore called *the prince of the power of the air*, Eph. ii. 2. He had shaken that kingdom, and made himself master of it, in his death, and is now ascended above it.

He hath also ascended above the heaven of the sun, moon, and stars, and they are all put under the feet of the man Christ Jesus. This same person was before their maker; but now they move under him, the Son of man, "made head over all things to the church, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

And he hath further ascended into the heaven of God's glory, where the angels and spirits of just men were; and is exalted far above angels, and every name that is named in the world to come, unto the Father's right hand. This is the heaven which is here said to be shaken.

And was there not a glorious change and alteration there, when the Lamb that was slain began to appear alive in the midst of the throne? when he that

was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour, and sat down with the Father on his throne? Was not the heaven remarkably shaken, when this high priest entered there, and presented himself before the Father, with the blood of his own sacrifice, whereby God is infinitely glorified, and his glory fully displayed to angels and men, and whereby the way into the holiest is made manifest, and all his people for ever perfected? This was indeed a new thing in heaven: that blood of the new covenant was full of wonders, when it appeared there; as the fiery tongues, and a rushing wind, or vapour of smoke, were signs in the earth beneath, Acts ii. 16. 19. Was there not a glorious change in heaven, when the Son of David took his seat on his throne at the Father's right hand, and was *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, and crowned with many crowns, and proclaimed King through heaven, (*Let all the angels of God worship him*), and through all the earth in the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and acknowledged in the joyful acclamations of worshipping angels and spirits of just men in heaven, and of his people on the earth? There must have been a very great alteration in heaven, when the Mediator of the new covenant prepared the throne of his kingdom there, and sat down on the throne of his holiness to rule the nations from thence, Psal. xlvii. 5.---8. and ciii. 19.---22.

This appearance of Jesus Christ in heaven, as it was, so to speak, the filling up of a place there that was empty before, so it made a vast alteration in the whole state of things there. For,

2. The Old-Testament saints that died in the faith, and were in heaven before Jesus entered there, were hereby perfected; that is, they came to the enjoyment of that which they believed and hoped for on earth, and which they were expecting in heaven; even the accomplishment of the great Old-Testament promises

promises of Christ, and the good things to be brought in by him. They now see the promised seed in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, and their happiness is enlarged in becoming members of this glorious general assembly and church now erected, and in receiving of the Spirit from Jesus Christ, as it was given to him in an inconceivably-glorious manner, after he ascended to the right hand of God, that he might fill the things in heaven as well as on earth, Acts ii. 33. Eph. iv. 10. This was David's faith and hope: now he sees the throne of his kingdom established before him for ever. And this is what he sets forth as the faith, hope, earnest desire, and prayer of the Old-Testament saints, Psal. lxxv. 4. 5.; where we see they expected to be abundantly satisfied with the good things of this house of God, which is a house of prayer for all flesh, to which they have access, according to an election of grace. And the Old-Testament saints have the answer of their prayers for the accomplishment of the promise of the Messiah, in those terrible things in righteousness, which befell the Jewish nation when the Lord demolished that earthly church, and in his becoming the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and "of them afar off upon the sea, or in the isles." And now David, that sat in the Lord's throne in the typical kingdom, which is removed, has all his desire, in beholding his Son and Lord sitting on his throne, and in being a fellow-subject with New-Testament believers of all nations. Moses, who was faithful as a servant in the old earthly house, which is demolished; is now farther advanced, in being a part of his heavenly house, a stone of this glorious building of God over which is Jesus Christ, the Son of God; yea, that great prophet and lawgiver is now more happy, in hearing this prophet, and receiving the law from his mouth. And Abraham, the father of the faithful, that rejoiced to see his day afar off, is now blessed among his brethren of all nations, in beholding his

his glorious promised seed. Thus the Lord Jesus, our King, reigns in Mount Zion, and before his ancients gloriously, Isa. xxiv. 23. and they are come to the full enjoyment of what they were till now expecting: so being perfected, according to Heb. xi. 9. 10. 13. 14. 15. 16. 39. 40. and xii. 23. "they received not the promise-----God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. And we are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."

3. The innumerable company of angels are likewise brought into a new order, in subjection to the man Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, 1 Pet. iii. 22. Col. ii. 10. They have received a great addition to their knowledge, and their happiness is much enlarged now beyond what it was before, by being admitted to behold the glory of Christ in the New-Testament church, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Pet. i. 12. Eph. iii. 10. and by their having a part in this glorious society whereof Christ is the head. For though he took not on him their nature, and though they were not redeemed by his blood, and be not so near to him as his brethren the redeemed are; yet they owe their preservation from falling to him, according to their election unto this his kingdom: therefore they are called the *elect-angels*, 1 Tim. v. 21. They are comprehended in the things in heaven that are now gathered together in one in Christ, with the things on earth, and reconciled by him, Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20. And we are said to be come to the innumerable company of angels, Heb. xii. 22. They bear some part in the church's worship, Heb. i. Rev. v. 11. 12. They are now fellow-servants with us unto the man Christ Jesus, Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9. And this is one excellency of the New-Testament church above the Old, that it is not subjected to angels, as that was; but they are now subjected to him that was made lower than they for the suffering of death, and are fellow-subjects with his servants,

vants, Heb. i. and ii. Consider Chap. ii. 2. 3. 5. “They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation,” and are present in gospel-churches; and they will appear with the Head of the church ministering to him and his members, when the church shall be fully separated from all other societies, Matth. xiii. and xxv. 31. Something of this kind seems to be pointed out by our Lord, in his saying to Nathanael, when he professed his faith in him as the King of Israel, “Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” This new order among the angels ministering unto David’s Son in his kingdom, according to Psal. ciii. toward the close, is a notable alteration in heaven; and it may be also noticed, that the angels seem to have received something of his spirit, for serving him in his church, Rev. xix. 10. Thus he that ascended above all heavens, that he might fill all things, has filled the Old-Testament saints, and his angels, and now they are the angels of the Son of man, Matth. xxiv. 30. 31.

4. There is a notable alteration in the worship of heaven, by Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant his entering there, and appearing as the slain Lamb alive again in the midst of the throne. Of this we may have some view in comparing the 4th and 5th chapters of the Revelation, and considering the difference betwixt the worship described in the one and the other. Yea, and now heaven is opened as the sanctuary for sinners of all nations on earth, and a house of prayer for all people, that they may join in the worship of the Lamb, and of him that sits on the throne, with that glorious company above, as one worshipping assembly, Heb. ix. and x. This was not while the first tabernacle was standing; for then the

the way into "the holiest of all" was not thus manifest. But more of this afterward. Only we may notice to this purpose, Rev. v. 13. and xiv. 2. 3. where the worship of the company of heaven is represented, and the company of the redeemed on earth joining with them in it, and none but they.

But this leads unto another observation, which is not alien from the words, according to the view I have of them; and it is thus.

S E C T. IV.

Obf. 4. **I**N this second shaking, heaven and earth are joined together. For this we may consider Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20. and this context. And how this is, we may consider under these two heads.

1. They in heaven, and believers on earth, are one society, one city of God, one building and house of God, one kingdom and one family, whereof the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the father, and he the first-born, the antitype of the first-born in the family-state of the church, Eph. iii. 15. The children of this family upon earth, who are but as babes in the cradle, or upon the breasts, in comparison of those above, are yet children of the family, as well as they who sit at their Father's table. It is one whole family. They in heaven, and they on earth, are not two churches, but one: the spouse of Christ is but one. It is one kingdom of God; and they who were last, in respect of the Jews, who inherited the old earthly kingdom of God, do now come from the east, west, north, and south, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets, in the kingdom of God. Thus the apostle says of the believing Gentiles on earth, that they were *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*; and that they were fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, Eph. ii. 19. and iii. 5. 6. The apostle calls this the mystery of Christ now revealed

vealed by the Spirit, even as Eph. i. 9. 10. he calls this the mystery of his will made known to them; his gathering together in one, in the fullness of time, all things in Christ, which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him. The church in heaven and on earth is the body of Christ, his fullness, the fullness of him that filleth all in all, and one whole building, which, being all fitly framed together in him, the foundation and corner-stone, groweth unto an holy temple in him.

2. There is a new communication between heaven and earth opened by this shaking of the heaven and earth together. The saints on earth have access unto that holiest of all by faith, in the new and living way consecrated for them through the vail of Christ's flesh, and join with them above in the New-Testament worship: and from the Lamb in the midst of the throne, that same Spirit of his that fills them above, comes down upon all the redeemed upon earth; so that they have a blessed communion together in Christ, in whom they are one. And heaven being now opened by Jesus's entering there, the angels of God are ascending and descending upon the Son of man, the antitype of Jacob's ladder; which is the great thing that our Lord called Nathanael and the disciples to look after.

Obf. 5. *By means of this shaking, not the earth only, but also heaven, the state of the church is now become heavenly,* Gal. iv. 26. Phil. iii. 20. Eph. i. 3. and ii. 6. and iii. 10. Col. iii. 1. and the context. On this account it is called the heavenly Jerusalem. This also is the reason of that common designation of the church in the New Testament, *the kingdom of heaven.* And that the state of the church is now heavenly, may appear, if we consider these things.

1. The sanctuary, or holy place of the church's worship, is now heaven itself, where Jesus is entered. The New-Testament sanctuary is not a worldly sanctuary, as that of the Old Testament. It is no more

in any place of this earth, John iv. 21.---“Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father,” Heb. ix. 11. “Christ being come an high priest---of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.” Yet this church has a sanctuary as well as the Old-Testament church. It has something instead of that worldly sanctuary, which is done away. And the Apostle plainly tells us, that this is heaven itself, Heb. ix. 12. 24. “By his own blood he entered in once into that holy place. ---For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” “The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing,” Heb. ix. 8. But now, by Jesus’s entering heaven, as the high-priest of the church, heaven is become the sanctuary for us; and we have “boldness to enter into this holiest by his blood, by a new and living way that he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh,” Heb. x. 19. 20.

It was the appearance of the Son of God fore-shewing his incarnation, and some way manifesting himself present, that made the places where he so manifested himself holy. And when he was actually incarnate, his presence in the second temple made it more glorious than the first, though it wanted the *Schehinah*. And when he is now no more so in this world, but in heaven, his personal presence there, in the human nature, makes that the sanctuary, and we have access into the holiest of all through the vail of his flesh.

The glory of God shines unto the church in Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God. The gospel, with its ordinances, manifest the glory of God unto believers, in the face or person of Jesus Christ, who is in heaven, at the Father’s right hand, beyond the
reach

reach of all the world's observation, and is seen only by the faith of his people there, John xiv. 19.

The first thing that a convinced self-condemned sinner (for none other come to God by him) has to do with, in drawing near to God, is the flesh of Jesus Christ, his human nature, that suffered, which is now in heaven: *I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb, as it had been slain.* We consider him, in the worship of God, as the slain Lamb, now alive in heaven: and herein we discern the infinite worth of his glorious divine person; and so we ascribe worthiness to him in our worship. In seeing him thus, the glory of all the divine attributes opens itself to us in him, the brightness of the Father's glory; and in seeing him we see the Father, having liberty to come to him as a father. And in the slain Lamb we have all the fullness of the Holy Ghost dwelling, to be communicated with us, by whose influence also we thus enter into the holiest, through the veil of Christ's flesh. Thus we find the one Godhead in three glorious persons, in this our entrance into the holiest through the veil of his flesh. Thus we have the object of worship in this heavenly kingdom. "This is the true God, and eternal life. Let us keep ourselves from idols." Here it is that God dwells with men, in the heavenly house not made with hands: and so far as men have access here, so far they are near unto God in his ordinances.

The throne of grace, the mercy-seat pointed out to us in the gospel, is now no where but there, where Jesus, the true propitiation, is. There only is the church's high-priest ministering, and there only is the true sanctuary, the true place of worship, Heb. iv. 14. 15. 16. and viii. 1.---5.

There is now no more any place on earth, where the whole church assembles for worship; but they all assemble in the heavenly Jerusalem, where Jesus is, the antitype of that on earth, to which the church of Israel assembled, and toward which they worshipped

from all corners of the land. Here they on earth have their conversation, Phil. iii. 20. and unto that place the tribes of God go up now worshipping God, all serving in the newness of the Spirit: and there are no worshippers here but spiritual worshippers. Thus there is an end put to all controversies about earthly holy places; and temples of God made with hands, John iv. 20. 21.

2. The seat of the kingdom, and of the church's power and government, is now only in heaven, where the Son of David is set on his throne, at the Father's right hand. It is no more on this earth, nor any spot of it, as of old: For this kingdom is spiritual and heavenly, and so cannot have an earthly seat. It puts forth its power upon the souls of men, and influences the inward man, the spirit of our minds. Therefore says our Lord, Luke xvii. 21. "They shall not say, Lo here, or, lo there."

Men of all nations and places of the earth do, at one time or another, belong unto this kingdom; and it is but some of the people, a few, a little flock, in comparison, in any nation of this world; that have been, or are the subjects of this kingdom. So it hath not its seat in any nation of this world, nor in them all together.

The subjects of this kingdom that live on earth, are all *strangers and sojourners* in it, having "here no continuing city. And if in this life they had hope only, they were of all men the most miserable." For the seat of the kingdom to which they belong is not here, but in heaven; where the throne of the kingdom is, and their King sits ruling on his throne. The thrones of judgement, the thrones of the house of David, were set in Jerusalem that was on earth, and there was the seat of that kingdom; but the throne of this kingdom is above, in the heavenly Jerusalem.

There is the bulk and the greatest number of the subjects, living at rest with their King. Few, in comparison, are, on this earth, at any time; and these have

have their houses, their mansions, there, being here only as in a tabernacle or tent, upon a journey, or in a warfare, 2 Cor. v. from the beginning, John xiv. 2. 3. and there they have their nativity, *Jerusalem which is above is the mother of them all.* They have their citizenship there, Phil. iii. 20. and their names are inrolled there as citizens of that city, even while they are sojourning on this earth. Their whole strength and furniture for their warfare on earth is there, and from thence, Eph. vi. 10. 12.

And all the acts of government upon the subjects of Christ in his gospel churches on earth, have their whole authority and force only from thence, and there they are all ratified and confirmed, or they are null and void, Matth. xviii. 18. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Thus the discipline of the visible churches of Christ, which is of his institution, is heavenly.

3. The inheritance of the New-Testament church is also in heaven. Whatever it be that was prefigured by Canaan, the land of promise, with the privileges and blessings thereof, that is certainly the inheritance of the New-Testament church; and where that inheritance is, to which Old-Testament saints looked through that vail, there is now the inheritance of the church. Now, that is heaven, Heb. xi. 9. 10. 13.---16. The privileges and promised blessings of this church are with Christ in the heavenly places; and his subjects on earth enjoy what they have of them here in their conversation there by faith, seeking the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; for they are dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God, Eph. i. 3. Col. iii. 1.---4. The inheritance of the saints, to which they are begotten, and which they are called to hope for, is declared to be in heaven, 1 Pct. i. 4. While on this earth, they are exercised with many temptations and afflictions, to wean them from this world,

world, to prepare them for that, and make them earnestly desirous of it. And the joy and pleasure proper to them in this world, is that which they have in the hopes and foretastes of that inheritance.

Our Lord calls his disciples, *not to lay up for themselves treasures on earth, but in heaven.* See his exhortation, Matth. vi. 19. 20. 21. And the apostle tells the Hebrews, “That after they were enlightened, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance,” Heb. x. 34. How wonderfully did the gospel of the kingdom, upon the first down-pouring of the Spirit, draw the hearts of the Jewish converts off from their inheritances in that land, which was before the land of promise, unto this better and more enduring inheritance, typified by that which is done away?

The Apostle complains of the Judaizing teachers, who were for an earthly state of the church, *that they minded earthly things*; and in opposition to them, he says, *Our conversation is in heaven.* They are rare, but happy, whatever their condition be in this world, that can now join him heartily in that saying of his. But then they had a clearer view of the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, and were more powerfully influenced by what they knew of it, than we. And I doubt not but to the loss of that is much owing our darkness of mind, and carnality in the worship of God, our conformity to a present world, our want of the primitive mortification, holiness and heavenliness, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, so much complained of; but in vain, while the causes of the things complained of are neglected.

From what has been already said, we may have some view of the difference betwixt the Old Testament and the New, and betwixt the church of the Old Testament and the New Testament church, and how far the New excels the Old. The Jews thought, that the declaration of this in the preaching of the
gospel

gospel by the Apostles, was a very great reflection upon the Old Testament, and tended to weaken its authority; yea, and to make it void. But the Apostle declares, that he who hath shaken both the earth and heaven, is the same whose voice then shook the earth; and that this new shaking is the accomplishment of his promise in the Old Testament. Christians will own, that the writers of the New Testament were inspired, for explaining and declaring the fulfilment and great intent of the Old-Testament prophecies, by the same Spirit that indited them: for no prophecy of the Old Testament is of any private interpretation, “seeing the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” 2 Pet. i. 20. 21. And the gospel-declaration of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that follows, makes that manifest which the prophets were “searching into, to find what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified of it before hand,” 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12. And, by this means, we have the word of prophecy more confirmed unto us, 2 Pet. i. 19. Now, the Apostle here explains that prophecy of Haggai, chap. ii. 5. 6. 7.-----
 “The word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, and my Spirit remaining among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.”

What the apostle insinuates, of the voice at Sinai, its being the voice of the Son or Word of God, seems to be taken from this prophecy. And, in that promise of another shaking, there appears a reference unto the shaking of the earth in the making of that covenant of which the Prophet spake immediately before; and the Apostle plainly says, *that this shaking of the earth and heaven, spoken of in that promise,*

mise, had been when he wrote; *but now*, says he; “he hath promised, saying, Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom,”-----

But he takes special notice of that word in the prophecy, *Yet once more*, and insists upon the import of it; which is, the changing and removing the things established by that first covenant, and the establishing of a new state of things, which cannot be again shaken, and therefore must remain, ver. 27. “And this word, *Yet once more*, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken, may remain.” And here is matter for some more observations.

S E C T. V.

Obf. 6. **B***Y this last shaking of the heavens and earth, the things which were established by the shaking of the earth are removed.*

The moveable things, as all the temporal and earthly things of that first covenant were, are set aside.

The worldly sanctuary, with the ordinances of divine service belonging to it, stands no more, Heb ix.

The worldly kingdom established by that first covenant is also removed, with all things belonging to it. “The sceptre is now departed from Judah, and the Lawgiver from between his feet; for Shiloh” is “come.” God has *overturned, overturned, overturned* that worldly kingdom, which was his church, *till he came whose right is* to rule the kingdom of God; and God’s kingdom, which is not “now” of this world, is given to him.

And to this we may add the removal of the worldly inheritance: “Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come,” Heb. xiii. 14.

The temple, with what belonged to it, and the
kingdom,

kingdom, especially in the house of David, were as the sun and moon in the Old-Testament church: for that kingdom was called a light before God in Jerusalem, *the city which he had chosen to put his name there,* 1 Kings xi. 36. This light, this sun, is now turned into darkness, and has disappeared, to give place unto the *Sun of righteousness*, who reigns in Mount Zion, and *before his ancients gloriously*. The old sanctuary, with what belonged to it, fitly compared to the moon, (as being changeable, and regulated by the moon, and having no true light of its own, but what is borrowed from Christ typified in it), hath its issue in the blood of Christ, Eph. ii. 15. "Thus the sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and all the light they give" is far outshined by the light of that *great and notable day of the Lord that now is,* Acts ii. 20.

In a word, all the glory of the letter is done away, to give place to the more excellent glory of the spirit and sense of that letter, 2 Cor. iii.

These things were not removed but by the removing the covenant which did establish them. And these texts plainly shew the doing away of that covenant, Gal. iv. 22. 24. 30. "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman.---Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.-----Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Heb. viii. 6.---13.---"In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away."

That covenant could not be removed but by its being fulfilled by Christ, and reaching its end in him, Matth. v. 17. 18. Eph. ii. 12.---16. "That at that time ye were without Christ, being strangers from

the covenants.----But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances," &c.

That first covenant therefore is now removed, and that on these accounts. (1.) As being the ministration of death, and *gendering unto bondage*, 2 Cor. iii. Gal. iv. 24. (2.) As being unable (by itself) to justify the covenanted, and bring them truly near to God, or to make a man perfect as pertaining to the conscience, Heb. vii. 18. 19. and viii. 9. 12. and ix. 1. 9. 15. and x. 1. 2. 16. 17. (3.) As affording only a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, but vailing them, 2 Cor. iii. Heb. x. 1. and viii. 7. 9. 11. And so not being able to make God manifest to all the covenanted people. (4.) As not being able to make the covenanted people holy, and truly obedient to God, nor to keep them for ever in subjection to him, 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. viii. 9. 10. (5.) As being worldly, and not spiritual and heavenly, 2 Cor. iii. Gal. iii. 3. and Col. ii. 8. 20. (6.) As being a wall of partition betwixt the covenanted nation, and all other people, excluding all them that came not within the bond of it, from the church of God, and from hope in the promise of Christ, Eph. ii. 11.---14.

By the abolishing of this covenant, the earthly seed, the earthly nation, that stood related to God by it, are likewise removed, Gal. iv. 30. 31. John viii. 33.---36. and Heb. viii. 6.---13. And if that people come in again, as no doubt the elect among them will, they must come in upon another and more durable footing; even the same upon which the spiritual seed of Abraham in all nations stand eternally related to God.

Obs. 7. The things that are established by this shaking
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ing of the heavens and the earth, are things that must remain.

And what are these things that cannot be shaken, and therefore remain?

1. All that was spiritual and eternal in the word and promises of God, and in the experience of the saints, stands and remains in and by the new covenant. As we observed before, that all that was earthly and typical about the church of God, from the fall of man, was carried into the covenant at Sinai, the old testament; so now we may observe, that all that was spiritual of old stands and is established in the new covenant: "All the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ," 2 Cor. i. 20. The promise of the seed of the woman, the enmity betwixt the two seeds, and the victory of the woman's seed; the promise of the seed of Abraham, and of eternal blessedness to all the nations in him; the promise of the seed of David to sit on his throne, and rule the true Israel, the true kingdom of God, for evermore, with all the promises and prophecies explaining and enlarging upon these, stand good in the accomplishment of them, by this shaking of the earth and heaven; and all they who died in the faith of these promises, have reached the end of their faith, and remain in the New-Testament church, to enjoy eternally that which they believed and hoped for.

2. The moral law, the same for substance under all covenants, and which has been in all the covenants that God made with men, stands and remains here, and is written, not on tables of stone, but in the hearts of all them that are within the bond of this covenant, that they may never depart from God.

This eternal rule of righteousness could not be shaken, Matth. v. 17. 19.; but as it was always suited to the manifestation God made of himself in the covenants he entered into with man; so the New-Testament revelation being the clearest and fullest, and making known what before was hid in God,

makes that law suitable to itself; and therefore it is given in the New Testament in another and more excellent manner than it was given to Adam, or the children of Israel at Sinai. It would be long to declare this fully; we shall only notice, that the moral law stands in the new covenant, delivered by the Lord Redeemer to the church, and we have it in this covenant, together with the institutions of Christ, under the covert of his blood, even as the book of the law in the first covenant was sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices, Heb. ix. 19. 20. 23. And to engage to do the duties required in the law any otherwise but as the law stands in the new covenant, sprinkled with the blood of Christ, is to engage to fulfill the covenant of works some way, and so to subject ourselves to the curse; and therefore there can be no such thing as a covenant of duties between God and us under the New Testament, distinct from the New Testament which is in Christ's blood. The obedience of the Lord's covenanted people is better secured in the new covenant than ever it was before, either in the covenant made with mankind in the first Adam, or in the covenants made with Israel after the flesh: for now he puts his laws into their mind, and writes them in their hearts: and as their obedience is thereby, and in its own nature, more spiritual, and more free; so, when they are perfected, as they will infallibly be, their obedience will very far excel, not only Israel's poor service, in the *oldness of the letter*, but Adam's obedience before he fell. And how much more excellent is conformity to the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, in our obedience, by his Spirit, than conformity to the first Adam, even while innocent, by our natural powers?

3. When the types, the shadows, are fled away, and the patterns of heavenly things are shaken off, the heavenly things themselves, the substances of these shadows, stand by the new covenant, and remain established for ever.

The original word rendered *removed*, may import *translated*; and we may make this observe upon it, *That whatever was excellent in the types, we have it unto much better advantage in the antitype, when the types are set aside.* For here we have heavenly things for earthly, and the things themselves established to remain for ever, when the figures and patterns of them are done away.

Here is the eternal covenant, sealed with the blood of the Son of God, instead of that earthly temporal covenant, dedicated with the blood of beasts: A covenant more sure, more efficacious, more extensive, established on better promises, and having a better people covenanted.

Here is the glorious heavenly sanctuary instead of that worldly figure of it, and ordinances of divine service more pure, spiritual, and heavenly, wherein we have a more glorious discovery of the living God in the person of Jesus Christ, and more intimate nearness with him. This sanctuary is a house of prayer for all people, and it hath more excellent worshippers than the old, and shall stand for ever.

Here also is the “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto” it; even the inheritance which the Father gave to his Son Jesus Christ, and of which he took possession for himself and his people, when he ascended, that they might enjoy it with him for evermore.

And here is the true kingdom, not earthly, as of old, but heavenly; and managed, not by dying men, but by Jesus, the true God, manifest in the flesh, and that has arisen from the dead to judge the earth, and to inherit all nations, Psal. lxxxii. 8.: A more excellent kingdom for power and glory, number of subjects, and their quality, prosperity, and peace; and for stability. Of this kingdom there shall be no end, for it hath the things that cannot be moved.

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But against this it may be objected, Shall not this kingdom, and the things of it, be moved at the second coming of Christ? and will there not be a new state of things, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father? How is it then said, that this is an everlasting kingdom, and that this state of things will remain for ever?

Ans. 1. It is evident, at least, this kingdom, and the things established in the shaking of the heavens and earth, will remain untill the consummation of all things.

2. These things that thus remain will, at that time, have their perfection; so that will not be another state of the church, but the perfection of this that now is; even as the setting aside of the tabernacle, and building the temple, and the glory of the kingdom under Solomon, after the people were settled in the land of promise, made not another state of that church, but was the perfection of that state which was before. So we see sometimes the Apostle speaks of our being come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and receiving this kingdom already; and sometimes says, *It is to come*, and that we *seek this city to come*: for though we be come to it, and it be already set up; yet it will not appear till then, nor will it till then be perfected; and so we seek it and expect it as to come.

Now, whatsoever things they be that shall then be done away, they are such things as belong unto the imperfection of this state of the church; and when the full perfection of this state is come, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, then the things that attended it while not yet perfected, will be no more. Of this sort are the preaching of the gospel, and the institutions of the New Testament for the subjects of this kingdom sojourning on earth, which are to continue only till the end of the world, Eph. iv. 10.---13. We may also notice what the Apostle says, 1 Cor. xiii. 9.---12. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which
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is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

The subjects of the Son of God, so far as they are subject to him, are subjected to the Father, who is excepted in putting all things under him, for this purpose, that the things subjected to the Son may be thereby subject to him, who is represented by the Son in his kingdom. But though the subjects of Christ, who are his members, be thus subject to the Father; yet they are not fully subjected to him, while the enemies of his Son's kingdom remain, or while he rules in the midst of his enemies, and his people are not totally delivered from them. But when Christ shall have fully destroyed his enemies, and put them under the feet of his members, as they are already under his own feet personally considered, and fully subjected all his members to the Father, then he shall rule no more in the midst of his enemies, or for bringing his people in subjection to the Father: for then will he deliver up that commission fulfilled, and deliver them up perfectly subjected to the Father in himself their head. And then, when that which belonged to the imperfection of this kingdom is ended, this kingdom will be in its perfection, and the subjects remain for ever in perfect subjection to the Father in the Son, their head, from whom the whole body has that denomination, *the Son*, as being all joint heirs with him, and as being his members, even as the whole body, the church, is called *Christ*, 1 Cor. xii. 12. God is already in all those who are members of Christ's body the church; but is not yet all in them, while they remain unperfected, and while the last enemy is not destroyed; neither yet is he in all those who are designed by him for being members of the church; but when the last enemy is destroyed,

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and God is *all in all, and every one of them*, this will be the perfection of the state wherein they were before; "only that which is in part shall be done away, when that which is perfect is come," 1 Cor. xv. 24.---28.

The temple of God that is now a-building, and is all receiving stability, unity and order, glory and beauty, from that glorious foundation and cornerstone Christ, and is growing in him unto a holy temple; when it is fully built and finished, will not be another building, but this same perfected, and it will stand perfect for ever, as a holy temple in him the Lord, even as it is *now fitly framed together, and growing in him*, Eph. ii. 20. 21.

3. Christ, the head of the church, is already in the possession of that glorious perfection of this state unto which his people shall then come in fellowship with him; for their perfection will consist in their conformity to him, and communion with him, in that which he now possesses, 1 John iii. 2. Col. iii. 3. 4. Seeing then he is perfected, and will remain so for ever, the perfection of his members, in fellowship with him, in that whereof he is already possessed for them, will not be another state of the church, but the perfection of this same which hath taken place by the shaking of the heaven and the earth; so then the state of the church, raised by this last shaking, must remain for ever, must grow unto perfection, but can never be done away.

Obs. 8. The things removed were moveable, as being made things; but the things that remain are unmoveable, and cannot be shaken-

This is the reason of the removing the things that are shaken, and of the remaining of the things established by the shaking of heaven and earth. The things removed were, in their own nature, moveable; but the things that remain are things *that cannot be shaken*, 1 Pet. i. 24. 25.

For 1. The things removed were merely created things;

things; but the things that remain have something uncreated in them.

The blood of the Old Testament was the blood of mere creatures, and all their sacrifices were mere creatures; but the blood sealing the New Testament is the *blood of God*, and the sacrifice is divine, Heb. ix. and x.

They that sat on the throne of the Lord in that his earthly kingdom were mere men; but the Son of man, who sits in the throne of his kingdom, is *Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, Jehovah our righteousness*.

The priests that ministered in the worldly sanctuary were weak dying men; but the minister of the heavenly sanctuary is the eternal Son of God, "able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him," Heb. iv. 14. 15. and vii.

The inheritance of the earthly church was a spot of this earth flowing with milk and honey, and abounding in earthly good things; but the inheritance of this church is *all the fullness of God*.

The glory of the Old-Testament church, even that within the veil, was no more but a created thing; but here the uncreated glory of the invisible God shines in the person of Jesus Christ: and this is the glory of the New-Testament church, 2 Cor. iii.

2. The things removed were of this building, earthly things made on earth, and many of them made with mens hands; so they might be shaken: but the things remaining are spiritual and heavenly; not of this building, nor made with hands, and therefore cannot be shaken.

The things of the Jewish church were earthly, made on earth. The law, though written with the finger of God, yet it was written and engraven only in stones; and this engraving, however durable, could be done away. The stones were broken by Moses; and when renewed, they might be defaced by time, and destroyed; as they were at length. But now the law of Christ is written in the hearts of

his subjects, with the Spirit of the living God, sent down from heaven with the gospel, dwelling and abiding in them for ever: and this can never be done away: *I will put my fear in their hearts, they shall never depart from me.*

The things done away, the tabernacle and temple, were the work of mens hands: the things that remain are not made with hands, having God himself for the builder and maker of them; and are eternal in the heavens; and so they cannot be shaken.

3. The things removed were moveable, if we consider the end of their make, and the purpose for which they were made. They were made as a figure for the time then present, and as patterns of the heavenly things, that now take place; but the things that remain are the things prefigured by them; and so it behoved the shadows of good things to come to give place to the good things themselves, or the very image of them, Heb. ix. and x.

S E C T. VI.

IN ver. 28. we have the application of all this: *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace, (or rather hold the grace) whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.*

The apostle here tells us, that this is the great product of this shaking of the heaven and the earth, and this is what is come out of it to us; we have received an immoveable kingdom.

He designs this new state of things *a kingdom*; and this designation is common to that which is removed, and to this: for by the shaking of the earth, Israel after the flesh became the kingdom of God; and by the shaking of the earth, and also heaven, the kingdom of God being taken from them, the true *Israel* are God's kingdom, which being prefigured by the former, goes under the same name.

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This new state of the church is set forth both in the Old Testament and the New under the notion of a kingdom. Thus it is most frequently represented in the writings of the prophets, and after the promise to David, it was still expected by the saints under this notion. When our Lord came, the Jews were full of expectations and enquiries about the kingdom of God that should come. John Baptist, and the Lord himself, in his ministry on earth, made constant use of this same designation; only, as we have noticed, they corrected the error of the Jews, by calling it *the kingdom of heaven*; and this was the great subject of their preaching: *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*. The gospel is designed *the gospel of the kingdom*; and they that preached the gospel, after our Lord's ascension, and the down-pouring of the Spirit, preached *the things concerning the kingdom of God*. Acts viii. 12. and xx. 25. and xxviii. 31. So that this is the most notour and common designation of this new state of things, a sacred notion of the New-Testament church, the antitype of the Old; and it ought to be more insisted on by them that preach the gospel, if they would copy after the first preachers, and if they would indeed preach the gospel of the kingdom, than ordinarily it is now, when the ancient knowledge of this mystery of Christ seems almost extinct.

Truly the New-Testament church fully answers this designation. Here is the King, the mighty One, on whom our help is laid, chosen out of the people; their glorious One of themselves, their Governor proceeding from the midst of them, and with whom none among the sons of the mighty can be compared. Here are the best subjects, gloriously united, and separated from other people, Numb. xxiii. 9. and an order and government infinitely excelling that of all other kingdoms; absolute government without compulsion or oppression; perfect liberty, and a willing people, without any confusion or disorder; a go-

vernment of rich grace, reigning through righteousness unto eternal life; unparallelable laws, written on the hearts of the subjects; and most righteous judgement, rendering unto every one according to his works. Here is glorious power, for the defence, and for the enlargement of the kingdom, and for the destruction of its enemies, Pſal. cx. lxxviii. 17. 18. This is the King against whom there is no rising up with success: "The enemy shall not exact upon him, nor the son of mischief wrong him." See Isa. xxxiii. 20.---24.

This is the kingdom of God; his peculiar treasure, his portion and inheritance. Here, and no where else, is he known and enjoyed; here only has he cordial subjects; and here it is only that he is worshipped and served according to his mind and will in his holy place: "Why do ye leap, ye high mountains? This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever. God is in his holy place, as in Sinai; let us hold the grace, whereby we may serve him with reverence and godly fear."

This is the Father's kingdom; and all his people, the brethren of his dear Son, their brother-ransom-er, are his children, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus.

But we do not yet see the glory of this kingdom, which must be hid from the world, till the new Jerusalem come down from heaven at the second coming of Jesus Christ; we only believe the holy catholic church. And why is it that we affect a temporal kingdom of God, but because we abide not in the lively faith of this glorious invisible kingdom, and mind not heavenly things, nor converse in heaven as we ought? By this means came the earthly kingdom of Antichrist, where we have the uniformity of the letter, instead of the unity of the faith, and the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; human authority with tyrannical and worldly power, instead of the authority and spiritual and heavenly power of the
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Lord Jesus; and worldly splendor and glory, a worldly inheritance, instead of the spiritual glory of the kingdom of Christ, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. "Up, make us gods," said they; "for as for this Moses, we know not what is become of him." And then of this mystery of iniquity, set up instead of, and in opposition unto the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, it was said, *This is the holy catholic church*; and the men of this world bow down to this idol, and worship it. But the Lord of the church will utterly destroy this idol, and every thing that remains of it in the earth, by the brightness of his glorious second coming, when the holy catholic church shall appear, and this after he has consumed and wasted that abomination with the spirit of his mouth, in the gospel of the kingdom.

Now, the Apostle infers from what he had before said, that this kingdom cannot be moved; and so it excels the old in all those respects wherein it is immoveable. It is easy to perceive by what has been already said, that it cannot be moved; and further, it is plain, that a kingdom set up by God, for the destruction of all its enemies, and unto the advantage of which he is making all things, even the opposition of enemies, to work together, *can never be moved*. A kingdom founded in redemption from the curse of God, and where his mercy that endureth for ever, his grace that faileth never, reigns unto eternal life, and that hath its seat in heaven, can never be moved by any opposition from any quarter, or any evil within itself. And truly, there is nothing certain, nothing safe, but in this kingdom.

The Apostle, speaking of himself, and other New-Testament believers in his day, says of this kingdom, *We have received it*; as he had said, ver. 22. *Ye are come to Mount Zion, &c.* And this is the advantage that New Testament believers have by this shaking of the earth, and also heaven. John the Baptist said of this kingdom, in his ministry, *It is at hand*; and while
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our Lord said the same thing, he told, that there were some there “that should not taste death, till they saw the Son of man coming in his kingdom,” or the kingdom of God coming with power, Matth. xvi. 28. Mark ix. 1. They saw this, after the Lord ascended, and poured out the Holy Ghost; and then they began to preach of it after this manner: “Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, (*i. e.* with his body, as Jesus did); but he saith himself; The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, untill I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts ii. 33.---36. And thus this kingdom, spoken of long before by the prophets, and declared to be at hand by John Baptist, and by Jesus Christ himself while on earth, was fairly set up, and took place, when he sat down on his throne in heaven, and sent his gospel, with the Holy Ghost, from thence unto all nations, gathering the things on earth together with the things in heaven, into one in himself. John Baptist was more than a prophet, because he had this to declare, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*; but the least of them that preach the gospel of the kingdom, which the Apostle says *we have now received*, has greater things to declare than John the Baptist, and so is greater than he. This is our great privilege under the gospel, that this kingdom is set up, and is daily increasing. New-Testament believers have received this kingdom, and they are herein privileged far beyond the Old-Testament saints, who did not receive this glorious accomplishment of the promises till it took place, and so were not made perfect without us. And however little we may reckon of this, through our blindness and inadvertency to it, yet

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the angels desire to look into this glory following the sufferings of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12.

For my part, I could not understand the Lord and his Apostles speaking of this kingdom, and the glorious new state of things, far excelling what was before. For, thought I, the Old-Testament saints were saved the same as we, and they went to heaven when they died, even as the New-Testament saints; the covenant of grace was still the same; and all the difference between the Old and New Testament is only in some circumstances: how then do the Apostles make such a world's wonder of the excellency of this new state of things, and of the great happiness of living under it, and having a part in it? But when it pleased the Lord, by several means, to open the scriptures, and thereby lead me into some notion at least of what I have been hitherto attempting to declare, I came to find, that (whatever was the happiness of the Old-Testament saints in heaven before Christ came, and though there was never any eternal salvation for sinners but of free grace through Jesus Christ, and by faith in him), there is a greater difference betwixt the New Testament and the Old than I apprehended, and that our Lord and his Apostles are far from speaking hyperbolically, in declaring the exceeding glory of the New-Testament state of things above all that took place in the world before; and that every scribe instructed in the kingdom of God, has glorious new things to bring out of his treasure, as well as old. Yet, after all that has been hitherto said, some, no doubt, may see but little ground for reckoning much upon the glorious things God hath done in the latter days; and may be looking on the things said as airy notions, perhaps afraid of them, and thinking within themselves, *Oh! that our faith were like the faith of the Old-Testament saints!* They do well to imitate their faith; for it is proposed to us as a pattern to follow; “but still looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising

despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." God has revealed nothing in vain; and what he seems to make much of, we must not despise. And if there be any difference betwixt things hid in God and manifested, betwixt a type and the thing typified, betwixt a promise and the accomplishment of that promise, there must be such a difference betwixt this new state of things and what was before: and if the accomplishment of a promise have things in it which were not while the promise was not accomplished, there must be new things, even a new kingdom here. Yet because many can see no satisfying accomplishment of the prophecies in the times of refreshing, which commenced upon Christ's ascension, and his coming in the gospel, and are to issue in the times of restitution of all things, at his second coming; and because they cannot see the new things of the kingdom of God, which were not before Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth, and ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things; it will not be amiss, therefore, to put them in mind of some things further to satisfy them in this point. As,

1. God is manifested in this New Testament church and kingdom, as he was never before, John i. 18. Heb. i. 1, 2, 3. God is represented to the creatures no way to the disadvantage in the *Word made flesh*, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. All the discoveries were imperfect before the express image of his person was exhibited.

This same New-Testament church discovers something that was hid in God from the beginning of the world, not from men only, but from the angels, Eph. iii. 9, 10. It is no disparagement to the Old-Testament saints, or their happiness in heaven before Christ came, to say, that there was something hid from them which the angels themselves knew not: "For, unto the angels in heavenly places is now known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." Now, God's
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great counsels are laid open to them; they now see the end of the creating the worlds, and of the entrance of sin, and of their preservation from falling, and of the translating the Old Testament saints into heaven among them; and of all the promises, types, and shadows of the Old Testament; and the mystery of his whole procedure from the foundation of the world unfolded, and new wonders of wisdom exposed to them, which they had no thought of before. All this is made known to them by the church, even this same church, that we reckon so little upon. Blind thoughtless creatures are we, that are called to the knowledge of this church, and profess to believe it, and yet see no form or comeliness in it, beyond what was in the world before it was: and yet the angels desire to pry into it, and, as it were, go to school again, to learn something of God they knew not before. They had studied the works of creation and providence before; they had enquired into all the promises and types of the Old Testament, and considered whatever prefigurations or preparations for this state of things were in the heavens before; but, like children looking to a wise workman gathering materials, making preparations, and addressing himself to some notable piece of workmanship, they wondered what it should come to at the length. Now here they see it in the church; yea, and they are obliged to the Son of man for new lessons in the church, which they never learned before. The Son of man, Christ Jesus, knows more of God than ever man or angel knew; even the soul of Jesus Christ is filled with wisdom very far above angels, and therefore he makes that gradation, Mark xiii. 32.----*Of that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels, neither the Son.*--- This knowledge of God that is in the church, is first communicate to the soul of the Son of man, and from him to angels and men; neither can they know any thing of God but what was known before, except this way. This then is the teacher of angels as

well as of men; and this his church is his school. The angels are not ashamed to own themselves his scholars here, Rev. xix. 10. and compare Rev. i. 1. with xxii. 9.

That of God which is made known in this kingdom, as it was never before, is especially his grace; therefore the Apostle, when speaking of this kingdom that we have received, says, *Let us hold the grace.* To clear this, let us consider, 1. The state of things before the entrance of sin. 2. From thence to the setting up of this kingdom.

As to the first of these: 1. Whatever discoveries of God's goodness were in that state, yet there was no such condescension of God towards the creatures, as in the person and mediation of Emmanuel, God with us. 2. Neither was there any full representation of his love in a fruit like itself. He gave many things, but not his Son, in that first state; but now "God so loved the world, he gave his Son;" a fruit of his love equal to itself! 3. There was no discovery of pardoning mercy in that state of things; not the least evidence of it. But here it reigns, through the righteousness of Christ, unto eternal life, and all the glory of God shines here. 4. There was no preserving grace belonging unto that state of things; and therefore both angels and men fell. As to the preservation of the angels that stood, that was not owing unto the state wherein they were made, but unto their election of sovereign grace unto this kingdom; and that grace is the grace of this kingdom.

Next, If we consider the state of things after the fall, before Christ came, under the Old Testament, we shall see that this kingdom excels in this respect, of a discovery of God's grace. For, 1. Then this grace was only foreshewed in dark promises and types, not yet fully exhibited. True, the saints were saved in believing it; but they believed it to come afterward: "They died in faith, not having received the promises; but saw them afar off, and were persuaded of

of them, and embraced them." All the grace they enjoyed was the fruit of their election unto this kingdom, and was their preparation for it: so it was the grace of this kingdom, like a few drops of rain before a full shower. This grace, foreshewed and foretasted by Old-Testament faints, was much veiled, not only in the types, but in the promises and prophecies of it; so that the "prophets themselves inquired what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it told beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Consider 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12. The light that shines in the New Testament has given unto New-Testament believers more understanding of the promises and prophecies than the prophets themselves had. Moses's law, with all the prefigurations it had of this grace, was a veil over it; so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: "But we all, with open face, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." And these dark afore-hand discoveries of the grace of God were inclosed in narrow bounds; first, in the families of the patriarchs, then in the nation of Israel: but now "the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men," all nations. See Eph. ii. from ver. 12. Then it was whispered in a corner, now it is proclaimed to every creature, Rom. xvi. 25. 26. 2. If we consider the Old Testament, and the state of things under it, in themselves, and abstract from the promises of this grace, and the typical reference they had unto this grace; there we have the ministration of death, but here the ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit. There was bondage and fear; here is liberty, and love, and lively hope. There they were held at a distance; here there is access into the holiest by the spirit of adoption, and boldness and confidence by the faith of Christ. In a word, the law given by Moses ministered and wrought wrath, but grace came by Jesus Christ: The

law had the promises and shadows of grace, but the truth of these came by Jesus Christ, John i. 17. "Now hath God saved us, and called us with a holy calling, according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Tim. i. 9. 10.

2. There was never such union and communion between God and the creatures in the world before, as in this kingdom. Now God's nature and ours, is wonderfully met in the person of the Son of God, the King of this kingdom. This was not till Christ came; neither was the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Son of man, as the head, and in all his people, as the members of his mystical body. For however the Old-Testament saints were prepared for this, by the Spirit of Christ in them beforehand, yet they could not be thus united to the *Word made flesh*, the *First-born from the dead*, the *Head of the body, the church*, Eph. i. 19.---23. Col. i. 18. 19. Our Lord proposes this wonderful new thing to his disciples for their encouragement, when about to leave them, John xiv. 17.---20. Speaking of the Holy Ghost, he saith, *He dwelleth in you*; and further promises, "He shall be in you, and I will come unto you. The world seeth me no more, but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

3. God was never so worshipped in the world before, as he is in this kingdom. While the creatures were perfect, they glorified God to their power; but all the creatures put together, could not, by any performance of worship, fully glorify him. They came infinitely short of this; and as there were some of his attributes not known to them, particularly pardoning mercy; so he had not the glory of it from them: neither was his vindictive justice glorified in
that

that state of things to purpose. But God would have the glory of these attributes, and he will be perfectly worshipped and glorified. This could not be by mere creatures, nor could it be but by a sin-offering; therefore sin must enter into the world, or God cannot thus be worshipped and glorified in the world. From the entrance of sin, God was not worshipped among men, but by sacrifices and offerings for sin: but, alas! the sacrifices of beasts, men, or angels, could never fully glorify God's justice, mercy, and all his other attributes; he would never have appointed such sacrifices, but with a view to a better that should follow. "In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin he had no pleasure. But then, in the fullness of time, the Son of God came, the high priest and sacrifice of God's providing." He hath glorified God by presenting unto him an offering for sin, whereby the justice and mercy of God, and all his other attributes, are glorified to the full. Was there ever a worshipper like this in the world before, or such a high priest as Jesus the Son of God? "Now every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer," Heb. viii. 3.; and that is the sacrifice of himself, his own blood, wherewith he hath entered into the true holy place, heaven itself, there to present it continually before the Father, as the minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle. This sacrifice, once offered, and the blood of it brought into the holy place, and presented before the throne, glorifies God infinitely and fully; because it is the sacrifice of the Son himself, his own blood, the blood of God. *Burnt-offering and sacrifices thou wouldst not; then said I, Lo, I come.* There is something worth the noticing in that *I*, repeated with a *Behold*. The stress of the whole leans there; God, that found himself not suitably worshipped, not fully glorified, in all the sin-offerings, for want of worth in them, is pleased in this *I*: "This is my beloved Son, in
him

him I am well pleased." See Jer. xxx. 21. This *I* is the Father's equal, partaker with him in the same Godhead, *The man his fellow*, that was in the form of God, and took on him the form of a servant, for this purpose. Here is a divine worshipper then, and divine worship performed, and given to the Father by Jesus Christ, presenting before him this his offering, and God is fully glorified by the blood of God.

This is the worship given unto God in the name of the whole church, Heb. ii. 12. and God is infinitely pleased in it. All the church in heaven and earth behold it, and cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain;" for what is our worship, but an acknowledgement of, and concurrence with this most perfect worship given to the Father by Jesus Christ? God takes no pleasure in any worship where this God-glorifying offering is not acknowledged. The high priests on earth went into the holiest with their offering, bearing on their breast and shoulders, or arms, the names of the tribes ingraven, with the ingravings of a signet: But, Oh, to be set as a seal in the heart, as a seal on the arm of this High Priest, appearing in the presence of God for his people, and worshipping in their name. 'This was a good thing to come of old; now it is come; let us improve it. "Let us come boldly to a throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in the time of need. Bring no more vain oblations." Acknowledge the oblation made. "Offer unto God thanksgiving" for what is done. And we must also know, that this is a most awful thing: Here the divine glory and majesty shines in its strength. When we serve him acceptably, holding this grace, it must be with reverence and godly fear: "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: Fear before him all the earth."

4. There was never such a society before in the world as in this kingdom. Of this incomparable society we have some account, Heb. xii. 22. 23. 24.; and we have something of it, Col. i. 20. But, in the
epistle

epistle to the Ephesians, which seems designed to give an account of the excellency of the New-Testament church, we have this thing much extolled by the Apostle. He uses several similitudes to set it forth; he calls it a *city*, wherein we are fellow-citizens, chap. ii. 19. And to this agrees what is said, Heb. xii. 22. "Ye are come to the city of the living God." And Phil. iii. 20. *Our conversation, or citizenship, is in heaven.* He calls it a *household, a family*; the whole family in heaven and in earth, chap. ii. 19. and iii. 15. He calls it a *body*, chap. iii. 6. and iv. particularly ver. 16. and i. 23. He calls it a *building, a temple*, chap. ii. 20. 21. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." And chap. iii. 16.---19. He prays for believers, that they may be *strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man*; that *Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith*, and that *they may be rooted and grounded in love*; for this purpose, that so they may be able to have a true prospect of, and take up rightly the dimensions of this glorious spiritual building: "That he may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height." And he tells us what advantage they should have thereby: "So they shall know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God." So great a matter did the Apostle, yea the Spirit of Christ in him, make the understanding of this glorious thing. And, chap. i. 8. 9. 10. he magnifies the grace of God much in making known the mystery of it to them: "He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence: having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself." And what mystery of his will can this be? Even this, "That, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together,

ther in one" (or gather again in one head) "all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." There is a wonderful association, or rather union, of different things here, that were separated, but never united after this manner before. God and the creature, angels and the spirits of just men in heaven; again, heaven and earth; and on earth, Jews and Gentiles, and they of all nations, all ranks, conditions and sexes, are all joined in one in Christ Jesus, the Son of man, who is the Son of God. This is a most glorious society for number; and when it appears at the last day, all the promises and types of it, in this respect, will be found fully verified in it. They are gathered together in one in Christ, even in him. This must be peculiarly noticed, because so repeated. There was never such a bond of union, such an uniting head, in any society in the world before, as this is. In him all the members stand in the nearest manner united to one another, and to God, John xvii. 21. 23. 1 Cor. xii. 12. 13. And this wonderful union is most firm and everlasting. It is impossible that it should be by any means dissolved: *On this rock will I build my church.* There had been an union and peace among the creatures before, but it was dissolved by the entrance of sin. God has now settled this society and its union upon an everlasting foundation. The things in heaven and earth are united together here in the most holy manner; the bond of union is divine. In him also they sit together in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 6. There was never such a society as this in the world before. *Jesus ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.* This was reserved unto the dispensation of the fullness of times, as the Apostle says. And in this all God's great counsels and designs concerning all his works whatsoever do terminate. The head of this body the church, is head over all things unto it, even as all things were before made by him, and for him, Eph. i. 22. 23. Col. i. 16.---20.

5. There

5. There was never such an inheritance in the world before, as that which the Father gave to Jesus Christ his Son, when he set him at his own right hand in heavenly places; and in this inheritance his people in heaven and in earth are joint heirs with him, who purchased it by his own blood, Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7. Eph. i. 11.---18. The eyes of our understandings must be enlightened by the Spirit, if we would know the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. The glory bestowed on the Son of man, the head of the church, and the fullness given to him in possession, when he ascended to the Father's right hand, is such as was never given to any before: and this is the inheritance of the New-Testament church; of which believers have the earnest and first-fruits here, while they see him *by faith whom the world cannot see*, John xvi. 14. 15. Yet they *live by faith, not by sight*. But "when Christ, with whom their life is now hid, shall appear, then shall they appear with him in glory."

There can be no question but it was an addition to the happiness and glory of those in heaven, when they began to partake with the Son of man, Christ Jesus, in that fullness bestowed on him, however great their happiness was there before, while they were there, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelling in Canaan, the land of promise, but not yet possessing the inheritance. Thus the inheritance of this kingdom is a new thing excelling all that was before.

6. That holy Spirit of promise wherewith believers are sealed in Christ, which is the earnest of their inheritance, even the spirit of adoption, the Comforter, seems to be another new thing in this kingdom, and peculiar to New-Testament believers; as these scriptures seem plainly to declare: John vii. 38. 39. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not

yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John xvi. 7. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you: that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Acts i. 4. 5. "And being assembled together with them, commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence. Acts ii. 33. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Acts xv. 8. 9. "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference betwixt us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts xix. 2. 3. "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's Baptism." Rom. viii. 15. 16. 17. 23. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.---Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." 2 Cor. i. 21. 22. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Gal. iii. 13. 14. "Christ hath redeemed us from the
curse

curse of the law,---that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Gal. iv. 3.---6. “Even so, when we were children, we were in bondage under the elements of the world; but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Eph. i. 13. 14. “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

These are some instances of the excellent new things of this glorious kingdom; which being duly considered, with what has been before said, may satisfy us, that it was not unworthy of God to speak so much of it by the prophets, and to represent it beforehand in so many figures. And if neither the present state of this kingdom, nor the glorious perfection and manifestation of it *in the times of restitution of all things*, which are to take place at our Lord's second coming, will satisfy us, as to the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning the glory of this kingdom, I know not what will satisfy us, if it be not that temporal kingdom, which the Jews have been looking for in their unbelief and hardness of heart, and in their opposition to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus; but it ought to be most firmly believed among Christians, that they shall be ashamed of these their expectations. They despised the kingdom of God which they had of old; and now, when that is done away, and the kingdom of heaven is come, they affect that old kingdom much, and exceedingly despise this; and while they are so affected, it is evident they cannot

receive this kingdom of God, which is not of this world. But when the vail which is upon their hearts in the reading of the Old Testament is taken away, they will see the glory of this kingdom, and its excellency above that which is removed: so will they forget the earthly things, and seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; and, if they shall rise with Christ from that death under which they lie, they will be dead to this world, and have their life hid with Christ in God, not to appear, till he appear, and they with him in glory, Col. iii. 1---4.

And thus far we have been considering the import of our Lord's expression, *Now is my kingdom not from hence; my kingdom is not of this world.* We shall next see how he manifests to Pilate that his kingdom is not of this world.

C H A P. III.

Of the distinction betwixt the kingdoms of this world, and the kingdom of Christ.

WE have heard how our Lord confessed himself to be the King promised to the Jews, and owned his kingdom before Pilate; and we have also heard his testimony concerning the nature of his kingdom, as not now of this world, and so quite distinct from that which his accusers were looking for. By this his testimony it is evident, that the charge brought against him, of being against Cæsar, by making himself a king, was altogether without foundation. But further, he demonstrates to Pilate, that his kingdom in the world is not a worldly kingdom, and so does not interfere with Cæsar's kingdom, when he says, *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

It was a fact that might be plain to the observation of Pilate and the Jews, that he did not allow his servants to fight and defend him from the Jews.

It is true, he had signified to his disciples, that they would be in such circumstances as wherein they would stand in extreme need of this sort of defence; and had said to them, *He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one,*" Luke xxii. 36. Yet, while they stood in the greatest need of selling their garments to buy swords, before the Emperor turned Christian, they did not reckon that these words of the Lord were intended to oblige them to take the sword for their defence in their profession: For when the disciples answered Christ, saying, *Here are two swords,* he said unto them, *It is enough;* surely not for eleven disciples; but it was enough for his purpose, which was to give occasion, *first,* for the *miracle of healing Malchus' ear,* wherein he gave a notable evidence of his good-will to his enemies, and that he was able to deliver himself, but condescended to suffer; and a notable pattern to his people, of doing acts of kindness to enemies, and of patience in suffering; and, *secondly,* for the following prohibition of drawing the sword in his quarrel; for, when he healed the ear, he said to his enemies, *Suffer ye thus far,* Luke xxii. 51.; and to Peter, Matth. xxvi. 52. *Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.* He speaks there of another sort of defence, more agreeable to the nature of his heavenly kingdom, than the sword of his disciples, which he would have used rather, if it had not been unsuitable to his present condition, and against the fulfilment of the scripture, v. 53. 54. *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* There is no need of the sword of the disciples to defend the
kingdom

kingdom of heaven; the armies of angels are more suitable to this kingdom than armies of fighting men.

After this discharge of the sword, we have no commandment to Christ's disciples to take the sword to fight for his kingdom, nor any encouragement to expect his concurrence, or look for success in that way; but rather the contrary. For as he says to Peter, *All that take the sword, shall perish by the sword*; so this is upon the matter repeated, Rev. xiii. 10. *He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword.* Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. Where it seems, the good fight of faith and patience is opposed to the fight which is by the sword. This threatening, with respect to the disciples and saints of Jesus, their taking the sword, for the defence of his kingdom, has been verified in many instances. We need not go farther than this same land. The disciples of Christ here took the sword, and openly professed it was for the defence of Christ's kingdom; but they went into captivity, and were killed, first by the sword of Montrose, (whereby the land also suffered for the perjury immediately going before), next by the sword of Cromwell, and then by the sword of Charles II. and the Bishops; neither was it by their own sword that they were at length delivered. The Lord owned as many of his truths and ways as they contended for, and them in adhering to them unto death; but not their mistakes, nor their way of fighting with the sword. The earth hath helped the woman in many instances against Antichrist since the reformation, swallowing up the flood of persecution, cast out of the mouth of the dragon; but the earth and the woman are two very distinct things.

However, it was a plain fact, that our Lord did not allow his servants to fight to defend him from the Jews; and hereby he manifests, *that his kingdom is not of this world.* To this purpose he gives an account

count of a kingdom of this world, and describes it by that without which it cannot be; and that is self-defence by worldly power.

As the kingdoms of the world took their first rise from the necessity of associations for this defence, so it is impossible, in the nature of the thing, that they can be, or stand without it. Though a kingdom might be supposed without breaking in upon other kingdoms, yet no kingdom can be without power to defend itself from outward attacks by the sword, and from evils arising within itself: so that our Lord's account of a kingdom of this world is most just, as it is also the fittest that could be for his present purpose.

And here he establishes the natural principle of self-defence in the kingdoms of this world. His subjects on this earth are members of those societies that have power to defend themselves by the sword, and he has allowed them to do their duty in their stations and callings in them, and his grace will make them more faithful and conscientious in the duties of their stations and callings in those kingdoms.

As violence offered to the consciences of men is one of the greatest injuries, so, in all associations for defence by the sword, this ought to be attended to, and all men have a right of defence in the kingdoms of this world from violence offered to their consciences in matters of religion. This right is by no means refused to those kingdoms by the Lord Christ. Antichrist is the great invader of the liberty of mankind in this matter. He is furnished with worldly power, and he uses it unto this purpose. Where he prevails, tyranny, as in other respects, so especially in this, hath taken place, and men are enslaved this way; but, in Protestant kingdoms and commonwealths, there is some more freedom, and the subjects of Christ enjoy that liberty in common with others, in those kingdoms where this natural right of
mankind

mankind is in any measure defended. Thus far has the earth helped the woman: and this is properly the Protestant cause, so far as the sword and the power of the kingdoms of this world is concerned in it. And upon this ground stands the Revolution fully warranted, as it concerns religion.

And this is the common cause of mankind, according to the first rise and reason of the kingdoms of this world.

Now, from the account our Lord gives of a worldly kingdom, he demonstrates that his kingdom is not of this world, and therefore does not interfere with Cæsar's; for since he did not allow his servants to fight for his defence, and so had set aside that without which no kingdom of this world can be, it is evident his kingdom cannot be of this world: And he plainly intimates, that his kingdom is of such a nature, that it does not admit of that kind of defence: *My servants would fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence:*

Some think this is to be confined to his present circumstances, when he was only laying the foundation of his kingdom, in his sufferings; and that because he came into the world to suffer for his people, who could not be redeemed without his sufferings; and to fulfil the prophecies concerning his sufferings, it behoved him to suffer. But they reckon the case is not so now with his subjects, since his kingdom is set up in the world. They may now associate themselves to defend his truths and institutions, and to defend one another in their profession of them, by all the power of this world that they have or can attain unto. And so should I think if it were not for the following reasons.

1. Our Lord does not here give his present circumstances as the reason of his not allowing his servants to fight for defending him, but the nature of his kingdom; or, if he draws an inference from this matter of fact, to shew the nature of his kingdom,
this

this his inference is made void by this account of the thing. If our Lord had given the least intimation of this to Pilate, or if Pilate had taken the least suspicion of this from his words, he would have been apprehensive of his kingdom, and found fault in him; which yet he did not. It is true, he says, *Now is my kingdom not from hence.* But this *now*, as has been said, refers to the state of God's kingdom before this in Israel, and is plainly opposed to it, importing the great change now a-making in that point. And when our Lord is making an account of his kingdom to Pilate, is it reasonable to suppose, that he speaks of it only in that time, when he was but laying the foundations of it, and when it was not yet set up?

2. He calls his followers to imitate him in this very thing, *patient suffering*, when he foretells his sufferings and death, Matth. xvi. 21. Peter, who had made that excellent confession concerning his person, yet affecting a temporal kingdom, and filled with that sort of zeal, rebukes his Master, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee*, ver. 22. We do not read of a more sharp rebuke given to his disciples on any occasion, than that which he gave to Peter at this time, *Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.* He minded earthly things, and so set himself against the sufferings and death of Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, for the redemption and salvation of the church. But though his sufferings were thus absolutely necessary, and Peter far in the wrong to stand against them; yet this may be supposed to be far from his servants and followers; seeing the case is not the same with them as with him, whom it behoved to suffer for the redemption of the church. Our Lord destroys such a supposition, by telling his disciples, and all his followers, that they must be conformed to him their Master and Leader, in this point of suffering, and so deprives them of all hopes of a

temporal kingdom, and lays a perpetual bar in the way of their minding earthly things. His followers, though they be not to suffer for the redemption of the world, yet they must be conformed to their Leader, they must follow their crucified Master, bearing their cross after him, ver. 24. 25. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.* Luke has it, *Let him take up his cross daily,* chap. ix. 23. To the same purpose, says our Lord, when speaking of his sufferings for the salvation of his people, and for gathering them unto him, John xii. 23.---26. *He that loveth his life, shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, &c.* The true profession of Christ's truths, and all his commands and institutions will always, one way or other, cross our worldly interest: *For all that will live godly in him, must suffer.* And it is a vain thing to think to hold him and our worldly interest together: *No man can serve two masters,* 2 Tim. iii. 12. Rev. xii. 17.

This same Peter, that could not endure to hear of his Master's sufferings, tells us expressly, that Christ hath left all his people an example of patient suffering, and sets before us that same very thing that some would make peculiar to our Lord, as a pattern to copy after, 1 Pet. ii. 19.---23. *For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to*
him

him that judgeth righteously. Thus he sets forth Christ as a pattern, not only to slaves, as some conceive, but unto all his followers. And chap. iv. ver. 1. he thus exhorts Christians, *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.* Here then is armour for Christ's followers, instead of the sword, which Peter himself once took when he was in no good condition for suffering: but now he says, *Arm yourselves with the same mind that Christ had, when he suffered for us in the flesh.*

Our Lord tells his disciples, Matth. x. 16. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.* I have found this wisdom of the serpent much insisted on, and our Lord's call to it much perverted, to patronise his followers in using that wisdom of this world, as to which a man must become a fool, that he may be wise. But the harmless-ness of the dove, the Christian meekness, and patience in suffering for the name of Christ, is less spoke of. He would have his followers to outshine the men of this world; in bearing injuries, especially in his cause; and calls them rather to prepare for more sufferings, when they are injured, than to resent injuries done them, under pretence of avoiding greater wrongs that may follow if they should bear patiently, Matth. v. 38.---48. He does not allow his subjects to disturb the kingdoms of this world, by taking the sword to advance or defend his interest and kingdom in the world, but calls them to be subject to the powers that be, to *pay tribute to them, to pray for them, and to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty,* Matth. xxii. 21. and xvii. 24.---27. Rom. xiii. 1.---8. 1 Tim. ii. 1.---4. Tit. iii. 1. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13.---17. And it has been observed, that the Christians, while they were sufferers, had no hand in the insurrections that were in the Empire.

3. However much the disciples affected a temporal kingdom

kingdom before the Lord ascended, Acts i. 6.; yet, after his ascension, and the Holy Ghost's coming, they studied conformity to him in this matter, and never attempted to take the sword, either for promoting or defending his interest and kingdom in the world. And here we may observe a difference betwixt the Old-Testament kingdom and the New. Of old, the Spirit of God came upon his subjects, in that earthly state of the church, to enable them to fight with the sword against the enemies of that kingdom, to destroy them, and to defend the kingdom of God; and by a very few the Lord wrought great deliverances then, and destroyed vast numbers of men: *Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, &c. through faith subdued kingdom, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.* But the Apostles of Christ, though they had five thousand men in Jerusalem, Acts iv. 4. a greater number of men than those by whom the Lord wrought great temporal deliverances of old, yet they never attempted to stir in that way, but submitted patiently to suffer. And even when the captains and officers feared the people, lest they should have been stoned, and so were obliged to bring them without violence, they came peaceably. The church of Jerusalem was then full of the Spirit of Christ, the people magnified them, and the power of the Spirit of God was remarkable in the great miracles done upon the bodies of men to heal their diseases. If the Spirit had been given, as of old, to enable them to fight, or if it had been the will of Christ, that his kingdom should be advanced or defended in that way, they had men enow to defend themselves against the Jews and the Romans; for the Lord saves *by few as well as many.* And what was the hand of the Jews and Romans against the hand of the Lord, and his sword in the hand of his people, as in the hand of Gideon of old? But Christ would not have his servants to fight for him, because

because his kingdom was not now of this world. I question not but the difference observed by Gamaliel, betwixt those two men that arose with the sword, who were destroyed, and whose followers were dispersed, and the Apostles of Christ, who had nothing of worldly power about them, and made no stir that way, was the thing that made him suspect, that *this work was of God, and could not be overthrowen*, Acts v. 26. 27. and 34.---39.

The Apostle insinuates a difference in this point betwixt the New-Testament believers and the Old-Testament worthies, whom he brings in as witnesses to the way of faith in Christ, and whom he would have us to imitate in their faith and patience, Heb. xi. and xii. from the beginning. For he says, *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary, and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* This is another race set before us, than that of *subduing kingdoms, waxing valiant in fight, and putting to flight the armies of the aliens.* This is the Christian's fight, even the spiritual warfare against sin in ourselves, and in the world about us. This is the Christian resistance; even holding fast the profession of our faith unto the death, against all contradiction and terror that serves to move us to let it go. This is the Christian hero, that is conformed to the Captain of salvation in bearing the cross, despising the shame, and enduring the contradiction of sinners. And to this agrees that exhortation, Heb. xiii. 12. 13. 14. *Jesus---that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

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We have the Christian warfare, suitable to the nature of Christ's kingdom, and altogether distinct from a worldly warfare, set forth, Eph. vi. from ver. 10. to 20. Notice ver. 12. and see the warfare of the first Christians opposed unto a worldly warfare: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darknesses of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* And the armour unto this warfare is the armour of God, which the Apostle describes. Here we have no other sword but the sword of the Spirit. The first Christians used no other sword but this, and withstood their enemies, the enemies of Christ's kingdom, with no other armour but this armour of God. In those days, it was, in their eyes, the greatest honour to suffer shame for the name of Christ, Acts v. 41. They did not then dissemble or hide any part of the truth, for fear of suffering. They were not then filled with many contrivances of worldly wisdom, to avoid persecution, and to make to themselves a great name in the earth. Then they saw a beauty in being conformed to Christ in sufferings, and they breathed vehemently after it, Phil. iii. 10. The Apostle calls as many as were duly instructed in the Christian faith to be thus minded, in opposition to the Judaizing teachers, who minded earthly things, ver. 15. 17. 19. 20. Obedience to our Lord's command, Matth. v. 39. 40. 41. 44. and conformity to him in that point, was no strange nor ridiculous thing then among Christians, as it is now: 2 Cor. ii. 20. *For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face.*

4. A society avouching Christ to be head and king of it, furnished with worldly power for defending his truths and institutions, and associated for defending his interest, and their profession of subjection to him, by the sword, is undoubtedly a kingdom of this world, by our Lord's description of a kingdom of this world:
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for it agrees with our Lord's account of such a kingdom, in that whereby it is distinguished from his kingdom. Let it be what it will then, his kingdom it is not. And such an association is plainly cross to this testimony of our Lord concerning his kingdom.

But against all this it is said, Is it not lawful to defend our natural and civil rights? And why not our religious rights too, since they are the most valuable? Or, though the first Christians used not the sword, when Christianity was not a civil right, yet when it became so, by magistrates and whole nations their professing Christianity, may it not be defended even as a civil right? *Ans.* 1. How far religion is a natural and civil right, to be defended by the sword in the kingdoms of this world, has been already declared. But that sort of defence is the common right of mankind, and not peculiar to Christ's subjects. 2. It cannot be denied, that a defence of civil and natural rights in the kingdoms of the world is lawful and necessary; and they that have power, will defend their lives and fortunes by the sword. But the truths and institutions of Christ, and the privileges of his kingdom, which are not natural, nor civil and earthly, but spiritual, are not capable of such a defence: they must be defended another way. 3. If there should be a society for defending the truths and institutions of Christ, in the profession of them, by the sword; then these truths and institutions would be thus laid in the constitution of that society, which by our Lord's description of a worldly kingdom, is a kingdom of this world. But it is expressly contrary to this his confession, that his truths and institutions should be in the constitution of a kingdom of this world. For thus that worldly society or kingdom would be his kingdom, or his church: but he says, *My kingdom is not of this world.* 4. In such an association of Christ's subjects, persecution will be unavoidable. For should any in that society give up with the profession of any of those truths and institu-

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tions which the society judges to be Christ's, he must, according to the nature of society, be deprived of the defence of that society which hath those truths in its constitution, and forfeits his right to all the worldly privileges of that society, which, by the constitution of it, belong unto the profession of those truths, and the observation of those institutions. Further, if any in that society, while it stands, should find himself obliged, in his conscience, to profess contrary to any of those things that are held for truths of Christ by the society, and are in the constitution of it, then the power of the society must be put forth against him for the defence of the society. So such an association will be found inconsistent with that natural right of mankind, to be defended in the kingdoms of this world, from violence offered to their consciences, which yet our Lord hath not taken away from those kingdoms, by sending his gospel unto them. And this, if it were maintained, would answer all the good ends that could be proposed by such an association. For to destroy mens lives that will not receive Christ, or profess him, is not an end of a worldly society that Christ will approve of.

When God's kingdom was worldly of old, the case was otherwise: for then the profession of any other religion than the religion of the nation of Israel, was rebellion against the king of that nation: *But now,* says Christ, *My kingdom is not of this world, not from hence.*

If the natural right of mankind, with respect to religion, had been maintained in the kingdoms of this world, there had never been such a thing as the kingdom of Antichrist; and Christ's subjects cannot be great sufferers where this right is preserved; and if it be preserved, others will enjoy the benefit of it as well as they. But if it be not, they are the persons that will suffer most. Others can dissemble their principles, and feign subjection to tyrannical power; but

but they are bound by the law of Christ openly to confess all his truths, the least of them not excepted, so far as they know them; and that as they would not be denied by him at his coming.

It does not appear in his word, nor as yet in his providence, that ever he designed that his servants in this world should be, by themselves, in a capacity to defend their profession against the powers of this earth, by the sword. And they must *be strangers on earth*, conformed to the image of their suffering Master, in bearing the cross; and not conformed to this world, whatever shape it put on; whatever form it be cast into; but transformed by the renewing of their minds, that they may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, Rom. xii. 1. 2. *They are crucified to the world, and the world to them; they are dead to it, and their life is hid with Christ in God, not to appear till he appear*, Gal. vi. 12. 14. Col. iii. 3. 4. Then it is that the saints shall reign on the earth and till then they will be companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

If any of Christ's subjects shall, at any time, be in places of power, he has given them no warrant nor command to employ their power for destroying men's lives on his account; far less has he afforded any encouragement to his followers to raise up themselves in the world, unto the disturbance of the kingdoms of the earth, and the persecuting of them that differ from them, or any party of them, under pretence of defending Christ's kingdom by the sword.

C H A P. IV.

Of the proper means whereby the kingdom of Christ is set up, maintained, and advanced in the world.

OUR Lord having set aside the way of establishing a kingdom the most feasible in man's eyes, and the way of which his own disciples seemed very fond, proceeds to declare the way of setting up, and advancing

vancing, and defending his kingdom in the world: *Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.*

S E C T. I.

THis kingdom is not set up, maintained, or advanced in the world, by human policy, but by the truth. It might be expected, that when the power of the sword is laid aside, there would be the more need of this kind of wisdom. But instead of this wisdom, we have here the truth. They that were employed at first in setting up and promoting this kingdom in the world, used great plainness of speech, and spake naked truth without disguise: 2 Cor. iv. 1. 2. *Therefore, seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not; but we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience, as in the sight of God.*" And, upon a review of their conduct, they had this to say, 2 Cor. i. 12. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience; that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards." And this belongs unto that wisdom which is peculiar to the kingdom of Christ, and is opposed to the wisdom of this world, after this manner, 1 Cor. iii. 18. 19. 20. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." If we consider that context, we may find this kind of wisdom pointed at, as one of the things

things that defile the temple of God, being most useful in carrying on party-designs, and managing feuds. And we may see what the Apostle James says of this wisdom, and how he distinguishes it from that wisdom which is from above, James iii. 13. 17.

Yet there are some things brought, as from the word of God, for the use of this kind of wisdom in advancing the kingdom of Christ. That which the Apostle wipes off as a foul aspersion cast upon him, 2 Cor. xii. 16. 17. 18. "Being crafty, I caught you with guile," is by some adduced to this purpose, and they call it *holy guile!* And his making the gospel of Christ without charge to the Corinthians, though he had power to be chargeable to them, and his becoming a servant to the various tempers and dispositions of men, in indifferent things, for the gospel's sake, that he might gain their souls to Christ, and save them, 1 Cor. ix. 18.—23. is pleaded to patronise our walking in crafty compliances with the corrupt inclinations of the men of this world, in order to gain an authority over them, to save ourselves from the effect of the world's hatred, and to advance our worldly interest. This did not Paul.

S E C T. II.

THE kingdom of Christ is set up, maintained, and advanced in the world, by bearing witness unto the truth; and so not by the strength of human reasoning, nor by the moving influences of human eloquence.

This truth has wisdom in it, "even the hidden wisdom of God, which none of the princes of this world knew;" and there is an utterance in bearing witness unto this truth, which they that know, can distinguish from human reason and eloquence. But our Lord came not into the world to teach moral philosophy, nor to oblige men to acknowledge the truth by the force of philosophical argument, nor

to entice them to embrace it by the charms of rhetoric: for he came to bear witness unto the truth.

This faithful and true witness gave his testimony on the earth in the days of his flesh, and now bears witness to us from heaven, from whence he speaks in the ministry of the gospel, Heb. xii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 12. His ministers that are sent by him are his witnesses, declaring unto men the testimony of God. They must have some acquaintance with this testimony themselves, at least by that illumination which is called common, and is the foundation of all those gifts that are for the edification of the church, 1 Cor. xii. 4.—7. And they must lay open what they thus know to the world, proclaiming it as Christ's messengers, or declaring it as his witnesses. This is preaching. Now, as it would be very unfuitable for a herald making a proclamation, or a witness bearing testimony, to philosophise or harangue, to dispute or dress up his discourse in all the beauties of eloquence, in order to persuade men of what he testifies; so it is in this case. And this serves rather to make the testimony suspected. If by force of argument or eloquence, he can induce men to acknowledge and receive what he testifies, so as to answer the design of it, what use is there for that testimony which he declares?

When we embrace the gospel in the proper way, so as to be saved by it, it is by divine faith receiving the divine testimony: "For if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. He that believeth, hath this witness in himself," 1 John v. 9. 10. Our Lord, speaking of the evidence given to the Jews for his being the Messiah, John's ministry, and beyond that the works given him to finish, doth at length send them to the testimony of God in the word, declaring, that "they believed not, because they had not his word abiding in them," whatever regard to it they professed, John v. 32.—39. There is an extrinsic evidence for Christianity, which may
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stop the mouths of gainfayers, and move men to attend to the divine testimony in the word of scripture-revelation; but the faith whereby men are saved, doth not stand on this extrinsic evidence, but on the evidence that is in the divine testimony itself. Some would make our faith to be the assent to the conclusion of such a syllogism as this: "Whatever God says is true; but God says this; therefore this is true." But the business of faith is with that proposition, *God says this*. There is not so much occasion for faith to shew us, that whatsoever God says is true, and that if he says this, it must be true. The great pinch where faith is needful, is in the making out to us that God says this; and the province of faith is, to give assent to this proposition. Whatever way it be therefore that this is made out to me, in that way comes my persuasion of it. If my persuasion be in the assent to the conclusion of a philosophical argument, then it is science, not faith; if my persuasion go upon the evidence of human testimony, then it is human faith; and if my persuasion go upon evidence that the divine testimony carries in itself, then it is truly divine faith.

No man can say, it is impossible that God should testify his mind and will in such a revelation as we have in the writings of the inspired prophets and apostles, and give abundant evidence that it is he that speaks in this word itself. Neither will it be manifested to be impossible, that by means of this revelation, he should frame the minds of those whom he will have to understand it, into a suitableness to this his truth, and make them capable to discern this evidence, in having a true understanding of the truth which he testifies, and which carries this evidence in itself. Yea, it cannot well be conceived, how we can be furnished, in another manner, with a new set of principles by a divine revelation. But men will have the Most High to satisfy them of the truth of his revelation in their own way: "The Jews requir-
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ed a sign, and the Greeks sought after wisdom." The Jews saw signs; but were they satisfied with them? No: "As many of them as received not the witness of God in themselves," and had not his word abiding in them, "believed not" unto salvation. And our Lord tells us, Luke xvi. 31. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." And if the Greeks that sought after wisdom, had lived unto these days, they had seen abundance of that kind of wisdom they were seeking for, brought forth to evidence the truth of the gospel; and some men satisfying themselves so much in it, as to imagine, that their assent, upon this evidence of their own production, is indeed divine faith; yea, and to ridicule all pretences unto any higher evidence of another kind, as enthusiastic imaginations. When these men come to inquire into the meaning of this revelation, whereof they pretend to be thus convinced, they explain it to themselves by that same wisdom, whereby they convince themselves, that the revelation comes from God. Thus the Greek would find his wisdom in the gospel, and it should no more be so ridiculous to him, as sometime a day it was; but then I am mistaken, if he would be much the wiser or better by it; and it is plain, that the blessed fruits of the gospel brought forth by them that believed it, as it was the jest of the Greeks, have not attended this new faith, even in them that make most of it.

But, says the Apostle, we have a better way of doing to convince men; we declare the testimony of God, 1 Cor. ii. 1. 2. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. i. 23. 24.

In this testimony, and the subject of it, so soon as it is truly discerned, the Jew will find the power of
 God

God in a far more glorious manner than in all his signs, even the power of God unto his salvation; and this is the sign of the prophet Jonas, Matth. xii. 38. 39. 40. The Greek will find here the wisdom of God unto his salvation, excelling his as far as God excels him, confounding his wisdom, and making all his wisdom of words, his disputing eloquent wisdom, *foolishness*; for here he will see more than notions or words, “even the deep things of God,” and “the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew,” and which “was ordained before the world unto” our “glory.” Thus both Jew and Greek will find more satisfaction in the gospel than they were inquiring for. But who will find this? Only the Jews and Greeks that are called of God by this testimony concerning Christ crucified. The rest, both Jews and Greeks, will remain where they were, stumbling at the preaching of the cross, and counting it foolishness, because they find not that in it which they were inquiring and seeking after.

Every one that is persuaded upon this evidence, sees with his own eyes. The unwise and unlearned need not take the truths of this revelation, and the meaning of it, upon trust, from the men of wisdom, because they have not ability nor leisure to satisfy themselves about it. The Jew needs not be obliged to the Greek for his wisdom, nor needs the Greek the signs of the Jew here; for unto both Jews and Greeks that are called, Christ crucified, testified of in the gospel, is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. This evidence that the divine testimony carries in itself, is for men of all sorts whom the Lord shall call. The wisdom of the wise man is no advantage to him, as to the receiving this evidence; nor is the stupidity and foolishness of the unwise any loss to him in this case: “Yea, God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and hides these things from the wise and prudent, while he

he reveals them unto babes." No man can see these things "except he be born again;" and the unwise that have not a discerning of the disputing wisdom of words, nor a taste for the pleasures of human eloquence, stand as fair for this, as the disputer of this world. When the unwise receives the testimony of God upon its own evidence, though it make him wise unto salvation, it does not turn him into a philosopher; and when the wise man believes the testimony of God, it makes him indeed wiser than ever he was before, yet not with that wisdom which he sought after, and wherein he once gloried; for it makes that wisdom foolishness to him, and now he is taught to glory only in the Lord Christ, who is made of God to him wisdom. Thus God, in saving sinners, stains the pride of man's glory, (and there is nothing whereof men desire to glory more than their understanding and wisdom), that he alone may be exalted. We fell from God, affecting to be as gods for knowledge; and it was every way meet that God, in recovering us to himself, should effectually humble us in this respect, glorifying his own wisdom, and staining the pride of ours.

This truth of the gospel, whereby Christ advances his kingdom in the world, is practical; and when it is received upon its proper evidence, it must influence the practice: but all that evidence which is by some set up as the only true evidence upon which we receive the gospel, may be, and is clearly perceived by men, that are no wise influenced by the gospel in their practice. For what should hinder them to perceive it? Many such have as clear wits, and as much thirst for philosophical knowledge, as other men. What then should make such a man a Christian in his practice? His corrupt affections certainly must be rectified. But how should that be, if it be not by the light and evidence of the gospel? Yet he has that evidence already, and he is the same man still. But if this is to be done with a blind influence of
power

power without light, how shall our wise men understand this, or reconcile this kind of dealing with a rational man? To be moved thus, and influenced blindly to live the Christian life, must certainly be unto these men as ridiculous, as the true way of receiving the gospel is. Therefore this man must have more light to make him a Christian than our philosophers can afford him; and that is no other than the light that shines in the truth of the gospel itself, the testimony of Jesus Christ, which when he is enabled to behold, will effectually change him, and conform him to itself in heart and life, so far as he beholds it. Now, this is by means of the *foolishness of preaching*, or declaring unto men the testimony of God in such a way as is, unto the wise men of this world, foolishness; and when the truth of the gospel is received, by this means, *not as the word of man, (but as it is indeed) the word of God, it worketh effectually in all them that thus believe it.*

Men may have all that persuasion of the truth of the Christian religion which the extrinsic evidence can afford, without discerning the glory, or feeling the power of any one truth of the gospel: and whence is this, but that they receive not the truth of the gospel upon its proper evidence, and so indeed receive it not at all? for whatever may be pretended, they that discern not the glory of gospel-truth, and in whom it works not effectually, *do not receive it, and believe it, as it is in truth, the word of God, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Col. i. 6. 1 John v. 19. 20. 1 John ii. 4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* And however much they who despise the evidence proper to the gospel as enthusiastic, may value themselves upon doing such things, and leading such a life, as an infidel may lead as well as they; yet it is impossible, that the peculiar fruits of that faith which works by love, and purifies the soul unto unfeigned love of the brethren, can be found with them, or that they

should have those works to produce, by which the Apostle James calls men, *to shew their faith*, and by which our Lord will try the faith of the hearers of the gospel at his second coming, Matth. xxv. 31.—46.

This persuasion of the gospel, which produces fruits suitable to the gospel, is begotten in men, neither by the signs of the Jew, nor the wisdom of the Greek, however these may serve to make men attentive to the gospel, and render them inexcusable in an open rejection of it; but by this bearing witness unto the truth. Christ himself is the witness, and the gospel preached by his ministers is his testimony; and whosoever *receives his testimony has set to his seal that God is true*. In him we have all the persons of the Godhead bearing witness unto us. The Father speaks to us only in him, and by him; *and none knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him*, Matth. xi. 27. God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,—the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 1. 2. 3. *And the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost, given by the Father, without measure unto him the Son of man, is sent by him from the Father*, and bears witness to us in the gospel, Isa. lxi. 1. 2. John iii. 34. xiv. 16. 17. xv. 26. 27. and xvi. 13. 14. 15. Thus the testimony of Jesus is the testimony of the glorious Three that now bear record in heaven, 1 John v. 7. When Jesus began his ministry on the earth, there was a glorious manifestation of these Three at his baptism, Matth. iii. 16. 17.; but now they witness gloriously in heaven, in the testimony of Jesus which we have now from thence. Jesus Christ began to testify in his ministry upon the earth, and was then declared very far to excel all that came before him. John Baptist, greater than all the prophets, testifies of him, that he was preferred before him, though
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coming after him; and that on these accounts,
 1. Because *he was before him*, (the eternal God), John i. 15.; and because *he is from above*, (the Lord from heaven), John iii. 31.; and to this agrees our Lord's saying, *I was born, and I came into the world, to bear witness unto the truth.* 2. Because he was upon all the counsels of God, and in the contrivance of the great things brought to light by him, John iii. 32. *What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.* John i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* 3. Because the Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him, John iii. 34. The man Christ Jesus was furnished with the Spirit for the exercise of his prophetic office on the earth beyond all the prophets, and his hearers wondered at all the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, and were obliged to own that he spake with a peculiar authority, and *that never man spake like this man.* But now, having ascended to the right hand of the Father, and having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, he speaks from heaven in a far more glorious and powerful manner; and when he began to testify from thence, he made his rude Galileans speak in an amazing manner *the wonderful things of God*, Acts ii. 7. 11. John xvi. 12. 13. Eph. iv. 10.—13.

And this is that prophet that was promised to the church by Moses, Deut. xviii. 14.—19. His voice at Sinai, that shook the earth, was so terrible, that the children of Israel said unto Moses, *Speak thou with us, and we will bear. but let not God speak with us, lest we die*, Exod. xx. 19. And according to this the Lord said unto Moses, *They have well spoken that which they have spoken: I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee.* In hearing the voice of this our brother, the antitype of Moses, we hear the voice of the Lord our God, without that fear: for now *he hath taken part with*

us in flesh and blood; for which cause he is not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren.

His kingdom is set up and advanced in the world by the exercise of this his prophetic office; and thus we see how his prophetic and kingly offices are connected. His kingdom is a kingdom of light, into which we are translated from the power of darkness, Col. i. 13. And *he is a commander to the people, by being a witness to them, Isa. lv. 4. He bears witness unto the truth; and every one that is of the truth, heareth his voice.*

S E C T. III.

Pilate saw that our Lord laid great stress upon this truth; and though he despised truth as a mean of setting up a kingdom, when he proposed that scornful question, *What is truth?* and waited not for an answer; yet it becomes us diligently to inquire, till we be satisfied, what this truth is: and though it was not fit that Pilate should know it at that time, seeing, as we may hear, it respected Christ's cross; yet it is of the utmost importance and advantage to us to know it now.

We find God's mercy and his truth much spoken of and celebrated in the Old Testament. It is the promise of Christ that is intended; and truly God's mercy and truth together are no where to be found but with him, Psal. lxxxix. 24. They that saw his glory, when he came in the flesh, found him *full of grace and truth, John i. 14. He testifies of himself, That he is the truth, John xiv. 6. In him, the Son of God manifest in the flesh, the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth, all the promises of God are yea and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20.* So that he is the great subject of this his testimony in the gospel; and in order to understand what he mainly intends by truth here, we must consider how
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he is especially set forth in the gospel, to be believed in unto salvation, and what doctrine of the gospel it is whereby it is especially distinguished both from Judaism and natural religion.

We shall find, that the great thing testified of him in the gospel is, that he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; that he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; and we are told *that he that believeth this in his heart, and confesseth it with his mouth, shall be saved*, Rom. iv. 24. 25. and x. 4. 8. 9. 10. When the Apostle declares himself not ashamed of the gospel, and calls it the power of God unto salvation, he tells us, it is because *therein is the righteousness of God revealed*, from the faithfulness of God to the faith of every believer, Rom. i. 16. 17. When he gives an account of the great subject of the gospel message, he tells us it is this, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,—And be reconciled to God: for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 18.—21. And when he speaks of the testimony of God, the object of saving faith, he tells us, *it is Christ crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 1. 2. 1 Cor. i. 23. 24. This was the great intent of the prophecies, which spake of the sufferings of Christ, and the following glory: *For to him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sin*, Acts x. 43. This therefore is that truth of the gospel which is especially witnessed unto, and whereby Christ says, *his kingdom is advanced in the world*. And this may be further clear unto us, if we consider,

1. That this is the distinguishing truth of Christianity, whereby it is differenced from mere natural religion, and from all the religions in the world that any way compete with it. This is the great thing, the first thing, that any religion can propose to sinful men,

men; How they should be pardoned, reconciled to God, and justified in his sight? If the Christian religion differ from others in any thing, it is in this: they all propose other ways of coming into favour with God, and false ways; but Christ has made peace by the blood of his cross, and thereby reconciled all his people, of all nations, unto God in one body; and has come and preached this peace to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh; and this is the truth wherein the true God is gloriously manifested and distinguished from every false god.

2. God's truth in the just sentence of his broken law, and in the promise of life to sinners, meets and consists only in Christ, our Redeemer from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us, that the blessing might come upon us: and therefore this may well be called *the truth*.

The law condemned us in a head and representative; and there was nothing in it to hinder our suffering in another head, if God should think it meet: and they who are justified in Christ, were as verily punished in him, and as verily fulfilled the law in him, *as they sinned in Adam*, Rom. v. 15.—19. Thus, when God pardons a sinner, and justifies him in Christ, he no wise makes void the law; seeing we have fulfilled it in Christ our head unto far better purpose than if we had undergone the curse by ourselves without him. So when he holds us guiltless, he does not hold us guiltless, and clearing he does not clear, according to a phrase frequently used in the Old Testament, but always spoiled in our translation, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7. Numb. xiv. 18. *That will by no means clear the guilty.* It should be, *clearing will not clear.* Jer. xxx. 11. it is said to the church, *Though I make a full end of all nations, I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure,* (or I'll take a wise way of correcting thee), *and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.* It should be, *and clearing will not clear:* for the phrase is the same here as in Exodus,

Exodus, though differently translated. We may find the same phrase, Jer. xlvi. 28. Nah. i. 3.

3. This is the truth of the legal shadows: *The law was given by Moses, but truth came by Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth.* See Heb. ix. and x. And in this truth the promises of God are Yea and Amen: For it is either the accomplishment, or the foundation of the accomplishment, of them all, 1 Pet. i. 11.

4. This truth concerning Christ delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, is that wherein the stamp of divine authority on scripture-revelation is chiefly manifested. All the parts of this revelation depend on this, and are connected with it: so that, take away this truth out of the gospel, it will be another gospel, and the whole doctrine of the prophets and apostles will be utterly made of none effect, as to eternal life and salvation. That faith whereby we savingly believe scripture-revelation, is faith in the blood of the Son of God; and by this faith we receive the whole scripture-revelation, which does all, from beginning to end, one way or other relate unto this. And this is the great touchstone for the trial of true and false doctrine. See Heb. xiii. 7.—10. Eph. iv. 13. 14. 15.

5. This truth, witnessed unto in the gospel, is the great mean whereby the power of God is put forth to save sinners, and to subject them to him in his kingdom, Luke i. 77. Gal. iii. 2. Rom. i. 16. 17. 1 Cor. i. 18. 23. 24. Col. i. 13. 14. It was by the revelation of Christ's righteousness in the gospel, that Christ's kingdom was at first set up and advanced in the world; and it was by the revival of this great truth, after it had been buried under Antichrist's reign, that the Lord began to consume that wicked one at the reformation. Luther said, *This article reigns in my heart, and with this the church stands or falls.* Without this great truth, all other means for promoting or defending the kingdom of Christ will be

be altogether ineffectual; yea, on the contrary, serve to advance the kingdom of Satan. The strength of Christ's kingdom, and its safety, lies all in this truth: so that they who would advance this kingdom in the world, must bear it about with them in their hearts, in all their preaching, and in all their conversation in the ministry. And truly this would be a spring of daily refreshment to themselves, and of great liberty and boldness in all the labour of the gospel-ministry, and in all the sufferings that attend it.

6. To the same purpose also we might consider the name whereby Christ is called among the subjects of his kingdom, *The Lord our righteousness*; and that great motto of the church whereby it is distinguished from all other societies, Jer. xxxiii. 16. *In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.*

Thus we see the connection betwixt the kingdom of Christ and his priesthood. This King is Melchisedeck, King of righteousness, and a priest on his throne: and the influence of his priesthood on his kingdom is set before us, Psal. ii. 8. Psal. cx. Isa. lii. 11. 12. All the glory of Christ's kingdom follows upon and flows from his sufferings; and they never served him in his kingdom, whatever they may pretend, that did not first submit unto his righteousness.

C H A P. V.

Of the subjects of Christ's kingdom.

THE last thing to be considered in this testimony of our Lord, is the account he gives of his subjects. He is not ashamed to confess them, and his relation to every one of them; and far less reason have they to be ashamed to confess him, or to be ashamed of one another.

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He says, *Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice:*

Here we must consider, 1. What it is to be *of the truth*. 2. What is the import of that, *Every one that is of the truth*. 3. What it is to *hear Christ's voice*. And, 4. What is the connection betwixt *being of the truth*, and *hearing his voice*.

If these things be understood, we cannot be at a loss about the subjects of this kingdom on earth.

S E C T. I:

WE have had some account of that truth by which our Lord here describes his subjects. Now, it concerns those that would know if they have any part in this kingdom of Christ, to understand well what it is to be *of this truth*:

There is an expression, Rom. vi. 17. which seems to have a near alliance with this, and may serve to clear it: *Ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you; or, more agreeably to the first language, that type, or frame, or mould of doctrine, into which ye were delivered.* The doctrine here pointed to by the Apostle seems to be the same with that truth of which our Lord speaks, even the gospel of Christ; as it *reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith, that the just may live by faith; and manifests the righteousness of God without the law, which is witnessed by the law and the prophets*, Rom. iii. 21. Of this great doctrine the Apostle had been treating in the foregoing part of the epistle; and in this chapter he is shewing the connection betwixt justification and sanctification, and declaring the influence that this blessed doctrine of justification has upon sinners to sanctify them; and this in opposition to a common objection, and an error into which men are very ready to fall, who have not a true insight into the doctrine of God's glorious free grace in the justification of guilty sinners

through the righteousness of Christ alone. To this purpose he had said, ver. 14. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace:" and here he tells them to whom he writes, that *they were the servants* of sin; but it was matter of thankfulness to God, that they were delivered from that slavery; and still the greater ground of thankfulness, the more they had been enslaved. And by what means were they delivered from the bondage of sin, and made servants of righteousness? He tells it was by that doctrine. Yet the bare outward revelation, and their hearing and having a notion of that doctrine, as they had of other doctrines they heard, was not sufficient unto this: *Ye have obeyed, says he, from the heart, that mould of doctrine into which ye were cast; and so being freed from the service of sin, they became servants of righteousness.* That blessed doctrine was as a mould unto their hearts, into which they being cast, and new framed, became answerable unto it; and so were freed from the yoke of sin, and fitted unto the service of righteousness. Thus the Apostle expresses the work of regeneration, and our union with Christ, by means of the doctrine of justification by the free grace of God, *through the redemption that is in Christ's blood.* And so he shows the influence that this doctrine has upon our sanctification; as he does further, Rom. vii. 4. 5. 6. And by this we may see what it is to be *of the truth.*

I. To be of this truth, is to be, as it were, cast into it as in a mould, and framed according to it: *That form of doctrine whereinto ye were delivered.*

This truth is not at all of us. For as it is none of those principles which are commonly called natural to us, so we do not receive it as we do conclusions that we draw from or by those principles; nor do we admit it on the account of its agreeableness unto those principles of ours. It is altogether foreign to us naturally; and yet it is a truth that must be a most powerfully practical principle in us to make us live a
new

new life, unto which all the principles we had before, howsoever improved by us, could never influence us. And therefore it must be as deeply rooted in our minds as any of our principles, and have such possession of our souls, as to master all those corrupt principles that have taken such seat in the minds of all mankind, as to overpower all the right dictates of the natural conscience, and, in spite of them, to influence mankind into a life of sin. Now, it is evident, we cannot bring home this truth to dwell after this manner in our souls.

On the contrary, when a sinner begins to be convinced of his sin, and of the judgement of God against him, and is roused to hearken to the dictates of his conscience, he labours to answer those dictates; and so goes about to make amends for his sin himself, and to establish a righteousness of his own. But the farther he goes on in this way, as he strengthens sin the more, Rom. vii. 5. 9. so he fortifies himself the more against the entrance of this truth into his soul; especially if he imagines himself in any wise successful in his attempts after righteousness upon natural principles. And if the natural conscience be thoroughly awakened, it will influence the sinner; after all his attempts to satisfy it, unto despair. For it knows nothing of the imputed righteousness, and can take no satisfaction in it, till this truth take possession of the soul: and it requires as much to satisfy the duly awakened conscience as to satisfy the justice of God.

It is also manifest in them who know these things in their experience, that as there is a great enmity in the heart of man against God, so this enmity shows itself especially against this truth; because therein is made the most glorious discovery of God, and because it is that which effectually brings us near him, and conforms us to him.

And such is the pride of man's heart, and so much does this truth slay the pride of his glorying, that

the mind and heart of man will by no means submit to it, but rather be engaged in the hardest labour for self-righteousness or despair, and give up with all hopes of eternal life, than submit to, and take rest in the righteousness which this truth brings unto us. So it cannot be of us to receive this truth to bear sway in our souls; and it is no wonder that there have been so many subtile reasonings against it, so many perplexing disputes about it, and so many sorts of opposition made unto it, since it has been published and professed in the world.

This truth comes into our minds and hearts from from above, by divine teaching, and it is *ingrafted in our minds*, Jam. i. 21. Not growing naturally in them, but brought from elsewhere, and ingrafted, that we may bring forth a new kind of fruit, according to the nature of the graft, and not according to the nature of the stock into which it is grafted. It is as the seed whereby we are *begotten of God unto a new life*. Jam. i. 18. *Of his own will, not of ours, begat he us with the word of truth*. It is that seed of which we are born again: 1 Pet. i. 22.—25. *Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

They in whose minds and hearts this truth is ingrafted, and who are begotten and born again of this incorruptible seed, are *of the truth*; and these are they whose souls are cast into the mould of the gospel-revelation of righteousness in Christ, *delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.*

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This is that regeneration, that new birth, wherein we are united to Christ as members of his body, and wherein our whole conformity to him takes its beginning. So far are we conformed to God's image in Christ, and subjected unto him, as this truth takes place in us, and not a whit farther.

We may likewise notice, that to be of this truth, is the same as to be of faith, Gal. iii. which is opposed to being of the works of the law.

2. To be of this truth is to believe it. They that are delivered into that form of doctrine, do obey it. And the way that we obey a truth testified unto, is by believing it upon the authority of the testifier. In believing this doctrine, there is a subjection of the mind unto the authority of God in his testimony, which is in this doctrine. Thus we are said to obey that form of doctrine into which we are delivered. And this persuasion of this truth, upon the evidence of the divine testimony in it, is indeed that faith whereby we are justified, and eternally saved. And this is that which the scripture seems mainly to intend, when it speaks of faith, and calls us to believe. See 1 Theff. ii. 13. 1 John v. 9. 10. John iv. 42. John iii. 33. John vi. 68. 69. This is that faith *which is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for*, Heb. xi. 1. This persuasion of the truth is, 1. That faith whereby we are justified, and which has the promise of blessedness: Matth. xvi. 16. 17. *Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* Rom. x. 6. 8. 9. 10. *But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise:—The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*

saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. We may take notice, that the heart is not here opposed unto the mind, as is commonly thought, but unto the mouth. 2. This is that faith whereby a troubled conscience comes first to true peace and quiet: Psal. cxxx. 4. “But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” 3. This is that faith which is the prime fruit and evidence of the new birth, and whereby God dwelleth in us, and we in him: 1 John v. 1. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.” 1 John iv. 15. “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” 4. And this is that faith that overcomes the world, and is our victory over the world, and all the lusts and temptations of it: 1 John v. 4. 5. “For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood;—and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

Thus the scripture-notion of faith agrees with the common notion of faith and belief among men, a persuasion of a thing upon testimony. But that faith whereby we believe the gospel, has been very much darkened, by the many things that have been said in the description of it; while that which is most properly faith, has been either shut up in a narrow and dark corner of the description, or almost excluded from it, as a thing presupposed unto faith, and not that very faith itself whereby we are justified and saved. And some have so defined faith, as to take in into its own nature the whole of gospel-obedience. Agreeably to this, we have heard in sermons, that it has two hands, one to receive Christ, and another to give ourselves away to him. And when

when we are pressed and exhorted to believe in Christ, it is as if we were urged to put forth some we do not know what act of the will, or to give forth something towards Christ by God's help, by which we are to be saved, on account of the connection made in the promise betwixt salvation, and that deed, whatever it be, which is called *faith*. By this means the hearers of the gospel are set on to seek to do that deed, that work, called *faith*, to save them, and intitle them to eternal life. And serious souls are perplexed with many fruitless inquiries in themselves, whether they have this thing called *faith*; while that which lies at the bottom of most part of their doubts, is either the weakness or the want of the persuasion of this truth, and their taking no notice of it, because it is not much noticed in the accounts of faith that are made to them. And it is foolishly reckoned by many, that the belief of the truth is a common thing, and that it is no great matter to attain unto it; though the Apostle hath said, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. ii. 13. This glorious truth, containing in it "Christ the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believe it," is able to give rest to the weary soul, to make a blessed calm in the most troubled conscience, and to raise up the most desperate sinner unto a lively hope. All this influence it hath upon them that believe, and in their believing of it. Therefore, while this is not attended to, it is a vain thing to labour after the assurance of hope: for where faith in this truth is not in exercise, neither the thing hoped for, nor the true ground of hope, can be discerned; "faith being the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is impossible to have a "lively hope through the resurrection of Christ," without a lively faith in him, "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Therefore they begin at the wrong end, that press after the assurance
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of hope, without laying the foundation of the assurance of faith.

But what is this assurance, this *πληροφορία*, of faith? There are mistakes about this. For some, perhaps, finding all their endeavours after the assurance of hope, without the lively faith of this great truth of the gospel, altogether fruitless; and being at length brought to clear and sure belief of this truth, and finding their consciences quieted, the disposition of their hearts changed, by the influence of this truth, and hope arising in their souls; they have imagined, that all this flowed at first from an assurance of Christ's being made fully theirs, and a certainty of their own salvation by him: and so they have made that the nature of faith. Whereas these fruits take their first rise from the truth believed; and not from a persuasion of our interest in it, and of the absolute certainty of our salvation; which is the assurance of hope, and must arise from faith with the fruits of it, Heb. vi. 11. Therefore we find the saints in the New Testament, when professing their assurance of hope, always speaking therewith of their faith, and the fruits of it. See 1 John iii. 23. 24.

The assurance of faith can be the assurance of no other thing but what is proposed in the gospel unto all the hearers of it, to be believed by them, upon hearing it, unto their salvation. But it is evident it is not revealed unto every gospel-hearer, that Christ is absolutely given unto him, and that he shall be saved; because this is not true; and therefore every hearer of the gospel is not bound to believe this concerning himself: nor will the hearers of the gospel that perish, be damned for not believing that they should never be damned. Seeing then the assurance of faith is the assurance of what is laid out in common to every gospel-hearer, to be believed for their salvation; and seeing it was never, nor can be at any time, a truth, that Christ is absolutely given certainly to save every gospel hearer, or that every gospel-
hearer

hearer shall be saved; we must have another notion of the assurance of faith. And the scripture is very clear in this matter. When it speaks of the assurance of faith at its highest, it calls it the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, Col. ii. 2. And what is that, but a full persuasion of the truth of which Christ speaks, when he says, "Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice?"

So then, whosoever is verily persuaded of this truth that Christ bears witness unto, and that upon the credit of his testimony, and the evidence that it carries in itself, is of this truth; and this faith or belief is the fruit of the soul's being cast into the mould of that doctrine, without which no obedience can be given unto it.

3. They that are of the truth obey it from the heart; they love it. As this testimony of Jesus is received by faith, whereby we set to our seal that God is true, having the witness in ourselves; so there is the greatest good proposed in this truth to be embraced by us: "He hath shewed thee what is good," Mic. vi. 8. "Eat ye that which is good," Isa. lv. 2. This is the proper object of love: as faith respects the truth witnessed unto, so love respects the good in this truth.

This love is another fruit of the new birth, flowing immediately from true faith; and is never, nor can be separated from it. We read of some professors of the truth perishing, because they received not the love of the truth, and this is made an evidence of their not believing it, 2 Thess. ii. 10.
—13.

This love acts upon Christ in this truth, 1. In a way of esteem, valuing him above all things, and counting all things besides him, all things that stand in competition with him, *loss and dung*. Thus they that truly find Christ, are with him, as the wise merchant with the pearl of great price, when he hath found

found it, selling all to buy that pearl. Christ is indeed precious to all them that believe, and that to such a degree, that he is their only glory; but the soul that thus loves him, will be grieved that it cannot esteem him more, and will be ready to think it loves him not at all, because it finds not any esteem of him within itself suitable to such a glorious object; and such a soul will be jealous for him against his great rival self, which is constantly putting in for a share, at least, of that love and esteem which the soul finds only due to him. 2. In a way of earnest desire, expressed by the Apostle, when he says, “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things loss,—that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings,” Phil. iii. 8. 9. 10. They that love and truly desire Christ, find, as it were, a want in them, which nothing but he himself can fill up, and an uneasiness till they enjoy him, arising from faith’s apprehension of his complete sufficiency and fullness, his perfect suitability unto their whole ease, and his excellent glory. They desire him, so as to be ready to part with all things, and to suffer the loss of their nearest and dearest things for him; and this desire sets them on to the use of all the means of his own institution for finding him. His word, and all his ordinances, from the least to the greatest of them, are as the field where this their treasure is hid; and therefore *they sell all to buy this field*. Christ is especially desired by believers in that respect wherein he is a stumbling-block and foolishness to the world; even his cross, and his righteousness; and they desire him so much on this account, that they breathe after conformity unto him in that same cross. 3. In a way of complacence and delight. The soul having found Christ, and seen his glory

shining

Shining in this truth by faith, is joyfully satisfied and well pleased in him and his righteousness, rests under that shadow from all such perplexing inquiries as that, *What shall I do to be saved?* and that with great delight, and seeks no further. The believer takes a peculiar complacence in the wisdom and power of God unto salvation, and in the glorious discovery of the divine attributes, especially the comely complexion of the divine mercy and justice in this truth, and in that wonderful connection betwixt the glory of God and the sinner's salvation, that is to be seen in this truth, and in Christ himself, that glorious person, in whom all this is manifest. Such is the believer's complacence in Christ, that he abhors the nearest and dearest things to him, as they stand in competition with him. He counts his own righteousness but loss and dung for him. And "he that hates not father and mother, and even his own life, for Christ, is not worthy of him." This love to Christ is especially manifest in our love to all them that are of this truth without exception, on the account of their relation to him; and it is a very vain thing to pretend love to Christ, while we love not the least of his little ones, beyond any other sort of men in the world.

Thus they that are of the truth, love it: and as faith says of that word, "Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners," that it is faithful; so love says, "It is worthy of all acceptation." Christ's subjects are thus devoted unto this truth; it has their hearts, and so they are of it.

4. To be of the truth, is to be influenced by it, and to have it working effectually in us, unto all the ends for which it is revealed to us, and received by us, 1 Thess. ii. 13. 14. Col. i. 5. 6. We have not this truth as a speculation, only to divert ourselves with it; or as a precious jewel, only to be laid up that we may please ourselves by now and then looking upon it: but it must be a living principle of ac-

tion in us, and must be with us, when we lie down and rise up, and walk by the way, to influence us in the whole of our conversation in the world, and in the whole of the service of God. It is with this truth, and in it, that the Spirit of Christ comes to dwell in our souls, Gal. iii. 2. And this is the great instrument by which he works his gracious works in us. The sanctification of the Spirit is with the belief of the truth: "Seest thou," says James, "how faith wrought with his works," James ii. 22. And we are told, that "without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6.

As it has been a dangerous error, on the one hand, to think of leading a Christian life, and pleasing God, abstractly from this truth; so it is a no less dangerous error, on the other hand, to think, that we may receive it unto our joy, and deliverance from the torments of hell, without its working effectually in us to make us live unto God. The word of the truth of the gospel brings forth fruit in all them that know the grace of God in truth: and though in stony ground it wither, and among thorns be choaked; yet in good ground (that is, where men obey from the heart that form of doctrine into which they are delivered) it bringeth forth sometimes thirty, sometimes sixty, sometimes an hundred-fold. Thus the truth reigns in them that do believe it; so they obey it from the heart, and so they are of it.

Now we understand what it is to be of the truth, and that it is the same thing that the Apostle calls being of faith. Gal. iii. 7. 9. which, as was noticed, he opposes to being of the deeds of the law. Therefore all that are of the deeds of the law, and submit not to the righteousness of God, but, in their ignorance of the truth, are seeking by some means to establish a righteousness of their own, however sincere they may appear to themselves or others, yet they have not gospel-sincerity in them; for they "have not the truth in their inward parts." The imputation

putation of righteousness without works, and a spirit without guile, go together, Psal. xxxii. 1. 2. Rom. iv. 6. 7. 8.: and all sincerity and singleness of heart before God is of this truth. With such a true heart it is that the Apostle calls us “to draw near, and come into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, in full assurance of faith,” Heb. x. 19.—22. “The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,” till “the truth, as it is in Jesus,” take possession of it, and make the man sincere and upright, so far as it takes place in him, Eph. iv. 21.—25. And therefore it is strange to see sincerity set up, as it were, in opposition to this truth, and the glorious righteousness it brings to us, the only spring of all the godly sincerity that is in the world.

We find singleness of heart taken notice of, as a remarkable fruit of the truth in them that received it, when it came first from Christ, exalted by the right hand of God, Acts ii. 46. And their pretences to the faith of it are very poor, who study not simplicity and godly sincerity, but walk in policy and fleshly wisdom, and glory in the wisdom of this world, as to which the truth will make all them that are of it fools.

S E C T. II.

THE subjects of Christ's kingdom are, *Every one that is of the truth.* And these things are imported in this.

1. This truth, with its influence, is not now confined to any sort of men, however qualified, and however excelling others. The uncircumcised nations were excluded from Christ, till he should come, and had no hope in the promise, by means of the wall of partition betwixt the Jews and them; but now Christ having broke down that in his death, and come *preaching peace to them that were afar off and nigh,* they both, through him, have an access by one Spirit
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to the Father; and it is now free to all nations, all sorts of finners, even the chief, to believe this truth unto their salvation, and to come into Christ's kingdom by the belief of this truth, Matth. xxii. 9. Mark xvi. 15. 16. Rom. iii. 21. 22. and x. 4. 11. 12. 13. How much reason have we Gentiles to rejoice in the New Testament on this account!

2. It takes no more to make any man a subject of Christ's kingdom, but to be of this truth; and it requires no less. *Every one that is of the truth heareth his voice, is his subject.* The Jews, to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the promises, cannot by all this be of Christ's kingdom, if they be not of this truth; and the uncircumcised Gentiles are free in this kingdom to the enjoyment of the privileges of it, by being of this truth, without more. *Yea, the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone,* Rom. ix. 30.---33. The circumcision of the Jew leaves him on a level here with the uncircumcised Gentile, and the uncircumcision of the Gentile puts him not a whit behind the Jew as to an interest in this kingdom. The Greek has no advantage by his politeness in this matter; nor is the rudeness of the Barbarian his loss in this case. The slavery of the bondman cannot hinder his freedom in the kingdom of Christ, if he be of this truth, and without this the liberty of the freeman can give him no part in the liberty of Christ, Col. iii. 10. 11.

As none are by us to be accounted subjects of this kingdom, but those whom Christ commands us to reckon his disciples, or that they are of the truth; so all that appear to be of the truth, without difference, are by us to be held for subjects of this kingdom,
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and to be dealt with accordingly; and because some, under the common influence of the Spirit, receive the word with joy, and so appear for a while to be of this truth, who yet are not of it, and many of them afterward discover themselves, or will be discovered and separated from the people of Christ at his coming, Matth. xiii. and xxv. John xv. 2. 6. Matth. vii. 21.--29. 1 Tim. v. 24. 25. Heb. x. 39. Jude 4.; therefore there is a distinction made between the visible and invisible kingdom of Jesus Christ: and the visible is nothing else but the outward appearance of the invisible, such as it now makes, 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us."

3. By this truth Christ's subjects are all distinguished and differenced from all others, howsoever agreeing with them in other things, and however related to them, and bound together with them by many other ties. The church stands distinguished from all other societies, as has been noticed, bearing this motto, *The Lord our righteousness*. This truth lies at the bottom of all that division and enmity betwixt the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, and of all that hatred of the men of this world at the subjects of Christ's kingdom; for whatever fair pretences the world may make for this hatred, yet our Lord tells us the true cause of it, when he says, John xvii. 14. "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The men of this world may love Christ's subjects on account of other things common to them with the world appearing about them; but as they appear to be of this truth, and keep the testimony of Jesus Christ, they cannot love them; neither do they hate them for those same things that they find with others who are not of this truth, in whom yet they take pleasure.

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However we be joined with the people of Christ, if we be not with them in this, we are none of Christ's subjects, nor have we any part in the kingdom of Christ. And all separations from the world, that flow not from this truth, are none of that controversy which the Lord hath established in the earth between the seed of the woman and the serpent, and are not separations from the world, but divisions in it.

4. In this truth all Christ's subjects are one, however otherwise differenced. They are of different nations, different stations in the world, and of different parties in the world; they have different measures of gifts and grace, different measures of light, whence differences of opinion and practice will be found among them, and they are liable to error in many cases while they are in this world; so that uniformity, in all these things, which some of them may judge very necessary, is not to be expected here; but herein they are all one, they are "every one of this truth," yea, even though they may have different speculations about it, and controversies of words, while the truth itself reigns in all their hearts.

This is that unity of the faith wherein all the members of the body of Christ, even the babes not very skilful in the word of righteousness, are every one, according to their measure, growing up "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," Eph. iv. 13.

Thus they are united by Christ's word, according to his prayer to the Father, that they "may be one," John xvii. 20. 21. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." They are more closely joined together in this truth, than they can be by any other means whatsoever; and it is of more force to unite them; than any thing can be to divide them; so that it is impossible.

impossible for any difference to break this union. Here is Christ their peace, on whom all their iniquities met, Isa. liii. 6.; and his righteousness, which is unto them all, and upon them all without difference, and is the foundation of one and the same hope unto them all, Rom. iii. 22. Gal. iv. 5. 7. and v. 5.; his blood, his cross, whereby the enmity is slain, and they all reconciled to God in one body. By this truth they are all made to drink into one Spirit, which they receive through the hearing of faith, and are all related to God as their father, and to Christ as their brother-ransomer, their one Lord Redeemer. And in being of this truth, they are all united to Christ by it, as fellow-members of that one and same body, whereof he is the head; and though the members be many ways differenced, yet there is but one body, wherein all the members are growing up in this unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God. Ought they not therefore to endeavour to “keep the unity of spirit in this bond of peace, forbearing one another in love,” as to other differences? Should any party of them rise up to oblige all others to uniformity with them in matters of difference, and so to establish another bond of peace, to the dividing of the body of Christ, which yet must remain united in this bond in spite of all differences? Or dare we exclude from the privileges of Christ’s kingdom, and reject from our church-communion, the least of them that are of this truth, because they follow not with us in our uniformity; and this after the only Lord of the church has said, *Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice?*

S E C T. III.

THE hearing of Christ’s voice, and being his subject, are the same thing; but we shall enquire a little more particularly concerning this his voice, which

which his subjects hear; and then concerning their hearing it.

As to the first of these; we may find the short sum of our Lord's voice to his people, in his commission to the gospel-ministry: Mark xvi. 15. 16. *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Matth. xxviii. 18. 19. 20. *And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

And, 1. Christ's subjects hear his voice, preaching peace through his cross to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh, Eph. ii. 17. *even the word of reconciliation,* 2 Cor. v. 18—21.

This preaching of the gospel to every creature, this proclamation of peace, supposes a controversy between God and them to whom it is sent, and that they are thereby in a perishing condition, from which they are incapable to recover themselves: *For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost, and he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Wherefore, that sinners may hearken to this word of salvation, they must know that *they have destroyed themselves*: And because they do not easily entertain such a thought of themselves, and so slight the glad news of salvation, they are awakened to hear them by the voice of the law, and its work upon their consciences; the Lord Christ, by his Spirit, making the law subservient to the gospel, by this means, shutting up sinners to the faith, and stopping their mouths, that they may be subject to the judgment of God, and so hearken to the glad tidings of salvation, Rom. iii. 19. and vii. 9. Gal. ii. 19. But when
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the law hath done its work upon the sinner, he will not for all this hearken to the news of salvation, but despair, if he be not cast into the mould of the gospel-doctrine; for it is only they *that are of the truth, that have an ear to hear Christ's voice*; and of the hearing of this voice, we have spoken already.

2. His subjects hear his voice in his commandments: *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

He speaks to his people in all his institutions; all the ordinances of the gospel are his voice. He hath appointed the gospel ministry, first extraordinary, for the first erection of the church, the first joining together of the saints in the body of Christ, which ministry is now ceased; and then ordinary, for the edifying of this body of Christ, by adding the elect unto it, and building them up in it, in all ages, unto the end of the world, Eph. iv. 11. 12. 13. He hath commanded them to preach and teach, and to baptize the disciples, and their infants, (who are to be reckoned by us in the same state with them), with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Matth. xxviii. 19. Acts ii. 38. 39. 1 Cor. vii. 14. Mark x. 13. 14. He hath instituted the great ordinance of his supper, to be observed in the churches, or worshipping congregations of the saints, who are one bread and one body in the communion of that bread which they break, and that cup which they bless, which is the communion of the body and blood of Christ; even as that bread and cup is his body and blood, 1 Cor. xi. 18. 20. 23. —26. 1 Cor. x. 15.—18. A gospel-church is his institution, with its officers, elders, or bishops, and deacons, Phil. i. 1. and its discipline, Matth. xviii. 15.—20. 1 Cor. v. 2 Cor. ii. 5.—8. And in such a church, his disciples, made so by the influence of the word, are to continue *stedfastly in the gospel-doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, and in praising God, glorifying the Father of*

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our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind, in one mouth, Acts ii. 41. 42. 47. Rom. xv. 5. 6. 7. *Not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, but considering one another to provoke unto love and good works, and exhorting one another,* Heb. x. 23. 24. 25. And this is the most eminent mean of our worshipping in the heavenly sanctuary, while we are here upon the earth, Heb. x. 19.—25. He hath also changed the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the Jewish week, when he finished his work, and entered into his rest in the new creation, even as God rested from all his works in the first creation; so that this day remains as the sabbath of the people of God, Col. ii. 16. Heb. iv. 3. 8. 9. 10. Acts xx. 7. Rev. i. 10.

Christ speaks to his people in the moral law, which he hath explained and delivered to his people, as their Lord Redeemer, and which “he writes on their hearts.” The least of his commandments must be great and precious, as they are his, unto his people: and, “he that breaks the least of them, and teacheth men so, is least in the kingdom of heaven;” his people must be taught “to observe all things whatsoever he commands them.” But there are some things much insisted on, and vehemently pressed upon his people, in the New Testament, which were not so clearly revealed, nor so much inculcated before, and which are especially suited to the New-Testament revelation: as, for instance, the command “to deny ourselves, and take our cross, and follow Christ,” Matth. xvi. 24. 25.; the command “to love our enemies; to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us,” Math. v. 44. Luke ix. 51.—56.; and the command “to call on the name of the Lord Jesus, and to ask of the Father in his name,” John xvi. 24. Rom. x. 13. 14.; and “to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh,” Heb. x. 19. 20. 22.

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But we have a commandment in the New Testament, whereby the sincerity of all our obedience is to be tried, and whereby distinction is especially made betwixt Christ's subjects and the seed of the serpent, or the children of the devil; and we have this commandment, 1 John iii. 23. *And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.* Christ gave this commandment of charity or brotherly love to his disciples, when about to leave them, John xiii. 34. 35. *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* This love is plainly distinct from that love which, by the law of nature, we are bound to have to all men, and which is also enjoined us by Jesus Christ: for after the entrance of sin, the Lord laid the foundation of this brotherly love among the woman's seed, in that intimation of his design to put enmity betwixt the two seeds, and our Lord commands his disciples to love one another, *even as he has loved them.* This love is also distinct from that peculiar love that God's peculiar people, the members of the commonwealth of Israel after the flesh, were bound to have toward one another as brethren by the law, as it was delivered to them: for this is a peculiar love among the disciples, Jews or Gentiles, wherewith they love one another, *even as he hath loved them.*

Our Lord calls this his *new commandment.* And it may be called new on these accounts: (1.) Because the love here required has a new object: *Every one that is of the truth.* Every one of the redeemed unto God by the blood of the Lamb, out of every nation, is to be loved with this love, wherewith Christ would have his people to love one another, *even as he hath loved them.* He hath slain the enmity betwixt these two, Jew and Gentile, and hath
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taken them down, and made them up again into one new man in himself. This one new man is the adequate object of this love, and so it is new, Eph. ii. 14. 15. 16. (2.) Because there is a new reason for it: *Even as I have loved you.* 1 John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* 1 John iv. 9. 10. 11. *And this is his commandment to whom the Father hath given authority to execute judgement, because he is the Son of man,* John v. 27. As it was said to the children of Israel, *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;* so here he says, *A new commandment give I unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* (3.) Because obedience to this commandment is a special fruit of the New-Testament Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ conforming us to him in his love to his people: “Therefore,” says he, “as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” And John xv. 12. 13. “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” This is pointed out as the special fruit we bring forth, by “abiding in him, as the branch in the vine,” ver. 4. 5. 8. 10. (4.) Because it is the trying command of the New Testament, whereby the Lord puts a difference betwixt his subjects and the rest of the world: for by means of this he makes “it manifest in their own consciences by his Spirit, that they are his,” 1 John iii. 18.—24. And by this he would have his disciples manifest in the world; therefore he prays to the Father, “that they may be one, that the world may believe that the Father hath sent him,” John xvii. 21. And by this he will distinguish his people from the world, “when he executes judgement at his coming,” Matth. xxv. 31.—46. “And then the world shall know, that the Father hath loved them, as he has loved him,” John xvii.

xvii. 23. So he says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

With respect to this law, putting the difference betwixt the children of God and the children of the devil, believers are called "righteous:" 1 John iii. 7. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous," Jesus Christ is righteous, in the perfect obedience he gave unto the law of eternal life and death, in the room and stead of his people; and this is the righteousness whereby they are justified, and stand for ever as children, in the Father's favour and love, with Jesus Christ his Son, who kept his commandments, and continues in his love. And he "that doth righteousness," is said "to be righteous, even as he is righteous." Righteousness must respect a law, against which if a man sin, he cannot properly be called righteous with respect to that law; and here believers are called righteous with reference unto a law against which they do not sin, ver. 4. 5. 6. "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him." The law with respect to which believers are righteous in doing righteousness, cannot be that with respect to which Christ is perfectly righteous, and they in him their head. For though there be none that give any true obedience to the commands of that law but they, yet they sin against them daily; and so they are not righteous with respect to that law, in their doing the righteousness of it. But the Apostle plainly points here to the Lord's new commandment of brotherly love, as the Lord himself doth, when he says, John xv. 10. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments,

ments, and abide in his love." See ver. 11.—14. 17. "These things I command you, that ye love one another." For the Apostle tells us, 1 John iii. 8. 9. 10. 11. "He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin; because he is born of God. 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. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." It is plainly the enmity and hatred of the devil and his children, against the woman's seed, that is here called *sin*, as it is also John viii. 34. 37. 38. 44. And it is love to the woman's seed, love to our brethren in Christ for his sake, that is here called *righteousness*. But it cannot be the perfection of this love which is in Jesus Christ the righteous, nor such measures of it as are to be found with some eminent saints only, that is here intended: for some of the children of God have it not in this respect. But the Apostle here speaks of a law, against which "none that are born of God can sin, because the seed of God remains in them." And that is the law requiring that we have this love one to another, to difference us from the children of the devil, that have not this love at all, nor can have it, because they are not born of God, but hate and persecute God's children. None of the children of God sin against this law; for "they have purified their souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; being born again of the incorruptible seed of the word, which remaineth in them:" So that they cannot be destitute of this love altogether, as the children of the devil are, nor hate the brethren as they do, and so cannot sin against this differencing law, ver.

12.—15. “Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: 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.”

The more we do of this righteousness, the more full evidence we have of our being the children of God, and enjoy the more of those manifestations of his love that are promised to them that keep his commandments, John xiv. and xv. And because there is so little of the labour of this love which is the fruit of faith, yea so little access to perform the duties of this love in a constant way, through the neglect of Christ’s great institution for that end, Matth. xviii. 15.—20. Acts ii. 41. 42. therefore those manifestations are so little known, as they were at the beginning, when faith and this love was lively, and when it could be said of believers in the churches, whose faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, might be heard of, “After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance,” Eph. i. 13. 14. 15.

3. Christ’s subjects hear his voice in his threatenings: “He that believeth not, shall be damned.” See further these instances of gospel threatenings, Matth. vii. 21.—27. Luke xiii. 24.—27. Matth. xxv. Matth. xviii. 6. 17. 18. 32.—35. John xv. 2. Heb. ii. 1. 2. 3. and vi. 3.—8. and x. 23.—31. 38. and xii. 25. 28. 29. 2 Pet. ii. 20. 21. and the threatenings to the churches, Rev. ii. and iii.

His threatenings are his voice as well as his promises. And if his subjects be not they that hear this voice of his, who are they then that give it a suitable hearing? This voice of Christ is very useful to

his people, to keep them from carnal security and self-confidence, and to move them to hold fast the grace of his kingdom, *whereby they may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.* For even their *God is a consuming fire.* It is far from being an evidence of unbelief or self-righteousness, to be poor, and of a contrite spirit, and to tremble at God's word. And they that hearken not to the voice of Christ's threatenings, while sin and self remain in them, will very soon give little ear to the word of his grace, and be little under the influence of it. Paul knew as much of free grace, and of the everlasting righteousness brought in by Christ, as any in our day; and he did not think that he was doing any thing inconsistent with it, when he kept *under his body, and was bringing it into subjection, lest that by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away,* 1 Cor. ix. 24.—27.

4. Christ's subjects hear his voice in his promises: *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.* See Rom. x. 8.—13. John vi. 37. 1 John v. 11. 12. 13.

This is the great promise of the gospel, wherein all that is promised is the reward of Christ's righteousness, the only foundation of our title to all the promises: and then only can we have solid hopes of enjoying the good things promised, when we look upon them as the reward of his righteousness: yet so as we must always attend to this tenor of the promises, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world. And if ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*

The gospel contains *the promises of this life, and of that which is to come;* and godliness has these promises. See the tenor, first, of the promises of this life: *Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or,*
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What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, Matth. vi. 31.—34. Unto this promise the Apostle seems to refer, when he says, That godliness has the promise of the life that now is. See 1 Tim. iv. 7.—10. We have also something like a promise of this life in our Lord's saying, That there is no man that hath left house and lands—for his sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life, Mark x. 28. 29. 30. But there are other sorts of promises made out unto Christ's subjects in this world; such as, the promise of Christ's being always present with his ministers in teaching, and with his people in observing all things that he commands; and that promise, John xiv. 23. and the promises to the churches. See the promise to Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 10. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation.* We must next consider the tenor of the promise of the life that is to come, which is the main promise of the gospel, the earthly inheritance being now done away, and the promise of Christ's coming in the flesh being now fulfilled. See Rev. iii. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* John xii. 25. 26. Rom. viii. 17. 1 Cor. xv. 8. *Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.* Col. iii. 23. 24. *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.* Rev. xxii. 14. Our Lord says, Matth. vii. *He that heareth my sayings, and doth them,*

is like unto a man which built his house on a rock; and when the storm came, it fell not, because it was founded on a rock. His people cannot perish in the judgement, but will be eternally saved, because founded on him, the only Rock of salvation. But every one founded there keeps his sayings; and so their title to the promised salvation is manifest. He represents himself, Matth. xxv. speaking thus to his people in the judgement: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink," &c. The kingdom was sure to them by an eternal purpose of free grace in Christ. But their keeping of Christ's sayings manifests their interest in this grace; and so the promises run in this tenor.

Grace and duty harmonise pleasantly in the word; but since they have been set at odds by the subtilty of Satan, and the corruptions of men, the glory of both, which appears brightest in their due connection, has been very much darkened; and both contending parties seem to have lost, each of them, a considerable part of the word, with the benefit of it, in the contention. If I durst presume to offer a text to the consideration of both parties, that might be of great use to them, it should be that word, Jam. ii. 22. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." They that have a zeal for works, and magnify them, as it were, upon the disparagement of grace, and Christ's righteousness revealed in the truth of the gospel, and so give out that truth with great caution, as if they were afraid of it, and that will not let themselves or others see much in the gospel, but commands, and promises to the keeping of these commands, had need to understand and see how faith wrought with Abraham's works, when he offered up his son, and to endeavour to make it manifest to others, when they press any duty. Now, the faith that wrought
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oath," Heb. vi. 10.—18. And thus by works our faith would be made perfect, and we would learn "to hold faith and a good conscience; which some putting away, concerning faith make shipwreck," 1 Tim. i. 19.

If our preachers would look with both eyes upon both parts of this same text, *See'st thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?* there would not be so much encouragement given, on the one hand, to the natural inclination that is in us to establish a righteousness of our own, and so much offence to them that *love the truth as it is in Jesus*; nor, on the other hand, so much encouragement to a sort of professors of the truth, that would take joy from the gospel, and triumph in their knowledge of the way of righteousness, and in the exercise of their gifts, while, at the same time, they slight the commandments of Jesus Christ, walk after the flesh, and exercise not *themselves to keep consciences void of offence toward God and toward men*; and will not take up their cross, and follow Christ.

Preachers of natural religion, with the wisdom of words, will be magnified by the Sadducees; and preachers of a zeal of God, but not according to the knowledge of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel, will be magnified by the Pharisees; and preachers of grace, or of faith, without works, the fruits of it, and without exhorting and warning every one how he ought to walk, and to please God, will be delightful to them that boast in *faith without works*; and they that shun not to *declare the whole counsel of God*, will please no party of this world; yet they are *unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish*; and every one that is of the truth, will bear Christ's voice.

But we must proceed now to consider what it is to *hear Christ's voice*. And, 1. To hear Christ's voice is to discern it. Christ's subjects that are of the truth,
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and so have an ear to hear Christ's voice; have another sort of discerning of his voice than other men are capable of. *The natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned.* He takes up all that Christ says, in a natural way, accommodates it all to his natural way of thinking; and so far as he imagines it to be according to that, so far he understands it, and no further: but if he apprehend that there is any thing more in it, he understands it not, *it is foolishness to him,* because it is not according to his wisdom; and so he discerns not the voice of Christ at all. For the things that Christ says, are the things of God's deep wisdom, which man knew not; and which the Spirit, that searcheth all things, reveals not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in words fitted by him to express spiritual things.

The natural man goes about to judge this by his wisdom; for he has no other way of judging; but he that is spiritual, or he that is of the truth, and so has an ear to hear Christ's voice, *judgeth all the things that Christ says; he knows his voice,* understands his meaning, having heard him, and been taught by him, as the truth is in him; he has faith, the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for; the eyes of his understanding are enlightened, *to know what is the hope of God's calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and he is transformed by the renewing of his mind, that he may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; and he knows the terror of the Lord;* so he judges all the things that Christ says. Yet herein he is not subject to man's judgment: for he judgeth of things above all man's wisdom: *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But, says the Apostle, we have the mind of Christ,* 1 Cor. ii. See ver. 13.—16.

They that are of the truth, and *have tasted, that the Lord is gracious, do, as new-born babes, desire the sincere*

sincere milk of the word, and they suck in that sincere milk, *that they may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 1. 2. 3. But others seek the word, and a meaning of it, to answer this and the other corrupt end and design; and they delight in it, as they conceive it suited unto that end: so, if they grow up by it, they grow monsters in religion. They taste not that sincere milk to grow up thereby unto eternal life; they take the word only as it makes for their purpose. And this is the way in all the perverse disputings of them that use the word to serve their party-designs, and their pride, envy, and malice against one another: they rejoice in the word, as it seems to hit their adversary, and as they conceive it makes for their party; but the sincere milk of the word they know not, they love not. However Christ's subjects may be for a time, or in some things, carried out this way, yet this is no mark of his subjects.

They that are of the truth, distinguish Christ's voice: "His sheep follow him; for they know his voice: and a stranger will they not follow; for they know not the voice of strangers," John x. 4. 5. They can distinguish his voice from enthusiastic imaginations, and the language of a false spirit from the language of nature and man's wisdom, and from the doctrines and commandments of men: for though there may be superstition in them, and though they be enslaved in many things to men, and afraid to doubt that their doctrines and commandments are the word of Christ; yet they do not see that glory in man's words that they see in those words of Christ which they discern: "For what is the chaff to the wheat?" Christ's people may be keeping, in notion, and some way in practice, the word of man, and yet have some discerning of, and inclination to observe the word of Christ, directly contrary to what they are keeping of the word of man; though they do not see the inconsistency; and so are driven into great difficulties

culties about keeping the word of Christ and man's word together.

2. Christ's people hear his voice; their consciences are subject to it, they receive it, and embrace it on account of his authority, as the rule of their faith and obedience, of their fears and hopes.

They hear his voice as it is the voice of their Lord Redeemer. They have a sense of his authority in his voice, and their minds and wills are subjected to it. It is enough for them that he says so, without asking any further questions about it; and thus they hear his voice of whom the Father hath said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* Christ hath not subjected the consciences of his subjects to any other authority besides his own; yea, he has discharged his disciples *to call any man master.* He would not have any of his disciples called *Rabbi; because one is their master, even Christ, and all they are brethren,* Matth. xxiii. 8.—12. His ministers, that bring his word to his people, *are not to preach themselves their lords, but Christ Jesus their Lord, and themselves their servants,* in representing the authority of Christ in his word unto them. They have no authority of their own over the consciences of the disciples; and however the disciples may be in many things enslaved even by them, yet Christ hath made them free. And this their slavery is no evidence of their subjection to Jesus Christ: for their subjection to him, evidences itself in a respect to his authority in his word, in opposition to all that stands in competition with it; and though his mind should be many ways mistaken by his subjects, yet a regard to his authority, in holding what they take to be his mind, in opposition to the authority of man, is a better evidence of their hearing his voice, than the observing the things that he says, on the account of no other authority but that of man.

Some seem to receive Christ's word on the account of the reasonableness of what they think he says; and

so it is not his voice they hear, but the voice of their own reason. Some receive what he says, because of impressions made upon them, as they take it, by his Spirit; and they take no further heed to what he says in his word, than as they find impressed upon them: thus they hear not his voice in the scripture-revelation, but the voice of these impressions; and they take not the whole word of Christ as it is his, but the word as they find it impressed, for their rule. Yet the Spirit of Christ is the same Spirit that indited the scriptures; and he that is born of God, heareth the scriptures, and Christ's voice in them; and when the Holy Ghost leads us into all truth, "he brings all things to our remembrance, whatsoever Christ hath said unto us; and he speaks not of himself, but glorifies Christ:" so that they that are under his influence are subjected to the authority of Christ in his word, and receive his word as it is his. Some again receive the things that Christ says, on account of the authority of man; and many hear not the voice of Christ, but the voice of prevailing custom, and the traditions of their fathers; and the voice of the world, the voice of the generality of the wise and learned, or the voice of the godly, goes farther with the most part than the voice of Jesus Christ in his word: for where they find Christ saying any thing in his word, and none saying with him, they cannot hear him. So far as his disciples give way to these things, so far their subjection to him appears not.

They that are subject to Christ's authority in his word, and entertain his voice, as the rule of their faith and obedience, fears and hopes, shew a regard to all that he says, all that he testifies, commands, promises, or threatens. The least thing he says has weight with them; and what he is most in saying, they are most in hearing. They regard all his commandments; and are not as the Pharisees, exceedingly zealous in the least things, which they ought also to do, and passing over *the weightier matters of the law.*

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They do not cut and carve upon the words and commandments of Jesus Christ, to shun what may endanger their worldly interest, and to receive only what they may keep without difficulty and hazard, and what they blindly judge absolutely necessary unto their salvation, or perhaps what they find absolutely necessary to maintain their credit among the party of Christians that they have to do with.

Christ's subjects *delight in the law* of their *Lord after the inward man*, and so they hear his voice without constraint; but there is "another law in their members" continually "warring against the law of their minds;" so that it is no wonder if this their hearing of Christ's voice be very much marred: yet so far as they are of the truth, he is unto them the only Lord of their faith, of their conscience, of sin and duty, of their fear and of their hope. Thus "every one that is of the truth hears his voice."

3. Christ's subjects keep his sayings, and do the things that he says; and so they hear his voice. They believe his testimony, they tremble at his word of threatening, they hope in his word of promise, and they observe to do what he commands.

He is highly offended with them that call him "Lord, and do not the things that he says." Luke vi. 46. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Men may be so far under the influence of his Spirit, as to be thereby enabled to call him *Lord*," 1 Cor. xii. 3. and so be joined with his people in the profession; and yet not do the things that he says: therefore they are called "branches in him, not bearing fruit," John xv. 2. These may be, as far as man's eye sees, doing what he says, and so be accounted his subjects: yet they are not doing the very things he says, but the appearance of them: They do not obey him in that faith which worketh by love, and which is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for; and so, not having root in themselves, they wither, and bring forth

no fruit to perfection. But every one that is of the truth, in the least measure, does, according to that measure, obey the commandments of Jesus Christ.

His subjects are not yet wholly of the truth. There remains a corrupt principle of unbelief and enmity in their souls, while they are in this world, from which the truth in them meets with continual opposition, as it does also from the temptations of Satan and of the world; “so that when they would do good, evil is present with them; and they cannot do the things that they would; yea, the evil that they would not, that they do,” Rom. vii. 19.—24. Gal. v. 17. Therefore all that obedience is very much to be suspected, that meets with no opposition from within a man’s self; and it is no wonder to see a Pharisee going on without difficulty, and very smoothly, in his obedience of the letter, while they that are of the truth, and according to their measure hearing Christ’s voice, find the greatest reason in themselves to cry out, “O wretched man!” and, through the power of temptation, and of the flesh, fall many times, even in the course of their external obedience; which is the reason for Christ’s institution of discipline in the churches of the saints, for the honour of his name, and of his truth in the world: “And the righteous falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked will fall into mischief.” Yet the Pharisee is walking ‘only after the flesh; he has not the Spirit of Jesus, nor the truth, to make head against it; and he is alive without the law; therefore he goes on smoothly in his carnal selfish obedience: but they that are of the truth, notwithstanding of all their escapes and stumblings, are the only persons in the world that move a step in the way of Christ’s commandments. They only are hearty in this obedience, and spiritual, doing the very truth of the things that Christ requires; they only do the things that he says, because he says them, and are honestly aiming at the glory of his name in the doing of them, and at perfection, in obedience to all
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his commandments without exception ; none but they are truly “ denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following Christ ;” and they only sin not against that law whereby the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest.

It is much to be lamented, that, even among them that have more than the common profession of Christian religion, and that have learned some way to call Christ Lord, there appears at this day so little doing of the things that Christ says, so much conformity to a present world, and so little conformity to Jesus Christ, so little self-denial, and patient bearing the cross after him, so little good-will and forgiveness to enemies, and so very little brotherly love, and charity, and mercy to the poor: and these are sad evidences that the truth, as it is in Christ, has either very little possession in our hearts, or that it is not in us, and that we receive not the love of it. Though there be many that renounce the gross profaneness of the publicans and harlots, and the loose principles of the Sadducees, and have learned *to pray long, and even to fast*, and that have a fair shew of giving alms, so as to maintain their credit; yet the truth of Christ’s doctrine, about the impossibility of serving God and Mammon, laying up for ourselves *treasures in heaven, and not on earth, that our hearts may be where our treasure is*, and about seeking *first the kingdom of God, and taking no thought for to-morrow*, and about *giving to the poor*, Matth. vi. Luke xvi. is fully as ridiculous to them unto this day, as it was at first to the Pharisees: Luke xvi. 14. 15. *And the Pharisees also who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.*

But Christ’s sheep hear his voice, and he knows them, and they follow him, and he gives unto them *eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand.*

S E C T. IV.

WE come now to consider the connection betwixt being of the truth, and hearing Christ's voice. And this may be some way cleared to us in considering these following things.

1. Christ's title to rule over us, his authority and right to command us, is manifest in this truth concerning his righteousness revealed in the gospel. Therefore, when he appears in the midst of the throne, as head over all things to the church, and takes the book to loose it, and to order and dispose of all things about the church, Rev. v. we find the redeemed brought in acknowledging him worthy *to take the book, and to open the seals.* And why? *For, say they, thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* The Lord's authority over Israel, and his right to command them, was manifest in his redeeming them from the Egyptian bondage; and much more is his authority and right to govern his people manifest in the eternal redemption he has now wrought for them, which is the subject of this truth of which they are. He is the good Shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep, and has taken it again for them; so they are his own, and they hear his voice, and follow him. They that know him in this truth, will be obliged to own, with Thomas, that he is *their Lord, and their God*; and to reckon, *that they are not their own, but bought with a price; and therefore bound to glorify him in their bodies and spirits, which are his.* For a man to be of this truth, and yet not subject to, nor acknowledge the authority of Christ the Redeemer, is as great an inconsistency as can be thought of.

2. The things he says are all suitable unto this truth, and all his commandments are according to it: "Therefore they that are of this truth must hear his voice." This truth is evidently set forth in all
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the institutions of the gospel, which he commands his people to observe, and in all the New-Testament worship. The preaching of the gospel is the preaching of Christ crucified. Baptism is the washing away of our sins in the blood of Christ, the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and our being buried with him unto death, that like as he was raised up from the dead, we should walk in newness of life; and as many as are baptized into Jesus Christ, are baptized into his death. The Lord's supper evidently sets forth his body broken for us, his blood shed for the remission of sins; and the communion of his disciples in a gospel-church in partaking together, as one body, of that one bread and cup, is the communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; and "therein we shew forth his death till he come." The Christian sabbath is our joyful rest in that work finished by him who is now entered into his rest.

What are our prayers, if they be not our calling on the name of the Lord our righteousness, and asking the Father in his name? And what are our praises, if they be not ascriptions of glory to the Lamb that was slain, and thanksgivings unto the Father by him? And what is all the New-Testament worship, if it be not our drawing near to the Father by one Spirit through him, "who has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross," and our coming into the holiest by his blood, and through the veil of his flesh? The assemblies of his people in the churches, are their gathering together unto him, and in his name, "who is the Lord their righteousness, to see the glory and feel the power of his cross." The government of a gospel-church is a representation of the authority of the great Shepherd of the sheep, that was brought again from the dead, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, unto his sheep: for it is the feeding of his sheep. And the life of the discipline is their agreeing to call on the name of the
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Lord their righteousness, and to ask in his name, that he may do what they thus do in his name. Thus this truth is written upon the institutions of the gospel. Further, all the obedience that Christ requireth of us, is according to this truth; so that it is a “walking in the truth,” 2 John 4. Christ hath shewed us in this truth what is good, in answer to that perplexing question, “What shall I give for the sin of my soul? and wherewithal shall I come before God?” And what he requires of us is very agreeable to that good: He calls us “to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God,” Mic. vi. 6. 7. 8. He becomes our God only in and by this truth; and when he calls us to do justly, and love mercy, it is most agreeable to the revelation of his mercy and justice in this truth: and whereas, in shewing us this good, he stains the pride of all our glory, and glorifies himself exceedingly in our salvation by that sacrifice of his own providing; it is every way agreeable to this, that we “should walk humbly with our God.” All our obedience to Christ is our conformity unto the image and glory of God, as it is represented unto us in this truth; therefore we find the apostles frequently representing the suitability of what they require in Christ’s name unto this truth. And if we look to the great gospel-commandments of “self-denial,” and “bearing the cross, love to enemies, love to one another, as Christ has loved us,” &c. we may easily see how they all relate to this truth; and therefore they that are of the truth, must hear his voice in them. The things that he forbids are the iniquities that he suffered for in his death; and that which he requires is, that we should follow him in that wherein he is our righteousness; and his threatenings are all to move us to cleave fast to this truth, and walk suitably to it; and they will be accomplished on them that slight this truth, and them that are not of it.

3. The most excellent motives unto the obedience that Christ requires, are fetched from this truth, and are contained in it. See 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." We see motives brought from this truth to influence us to our duty in the relations wherein we are placed in the world. See, for instance, Eph. v. 25. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." We may also take notice how strongly the Apostle presses charity, and rich liberality to the poor, by this truth, 2 Cor. viii. 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." If we speak of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the holiness of God, and his wrath due to sin, as a motive to obedience, it is no where to be seen unto such advantage as in this truth; and if we speak of the hope of acceptance with God, and of a reward to encourage us under all the fears and difficulties that may cast up to us about serving God and obeying him, this is no where to be found in the world but in this truth; and if we speak of the pleasure and delight that is to be found in the way of duty, whence flows all that joy but from this truth? or can they that take not rest in this truth, find *Christ's yoke easy, and his burden light?*

Motives brought from this truth are the most powerful; for the revelation of this truth is the great contrivance of infinite wisdom for bringing sinful men to obedience; and therefore it must be effectual in all them who are of this truth. And all other motives without this will be of no force to engage us to do the things that Christ says.

4. In this truth is found a deliverance from, and

the victory over every thing that stands in the way to hinder their keeping the commandments of Jesus Christ, who are of the truth: 1 John v. 3.—6. *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.* In believing this truth, we see a complete victory obtained by Jesus Christ, in his death, over the prince of this world, over all the power of sin, and of the lust of the world, within us, and over all the power of temptation. So that however great and terrible this power of the prince of the world may be to us, and however impossible-like the keeping of the commandments may seem to us thereby; yet, in believing this victory that Christ hath already won, we are partakers with him in it, according to the measure of faith; and so we overcome the power of the world, that stands against the keeping of the commandments of God, and find his *commandments not grievous*. There are many vain pretences unto striving against sin; but *this is the victory over the world, even our faith*: and who is he that overcometh, but he that believeth? The true fight against sin is the fight of faith. The power of the prince of this world is too strong a party for us to contend with, and all our labour against it is but the washing of the Ethiopian; yea, we are not at all striving against it, but labouring to wreath the yoke faster about our own necks, by all our natural efforts after deliverance. But Jesus Christ, by redeeming us from the curse in his death, hath effectually broken the power of the prince of this world, and cast him out. *For the strength of sin is the curse of the law*; and he hath effectually done away that in his death. Now, when we find ourselves

selves pressed hard, and ready to be overwhelmed with the power of the world, we overcome in the belief of this truth. For here we see all this power already broken and completely vanquished, and we are partakers of the victory in believing. And further, we find in this truth all the power of God reconciled, and engaged, by the cross of Christ, for them that believe. And thus faith overcomes the power of the world. This is the good fight of faith. Thus we overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

Our Lord bids them that would bear his yoke and burden, first take rest to their consciences in him, and then take on his yoke: For it will be insupportable to them that take not rest by faith in that redemption which is already wrought by his blood: but unto all them that are of this truth, and find rest in believing, it will be easy and light, and they will find his commandments not grievous: Matth. xi. 28. 29. 30. *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

5. It is by this truth that we are sanctified, and so powerfully inclined and enabled to hear Christ's voice: John xvii. 17. 19. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Compare Heb. x. 10. 14. "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.—For by one offering, he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified." It is the God of peace, God reconciled by the death of Christ, that sanctifies us: 1 Thess. v. 23. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." And therefore when the Apostle tells us, "that every man that is in Christ is a new creature," he declares, that all the things of this new creation "are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ; making

making him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 17. 18.—21. And when he prays that Christ's people may be made perfect in every good work, he prays thus, Heb. xiii. 20. 21. "The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.

We receive the spirit of sanctification from the slain Lamb, and by the hearing of faith; and that faith whereby we are sanctified, is "faith in the blood of Jesus;" that faith whereby we get an inheritance among them that are sanctified, is the very same faith whereby we receive remission of sins; the power that sanctifies us is no other power but the power of the cross of Christ; and the glory to which we are conformed by the Spirit in beholding it, is the glory that shines in Christ crucified; and we are raised up to walk in newness of life, no otherwise but together with Christ, and by the power of his resurrection, "who was delivered for our offences, and raised for our justification." and by that blood of the everlasting covenant, by virtue of which he came again from the dead: and therefore they seek sanctification where it is not to be found, who seek it not in this truth; and they seek it in vain, who seek it not by that belief of this truth; whereby we receive the remission of sins, and are justified. But every one that is of this truth is sanctified by it, and so inclined to hear Christ's voice.

6. In this truth we have set before us the most powerful and engaging pattern of obedience. There have been many flourishing discourses about the example of Christ, and about following him as a pattern; and, no doubt, he is every where set before us in the gospel to be imitated, and copied after by

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us: but we cannot look upon his example unto any advantage, if we do not view it, as it lies in this truth; and if it be set up any way unto the disparagement of this truth, the glory of it is destroyed. There are these two things that they would do well to advert to in the example of Christ, who are in good earnest to copy after it. 1. They must look upon the man Christ Jesus, who was obedient unto the death, as a truly divine person, and behold his glory, as the glory of God manifest in the flesh: so they will find him an unerring pattern, and have confidence to follow him absolutely without any fear of idolatry. 2. They must look upon his obedience unto the death, as that very righteousness, whereby they are to be justified in the sight of God, and intitled to the inheritance of children; and so they will find themselves under the influence of his redeeming love, and the power of his cross, to engage them to copy after him, and will find the greatest encouragement and liberty in following him. It will be no bondage nor slavish task for them to follow him in his obedience to the death who have this view of it. The Apostle Peter sets it, before us in this view, 1 Pet. ii. 21. 24. *For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:— Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.*

Thus Christ's example is set before us in the truth, to which he bears witness; and thus it is powerful to conform us unto itself: *For we all with open face, beholding (in the gospel) the glory of the Lord Christ, are changed into the same image, by the Spirit of the Lord; even that same Spirit that dwells in him, and furnished him in his whole obedience unto the death. He makes us partakers of the grace of the man Christ Jesus; and being thus partakers in his grace, we copy after him in his obedience. For the like grace produces the like obedience. So we, beholding the*
glory

glory of the Word made flesh, full of grace, do all receive of his fullness, grace, answerable to the grace that is in him; which makes our obedience answerable to his, according to the measure of the grace received from him. And we beholding the glory of his obedience and sufferings, *are changed from glory to glory, by the Spirit of glory* that rested upon him, in his obedience, and through which he offered up himself; and this according to the measure of our beholding his glory.

Christians cannot but acknowledge, there is a beauty and glory in his obedience. But do we see no glory in his sufferings, which accompanied his obedience from first to last? And is there no beauty, no glory, in being conformed to him in his sufferings, and in his being despised and rejected of men, *a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief*, in his poverty and want, his shame and disgrace, and his painful and shameful death, and in his patient enduring the cross, and despising the shame? Is not that suitable language for Christians, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. It became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings?* And it well becomes them who are led to glory by him, to go forth unto him bearing his reproach, and to follow their crucified Captain, bearing the cross; which is the good old way of following him, that had a certain issue in eternal glory. And whatever the men of this world may think, it is the greatest glory we are capable of in this world, the greatest privilege we can be admitted to, to be conformed unto Christ in his sufferings. And *every one that is of the truth*, will, according to his measure, breathe after it; and be something of Paul's mind, when he says, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things loss,—that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conform-
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able unto his death ; if, by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

“ Now unto him that died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living ; to that living One that became dead, and is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hell and death, be everlasting glory and dominion.” *Amen.*

QUERIES

QUERIES put to Mr Glas, by the synod of Angus and Mearns, with his ANSWERS; in April 1728.

Query 1. **I**S it your opinion, That the Christian magistrate has no more power concerning church-matters than a private believer? or not?

Answer. If the church be of this world, or if it be national, and established by the laws of the kingdoms of this world with civil functions, and if it have jurisdiction over the magistrate's subjects in their civil rights, then the magistrate's power must be in and about the matters of such a church; but in the kingdom of heaven, or in the church of Christ, which is not of this world, the magistrate's power, whether he be Christian or not, has no place.

Quer. 2. Is it your opinion, That earthly power, or power of the magistrate, ought not at all to be employed for advancing the kingdom of Christ? or not?

Ans. The kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, cannot be advanced by earthly power, or the power of the magistrate, any otherwise than as all things are working together for the advancement of it.

Quer. 3. Is it your opinion, That it is unlawful to enact laws, with penalties, in favour of religion? or to defend the true religion by arms? or not?

Ans. The Lord Jesus Christ hath not annexed civil functions to his laws, and the true religion cannot be defended by arms, as may the natural and civil rights and liberties of mankind: it must be defended another way, Eph. vi. 11. 12. 13. 2 Cor. x. 4.

Quer. 4. Is it your opinion, That no argument can be drawn for the Christian magistrate's acting for the reformation of religion, and suppressing of false worship, from the examples of magistrates under the Old Testament? or not?

Ans. It is my opinion, till I see otherwise.

Quer.

Quer. 5. Is it your opinion, That the kingly office of the kings of Judah and Israel was an ecclesiastical office? or not?

Ans. It is my opinion, That the kingly office of David, and the kings that sat upon his throne, was ecclesiastical.

Quer. 6. Is it your opinion, That the magistrate ought not to give civil encouragement to good Christians, living in his dominions, more than any other good subjects? or not?

Ans. Civil encouragement given by the magistrate respects his good subjects as such.

Quer. 7. Is it your opinion, That the countenance of civil authority to the church is a hindrance to religion or reformation? or not?

Ans. It is not my opinion; but I have thought, that the encouragement given by Constantine and his successors to the clergy, however they designed it, served to raise Antichrist to his throne.

Quer. 8. Is it your opinion, That the magistrate ought to give liberty to heretics, and all false teachers, to perform their worship, and spread their opinions, and hinder none of them, if they carry otherwise as good subjects? or not?

Ans. The magistrate can punish none that carry as good subjects.

Quer. 9. Is it your opinion, That the church of Israel was but a typical church; and God's covenant with them was but typical and temporary, promising nothing but earthly blessings, and a carnal inheritance? or not?

Ans. That church which consisted of all Israel according to the flesh, was a type of that church which consists of all the Israel according to the spirit; and that typical church enjoyed only earthly blessings, and an earthly inheritance, by virtue of the covenant at Sinai, which could not give them spiritual blessings, and the heavenly inheritance, any other way than as it was subservient unto the better covenant established

on better promises, by which all true believers among them obtained eternal blessedness.

Quer. 10. Is it your opinion, That the old Sinai covenant made with the church, was but a type, figure, or shadow of the new covenant that God was to make with his New-Testament church? or not?

Ans. The nation taken into covenant with God at Sinai, was a type of the heavenly nation related unto him in the new covenant; the redemption of that people out of Egypt, was a type of the eternal redemption of all the people of God by Jesus Christ; Moses, the mediator of that old covenant, was a type of Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant; the inheritance belonging to that covenant or testament, was a type of the inheritance in the New Testament; the blood wherewith that old covenant or testament was dedicated, was a type of the blood of Christ sealing the new covenant; and that old covenant, which is made old, Heb. viii. and is cast out, with the people covenanted, Gal. iv. even that first testament dedicated with the blood of beasts, was a type or pattern of the new covenant or testament in the blood of Jesus Christ. Heb. ix. 15.—23.

Quer. 11. Is it your opinion, That the commands or precedents under the old testament, for national covenanting, were not moral, but typical, earthly, and Jewish, and ought not to be imitated by any Christian nation? or not?

Ans. I know no nation truly Christian, but the holy nation, the kingdom of Christ; which is not of this world, and is gathered out of all nations: this is the only nation bringing forth the fruits of the kingdom of God, and with this nation there is an everlasting covenant.

Quer. 12. Is it your opinion, That it was unwarrantable for our ancestors to carry on reformation by national covenanting? or not?

Ans. It is my opinion, That the covenants commonly called the *national covenant*, and the *solemn league*

League and covenant, were without warrant in God's word; and that all the true reformation that has been in these lands, was carried on by the word and Spirit of the Lord Jesus, by the New Testament.

Quer. 13. Is it your opinion, That those who suffered in the late times, for adhering to such national covenant engagements, were so far unenlightened? or not?

Ans. It is my opinion; while, at the same time, I highly honour and value them, and the light they had, and their sufferings for Christ.

Quer. 14. Is it your opinion, That these covenant-engagements have a tendency to lead men off from that foundation that God hath laid in Zion? or not?

Ans. It is my opinion, That the founding of church-communion, upon that extensive uniformity, which is the great scope of the covenants, national and solemn league, had a tendency to lead off men from Christ, the foundation that God has laid in Zion, and the corner-stone, in whom all the building of God is fitly framed together; and I judge it to be the duty of all his people, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and to forbear one another in love, in their differences, about several parts of the foresaid uniformity.

Quer. 15. Is it your opinion, That there is no warrant for a national church under the New Testament? or not?

Ans. It is my opinion: for I can see no churches instituted by Christ, in the New Testament, beside the universal, but congregational churches; neither do I see, that a nation can be a church, unless it could be made a congregation, as was the nation of Israel; and my opinion about the church seems to me to agree with the account our reformers have given of it, in the Scottish Confession, sworn to in the national covenant, to which I here refer.

Quer. 16. Is it your opinion, That the members of
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the visible church are only those who have the credible marks of regeneration? or not?

Ans. The members of the visible church are only those whom our Lord points out to us, and commands us to love, with a peculiar love, in his new commandment, John xiii. 34. 35.

Quer. 17. Is it your opinion, That the body of believers, or church-members, have a right to determine the admission or non-admission of persons to the Lord's table, together with the ministers and elders? or not?

Ans. None can be admitted to communion in the Lord's supper, with a congregation of Christ, without the consent of that congregation, and there must be a profession of mutual brotherly love in them that partake together in that ordinance.

Quer. 18. Is it your opinion, That the admission of unbelievers to the Lord's table doth pollute the ordinance unto fellow-believing communicants, and hinder saints from enjoying communion with the Lord, and with one another, in that ordinance? or not?

Ans. The admission of visible unbelievers to that ordinance mars the visible communion of saints in it; and so far as their communion with the Lord, in the ordinance, is connected with that visible communion, so far it mars that also.

Quer. 19. Is it your opinion, That a single congregation of believers, with their pastor, are not under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and authority of superior church-judicatures, nor censurable by them, either as to doctrine, worship, or practice? or not?

Ans. A congregation or church of Jesus Christ, with its presbytery, is, in its discipline, subject to no jurisdiction under heaven.

Quer. 20. Is it your opinion, That a single congregation of believers hath power, not only to chuse, but to ordain their own pastors? or not?

Ans. If by ordination be meant the laying on of hands, it is not my opinion.

Quer. 21. Is it your opinion, That it is unwarrantable to take parents engaged to educate their children,

dren, when baptized, according to the confession of faith of this church? or not?

Ans. It is my opinion.

Quer. 22. Is it your opinion, That Christ, by his ascension, hath translated the place of the church's worship from earth to heaven, and the seat of the church's power? or not? And, if it be, In what sense do you understand it?

Ans. It is my opinion, That heaven itself, where Christ our High-Priest is entered, and where he sits ruling on the throne of his father David, is what we now have, instead of the worldly sanctuary and the holy places made with hands, and what we have instead of mount Zion, where David's throne was set.

Quer. 23. Is it your opinion, That a minister's preaching the necessity of repentance, and a mourning frame of heart, in order to fit people for approaching to the Lord's table, is to make them seek for a righteousness of their own? or not?

Ans. It is not my opinion; if he do not preach up repentance, and a mourning frame, instead of Christ's righteousness, which is to destroy repentance and a mourning frame.

Quer. 24. It is your opinion, That because God or his Spirit doth all for us in the business of salvation, that therefore we are to do nothing? or not?

Ans. God forbid that it should be my opinion.

Quer. 25. Is it your opinion, That the practice of our ancestors, at the reformation and revolution, in defending the true religion by arms, against the unjust oppression of Papists and tyrants, was unwarrantable? or not?

Ans. The Protestant cause, (so far as the sword is concerned in it), and the revolution, is a civil, not properly an ecclesiastical cause; and a most righteous cause it is, as it stands in opposition to antichristian tyranny, and oppression of the consciences and just liberties of men; and thus it is the common cause of mankind against slavery of soul and body.

Quer.

Quer. 26. Do you think yourself obliged, in conscience, to teach and publish these your opinions, differing from the received doctrine of this church, unto the people? or not?

Ans. I think myself obliged in conscience to declare every truth of Christ, and keep nothing back, but to speak all the words of this life, and to teach his people to observe all things whatsoever he commands, so far as I can understand; and that, notwithstanding of others their differing from me, and my being exposed to hazard in the declaring of them.

A query separately put to Mr Glas by the synod.

Considering that in Mr Glas's answers to the proposal, If he did adhere to his former subscription of the Confession of Faith and *Formula*, and would again renew it? he says, his scruples against signing are mainly the two therein mentioned: they think it convenient that he be interrogate, If he hath freedom in his mind to sign all the other articles of the Confession of Faith, as the confession of his faith?

Mr Glas's answer.

I have not freedom to refuse any thing in our Confession, but what relates to the passage already mentioned, in the chapter concerning Christian liberty, and liberty of conscience, and in the chapter concerning synods.

An explication of that PROPOSITION contained in Mr Glas's answer to the synod's queries, "A congregation or church of Jesus Christ, with its presbytery, is, in its discipline, subject to no jurisdiction under heaven."

TOGETHER WITH

A LETTER concerning communion in the Lord's Supper. In answer to some considerations on that subject sent to the author by a friend.

Isa. iv. 5. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

[First published in the year 1728.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

IF any shall find themselves obliged to appear against what is here advanced, it is intreated, that they bring with them no other authority but that of the word of God alone; and that they do not satisfy themselves with referring to what others have done before them, but fairly bring forth what light they themselves have to offer, from the word of God, against what is here said, and against that only; and, further, that they forbear metaphysical wrangling, and charging the author with any erroneous opinion not expressly owned by him in these papers; and this, if they would not lose their labour, for clearing the truth, and convincing those whom they judge erroneous.

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The explication of the before-mentioned proposition.

SOME are at a loss how to understand this proposition, and how far a practice suitable to it may take place without prejudice to the present establishment; and therefore something needs to be said, 1. For clearing the sense of the proposition. 2. For shewing how far the intendment of it is without prejudice to the present establishment.

As to the *first* of these, we must again consider, 1. What may be meant by a congregation or church of Jesus Christ? 2. What by its presbytery? 3. What by its discipline? and, 4. How it is said to be in its discipline subject to no jurisdiction under heaven?

If these things be cleared, there will be no remaining difficulty about the sense of the proposition. But before we proceed to them, we must take notice, that as the query to which this proposition is an answer, took its rise from Mr Glas's declining to affirm, that the constitution of the church of which the *Formula* speaks, is founded in the word of God; so the proposition respects no other thing but that word of God, and what appears to the author of the proposition from thence: and therefore unto that word we must have respect, in explaining the proposition. And whence should we have our notions of the church, if it be not from scripture-revelation? Or, if this matter be no way described or determined there, who then should describe or determine it to us? But if there be any that think Christ hath not appointed any church-order or government, nor laid down any plan of it, in his word, and therefore men may make what model of it they think most convenient; or, if there be that think the plan laid down by Christ and his apostles, concerned only the first age or ages of Christianity, and that it is in the power of more advanced ages to alter it for their own conveniency, as seems meet to their wisdom; such will not see the
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need of troubling their heads with this proposition; or any explication of it: and therefore, without troubling ourselves further with them, we shall proceed to explain the several branches of the proposition by the light of scripture-revelation, which will no doubt be very agreeable to the authors of the query, who have subscribed to this, as a great and important truth, *That the government of the church is founded in the word of God*, and reckon it a crime of a very heinous nature to alter their opinions on this head.

1. The first thing in the proposition that comes to be cleared is, *A congregation or church of Jesus Christ.*

And, 1: Here it is obvious, that the words *congregation* and *church* are made of the same import. Yet it is a matter very insignificant what they be in any human proposition; but we are told, *Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* And therefore the import of God's word on this subject must be diligently sought after; and if the proposition has added nothing to his words here, it will be clear, and no lie in this part of it.

The word *church*, [*ἐκκλησία*,] when it is used in scripture to signify another thing than a Christian congregation, it yet signifies a congregation. Thus that unlawful assembly at Ephesus brought together into the theatre against Paul by the craftsmen, is called *ἐκκλησία*; a church, Acts xix. 32. 41.; and ver. 39. it signifies an assembly. Thus we see the use of the word in other cases.

But this word is ordinarily applied in scripture unto a more sacred use; and then indeed it sometimes signifies the body assembling, and sometimes the assembly of that body; but still a congregation. The whole body of the disciples at Corinth is called the church, 1 Cor. xiv. 23. And we find the assembly of that body also called the church, 1 Cor. xi. 18.

20.—*When ye come together in the church. When ye come together into one place. See, to this purpose, 1 Cor. xiv. 34. 35. Let your women keep silence in the churches.—And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. The women were members of the church at Corinth, whether at home or in the assembly: so that the different assemblies of that same body of men and women that came together into one place, from time to time, to eat the Lord's supper, and to teach and hear, are called churches: Let your women keep silence in the assemblies.—If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the assembly.*

The whole nation of Israel is called a *church*, Acts vii. 38. But that was a congregation, and had one place of worship, the tabernacle of the congregation. The catholic church of Christ, his holy nation and kingdom, the antitype of that church of Israel, is also a congregation, having one place of worship, where they all assemble by faith, and hold communion: and when all the members of it are fully gathered in, they will be one glorious assembly. We find it called the *general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven*, Heb. xii. 22. 23.

It may be a question, if all the disciples of Christ throughout the world be called the church, any otherwise than as they appear, and, in the judgement of charity, are reckoned to be of this “general assembly and church of the first-born?”

But the proposition plainly speaks of a particular “church of Christ,” wherein this “general assembly” is someway visible; such as the church in Jerusalem, the church at Antioch, the church at Corinth, the church at Ephesus, &c. If these churches appear to have been no more but congregations, or companies assembling together in one place, it will then be manifest, that, throughout the word of God,
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the word *church*, in this matter, is of the same use as in the proposition; and if this appear to have been the case in Jerusalem, there will be no great ground of needful dispute about the rest.

Before we proceed to inquire into this, it may be observed, that we do not find the officers or representatives of any church or churches, or any congregation or assembly of them, called *the church*; but we find the people distinguished from them, and called *the church*: Acts xv. 22. "It pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church." Acts xiv. 23. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church." Acts xx. 17. 28.—"He sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.—Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God."—By these and such like places, it appears, that the proposition speaks in scripture-style, when it says *a church of Jesus Christ, with its presbytery*. It is true, that both flock and overseers are frequently called *the church*; but it cannot be made manifest, that the overseers or representatives of the flock or flocks are ever called *a church*, as it is manifest, that the whole flock, the multitude, the *πλήθος*, or full body of the disciples, when spoken of distinctly from the overseers, is called *the church*. The *church-representative*, as it is called, is a thing altogether foreign to the scripture-style; and the use that has been made of it in after ages, shews the wisdom of God in forbearing to afford any encouragement to it, in his word, and cutting off from us all pretences unto any authority from his word, for our own inventions.

Now, it cannot well be denied by them that believe there is a plan of the constitution, and order of the church laid down in the scriptures, that the church in Jerusalem, setting aside what may be shewed to be extraordinary, is a pattern for the constitution and order of all the churches of Christ: and

therefore they who contend for the divine right of that church described in the *Formula*, appeal constantly to the church at Jerusalem, judging their great strength lies there. Here then we must come for the decision of this question, Whether the churches of Christ be only congregations? And the whole of this cause turns upon this, Whether the church in Jerusalem was many congregations united in one common presbytery? or, Whether it was but one congregation assembling from time to time in one place? And though there might be many meetings of disciples in Jerusalem, yet if the whole body, called *the church*, assembled together in one place from time to time?

They that contend for many congregations united in their common overseers, insist mainly upon the multitude of disciples there; from which they infer, it was impossible they could all be one congregation.

It is true, there were very great numbers converted in Jerusalem by the gospel, and many disciples of Christ in Jerusalem; as these passages shew, Acts i. 15. "The number of the names together were about a hundred and twenty." Acts ii. 41.—"And the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls;" and, ver. 47. "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts iii. 11. "And as the lame man which was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering." Acts iv. 4.—"Many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." Acts v. 14. "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Acts vi. 1. 7. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied,—and the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." All this is before the dispersion
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by the persecution that arose about Stephen, Acts viii. 1. and xi. 19. After that dispersion, we find James and the elders saying to Paul, Acts xxi. 20. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law."

Now, besides that it cannot be made appear, that all the multitudes were members of the church at Jerusalem*, the inference that is made from these accounts of the numbers is plainly beside the scope of the Holy Ghost in speaking of the numbers, which is not to shew, that the disciples and church-members in Jerusalem could not be one congregation, but many, under one common presbytery. There is not the least intimation of such a scope: but the plain scope of his speaking of the numbers is, to shew the great power of the grace of the Lord Jesus by the gospel, and the accomplishment of the Old-Testament prophecies, in gathering sinners unto him. If we had but the least hint of their being divided into several congregations, then the inference would have the more weight; but that seems to be a thing much avoided, in the account we have of the church at Jerusalem. We find a considerable difficulty arose from the multiplication of the number of the disciples in that church, Acts vi.; and it may be thought it would have been a very good expedient, to have divided them into several congregations, for remedying that evil that arose from their numbers. But what do the apostles of Christ under the direction of the Holy Ghost? They call the multitude of the disciples unto them, and seven deacons are chosen for serving tables to the whole multitude in common. And they that insist upon this inference from the number of the disciples in that church, allow no place for deacons but in a congregation. They are also obliged to own, that there were not dif-

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* See Clarkson's primitive Episcopacy.

ferent fixed congregations in Jerufalem, but that they affembled in different places promifcuoufly, and were all under the common oversight of the apoftles acting as elders, and afterward of the elders bearing part of the burthen with the apoftles. But this is to give up the caufe of different fixed congregations under a common prefbytery, and to ftrike out feffions; and makes the church at Jerufalem fomething very near akin to one congregation. They that reafon from the conftitution and order of the church in Jerufalem, to fhew what is of divine right in this matter, are bound ftill to follow what they take to have been the order in that church; and not to change it, by erecting feffions under the jurifdiction of a prefbytery in different fixed congregations. Yet this inference from the number of the difciples in that church, howfoever wide, might be tolerable, if it were not crofs to plain texts, fhewing that the church in Jerufalem was a congregation. And it is not a decent way of treating the fcripture, to draw long confequences from texts that have another fcope, contrary to plain texts againft thofe confequences; or to explain clear open fcriptures, by confequences from other texts that do not appear to have thefe confequences in their fcope; and thus to explain away the plain obvious fenfe of thefe clear fcriptures. This would not be a fair way of treating a human writing. And there muft be fomething elfe than the influence of fcripture-light, and a regard to fome other thing than the confifting of the fcripture with itfelf, at the bottom of this way of doing.

Now, let us fee what the Holy Ghoft fays exprefly of the multitude of difciples in the church at Jerufalem. He tells us, (and this is a fhort fum of the State of the church in Jerufalem), Acts ii. 41. 42. *The fame day were added unto them above three thoufand fouls. And they continued ftedfaftly in the apoftles doctrine and fellowfhip, and in breaking of bread, and*
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in prayers. ver. 44. And all that believed were together *. ver. 46. And they continued daily with one accord † in the temple. ver. 47. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts iv. 31. 32. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together. And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul. Acts v. 12. 13. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch ‡. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. Acts vi. 1. 2. 3. 5. 6. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews. Then the twelve called the multitude§ of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not meet that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you sevenmen of honest report,—whom we may appoint over this business. And the saying pleased

* ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ. which is sometimes translated *in one place*. And I know not if that phrase occurs any where in the New Testament in another signification. See those places where it is found, 1 Cor. xiv. 23. 1 Cor. xi. 20. Acts ii. 1. and iii. 1. Luke xvii. 35.

† ἁμῶθυμαδον Neither seems this word to be used in the New Testament, but in the case of more or fewer concurring personally in the same action. See those texts, Acts i. 14. and ii. 1. and iv. 24. and v. 12. and vii. 57. and viii. 6. and xii. 20. and xv. 25. and xviii. 12. Rom. xv. 5. 6. 7.

‡ Here the Holy Ghost tells us expressly of the place where they all assembled with one accord, Solomon's porch. Against this it is said, That it was impossible for Solomon's porch to hold them all. But they that so flatly contradict the testimony of the Holy Ghost, must own, if they will believe him in any case, that the place now under that name was greater than the porch of old built by Solomon: for by comparing chap. iii. 11. with chap. iv. 4. we see that two thousand at least were converted in that place, by that sermon, and these were not all they that heard the word there. But if they who would make the numbers so great that they could not be one assembly, will have the number converted by that sermon, in that porch, to be five thousand, they must also acknowledge that this same porch held more than five thousand.

§ τὸ πλῆθος.

pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, &c. whom they set before the apostles. Acts xxi. 18. 22. The day following, Paul went in with us to James; and all the elders were present. And they said unto him, The multitude † must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Acts xv. 4. 5. 6. 12. 13. 22. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders.—But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying.—And the Apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.—Then all the multitude ‡ kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul.—And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me.—Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas.

What now should be the scope of the Spirit of God, in telling us of all that believed; the multitude of them that believed; the multitude of the disciples; the whole church; their being together, or in one place; their continuing with one accord, or in personal communion in the temple, and in Solomon's porch; and their being a separate body there, the rest not daring to join themselves to them; their joining all together in the choice of deacons to serve them in the matter of their common charity; and joining with the apostles and their elders in sending letters to Antioch; and all this without ever giving us the least hint of their being divided into many congregations? Does he thus constantly speak of them as one undivided body, assembling frequently and ordinarily in one place for the worship of God,
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† *πληθος.*

‡ *ἡ αὐτὴ τὸ πλῆθος.* See Lauder on the divine institution of bishops, having churches consisting of, &c. p. 17.

and all matters of common concern to them, and leave us to make out a constitution and order of that church, which should be followed, as a plan laid down by the Holy Ghost for after ages, and this from the number of the disciples its being so great, that the church of Jerusalem could not be as he seems expressly to say? It were more agreeable to a due regard to the scriptures of truth, to say something for reconciling the scripture-account of the nature of the church in Jerusalem, with the numbers of disciples there, than to use an indecent freedom with the plain words of the Holy Ghost, to reconcile them with our own distant consequences, drawn from words spoken by him, beside his scope in these words.

And to this good purpose it is observable, that there were some things someway extraordinary in the church at Jerusalem, by reason of which a greater multitude could be one congregation there than in other places, where we read of churches of Christ in the New Testament. As, 1. The communion of goods among them. Acts ii. 44. 45. 46. *And all that believed——had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.——And breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart. And Acts iv. 32. 34. 35. And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.* By this communion of goods, they were a body of people living upon a common stock, and had access to be much together, and to be well acquainted; and were not hindered, by their ordinary employments, from close communion in their private

and public meetings, and from continuing daily with one accord in the temple. For thus they seem to have given up themselves wholly unto the business of their communion in the worship of God, and in the mutual duties of brotherly love, and in spreading the gospel. This was extraordinary: for the case was not the same in other churches; where the disciples laboured, for most part, in their ordinary employments through the week, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. and assembled ordinarily on the Lord's day.

2. They had the conveniency of the temple for a meeting-place, where it was free to all sorts and sects of the Jews to assemble, without trouble or molestation, even from the Romans, if they did not disturb their government, or make any uproar. The members of the church were all Jews, that had not yet forsaken the observation of the ceremonies of Moses' law. And as it is plain, they preached openly in and about the temple; so the Christian institutions of baptism, and the eating of bread and drinking of wine in the Lord's supper, were like to some usages among the Jews, and could not occasion greater offence to the unbelieving Jews, than the preaching of the gospel, and the great conversions thereby. We have seen before, that they were a separate body, in some of their meetings in the temple; and it is also observable, that the people not yet joined to the church, and that durst not join themselves unto them, magnified them; and that they had favour with all the people for some time, Acts v. 11.—14. and Acts ii. 47.

When the persecution became so hot, that they could not assemble with one accord in the temple, they were so scattered abroad, that it cannot be shewed there remained any more in Jerusalem, during the persecution, than might assemble in some private place: neither, after the heat of that persecution was over, can it be shown, that there was any greater multitude in the church at Jerusalem, than such as
might,

might, and whom it behoved to come together in one place, Acts xxi. 18.—22. For though James and the elders speak to Paul of many thousands of Jews which believed; yet they do not tell that these thousands were in the church at Jerusalem: for by that time there were many other churches of believing Jews throughout all Judea, Acts ix. 31. Gal. i. 22. occasioned by Paul's persecuting, wasting, and scattering the church at Jerusalem, and those distinct from the church in Jerusalem, and many believing Jews through the world, that came to the feast.

It is observable, that when the multitude became so great, and the persecution such, that they could not conveniently assemble with one accord in one place, it was so ordered, they were scattered abroad, and other churches made out of them. And such a great multitude of disciples in Jerusalem being kept together, till then assembling with one accord in the temple, without any insinuation of its being divided into distinct congregations united in a presbytery, makes way for an inference of this nature, That the Holy Ghost, laying down a plan in the church at Jerusalem for all other churches of Christ, kept that great multitude in the state of a congregation, till it could no more be so; and then ordered things so, that it was scattered abroad, and other new churches erected after the fashion of it.

3. That great multitude was all of one heart and soul. The unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace and brotherly love, was there in its very prime; and the gift of tongues was there in exceeding abundance, with all gifts necessary unto mutual edification. For the members of that church were furnished and trained up there for spreading the gospel through the world: and the multitude was under the oversight and guidance of all the apostles of Christ. So that no objection, arising from the unwieldiness of such a great body of men, or from the difference of languages among them, can shake the truth of their

being all one congregation, assembling from time to time with one accord in one place.

There might be manifold meetings of disciples in Jerusalem; but it seems pretty plain, that the body of disciples, called *the church*, could, and did frequently assemble with one accord in one place; and so was but one congregation.

Thus we find the words *church* and *congregation* of the same import in Jerusalem. And if this was the case there, we may expect to find it so in other places.

The first church of the Gentiles was at Antioch. The disciples there seem to have been brought into church-order by Barnabas,—Acts xi. from ver. 22.: and we are told, ver. 26. that he and Paul *assembled themselves a whole year with the church*. And, Acts xiv. 26. 27. when they returned to Antioch from *the work which they had fulfilled*, it is said, *they gathered the church together, and rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles*. Acts xv. 30. *When they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle*. The church at Corinth was a numerous church, but still one congregation, and a church of the same kind with that at Cenchrea. See chap. xi. of the first epistle directed unto the church of God at Corinth, ver. 18. 20, 22.—*When ye come together in the church, I hear there be divisions among you.—When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper,*" (or, ye cannot eat the Lord's supper.) *What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God?* Chap. xiv. 23. *If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?*

The church at Ephesus is much spoke of in this matter, and the numbers of the converts there insisted on, the same way as in the case of Jerusalem, to
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shew that it behoved the church there to consist of many congregations united in a presbytery. That church, when first erected, consisted of no great number, Acts xix. 7. 9. And it is true, that, from that time, the success of the gospel at Ephesus was very great. Paul's continuance there for the space of two years, gave occasion to all the Proconsular Asia to hear the word of the Lord Jesus, ver. 10. So that the growth and prevalency of the word of God there, ver. 28. furnished matter for the seven famous churches of Asia, ver. 26. whereof this of Ephesus was one; and, without question, it was a church of the same kind with the other six; and it appears from the latter end of the xix. chapter of the Acts, that all the town of Ephesus was very far from being converted to the faith.

When Paul, on his journey, calls the elders of that church to Miletus, he speaks to them as the overseers of one congregation, Acts xx. 28. *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* If the church at Ephesus had been many congregations united in a presbytery, it would have been a way of speaking very agreeable thereunto to have said, *Take heed to yourselves, and the flocks over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers:* and this would have been reckoned a very strong argument for a plurality of congregations under a presbytery. But this way of speaking is still avoided in the writings of the New Testament. Here we find the disciples of Christ at Ephesus distinguished from the presbytery, (which is that whereby some would make many congregations one church), and in this distinction from the presbytery called all one flock and church: *Take heed to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.* So that here was one flock, one congregation; not many flocks, not many churches or congregations, under the oversight of the presbytery at
Ephesus.

Ephesus. And this was the church at Ephesus, the saints and faithful at Ephesus, all builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, Eph. ii. 22. In this state remained the church at Ephesus for a long time after, as they that have been looking into antiquity have told us*, all communicating and praying together in one place.

It is true, the other churches had not the conveniency of the temple for a meeting-place, as had that first church at Jerusalem: but they had *large upper rooms*; as we find the church at Troas assembled to partake of the Lord's supper *in an upper room*, where there were many lights, and some sat in windows, Acts xx. 6. 7. 8. 9. And it is probable that Aquila and Priscilla, great instruments in promoting the kingdom of Christ, kept such a house, where-ever they dwelt, as was a fit meeting-place for the church in that place. So we find Paul advising the church at Rome to salute Aquila and Priscilla, probably then at Corinth, with the church in their house; and writing to the Corinthians from some other place, he tells them, that *Aquila and Priscilla salute them, with the church in their house*, Rom. xvi. 1.—5. 1 Cor. vi. 19. We also read of one Nymphas, whom Paul desires the Colossians to salute, with the church in his house; which was probably some one or other of the Asian churches, perhaps Laodicea itself, Col. vi. 15. And Philemon had a church in his house, Philem. ver. 2. He seems to have been some great man.

Upon this head of the scripture-language about the church, it will not be easy otherwise to satisfy any man's conscience, how it is that the Holy Ghost, when speaking of all the disciples of Christ, in a nation or province, that could not assemble ordinarily in one place, so constantly abstains from calling them the church of such a nation, or province, or one church by themselves; but says, the brethren or saints
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* See King's inquiry into the constitution, life, &c. chap. 2.

in such places, Acts xv. 23. 2 Cor. i. 1. and the churches of Galatia, Gal. i. 2. the churches of Macedonia, 2 Cor. viii. 1. the churches of Asia, 1 Cor. xvi. 19.; but when speaking of the disciples of Christ in a city or town, which might assemble together ordinarily in one place, calls them a *church*, saying, the church of Antioch, the church at Corinth, the church of Ephesus, and the like. Shall we believe, that such a state of the church has the stamp of divine authority upon it, that the Holy Ghost has so much forbore to favour with the name of a church, and in favour of which he has strictly avoided dropping so much as one word? He foreknew what desolations would be brought upon the churches after his plan, by the inventions of men in this matter; and therefore he has cut off from them all pretences unto any authority from his words for their own inventions.

The whole nation of the Jews was one church, as was before said, under the old Testament; and it is very remarkable, that, after the dispersion, all the disciples of Christ in Judea are not called a church by themselves, or one church, but churches, Acts ix. 31. Gal. i. 22. 1 Thess. ii. 14. It is true, this careful observation of the words of God in this matter is much despised by some; and they can see no weight in such observations upon the words of God, because they are plainly against them. But to shew what pains some very great and good men have been at, to find countenance from scripture-words, unto such a state of the church as they have been prejudiced in favour of, see how they go to work, to make all those churches in Judea one church, in the scripture-style. They tell us, *Those whom Paul persecuted were one church*, Gal. i. 13. Acts viii. 3. And so were the disciples whom he is said to persecute in those texts. He persecuted, and wasted, and made havock of the church of Jerusalem, Acts viii. 1. 3. "But" say they, "he persecuted more than the church in Jerusalem." And how is that made out? "He obtained
letters

letters from the chief priests to go to Damascus, that if he found any of that way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem; and had authority from them to bind all that called upon Christ's name there," Acts ix. 2. 13. 14. After he had scattered the church at Jerusalem abroad, and they had fled far from thence, he pursues them, and persecutes them; not now called the church, nor the same church he made havock of, and wasted, Acts viii. but the disciples, and all that called on Christ's name. But now, when he goes to Damascus, he is beyond Judea: And how does this make all the disciples in Judea a church by themselves, or one church? They tell us further, "We read of churches throughout Judea, Gal. i. 22. Acts ix. 31. Yes, after the dispersion, and during the persecution, there were churches erected throughout Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria. But how are the churches of Judea one church by themselves; or how are the churches in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, one church? "The church," say they, "that Paul persecuted, was one church." Yes, Saul persecuted the church at Jerusalem: the Holy Ghost says so; and that he had letters, and a commission, to persecute all that called on that name at Damascus; and he breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord where-ever they were. But does the Holy Ghost say, that all the disciples of Christ, within the compass of ground, as far as Saul may be supposed to persecute, were one church by themselves? They say, "The churches of Judea, to whom Paul was unknown by face, said, He persecuted us in times past; he persecuted us the churches:" for they will have the churches speaking of themselves in a church-capacity, and all joining as churches; for it would spoil all to say, that the disciples of Christ that fled out of the church at Jerusalem, for fear of Saul, and were now members of the churches in Judea that were raised in time of that persecution, and to which Saul was not known by

by face, said, *He that persecuted us in times past, preacheth the faith that once he destroyed.* And next they say, *Paul persecuted one church, and so all these churches were one church.* It is said Paul persecuted the church at Jerusalem: but is it said, that all other churches and disciples that might be persecuted by him, were that one church that he walled in Jerusalem?

The Holy Ghost, in giving account of Saul's persecution, and of the church in Jerusalem, and of the scattered disciples, and of the churches raised on occasion of the wasting of the church in Jerusalem, keeps very close by his usual way of speaking on this head. But they, by confounding times, by consequences very wide, and abstract notions, would make the word of God to say the very thing, that, to the utmost, it every where avoids.

Our reformers, taking their notions of the church only from the word of God, acknowledge no other church of Christ besides the universal, but congregations: as is to be seen in the Scots confession of faith, art. 18. where we have these words:—“Wherefoever, then, these former notes* are seen, and of any time continue, (be the number ever so few, about two or three), there, without all doubt, is the true church of Christ, who, according to his promise, is in the midst of them: not that universal, of which we have before spoken, but particular, such as were in Corinthus, Galatia, Ephesus, and other places, wherein the ministry was planted by Paul, and were of himself named the churches of God: and such churches we, the inhabitants of the realm of Scotland, professors of Christ Jesus, have in our towns

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* These notes are, 1. The true preaching of the word of God. — 2. The right administration of the sacraments of Christ Jesus — 3. Ecclesiastical discipline uprightly ministered, as God's word prescribes.

and places reformed." And this is a part of that confession of faith which was sworn to in the national covenant. And what is said of the nature of the apostolic churches on this head by Mr Baxter and Mr Lauder against diocesan Episcopacy, and by King in his Inquiry into the constitution, &c. of the primitive church, may also be considered by them that have shown a great respect to those writers in opposition to prelacy.

2. But there is a second thing to be noticed in this part of the proposition, before we pass it. The church or congregation of which the proposition speaks, is distinguished from other assemblies and congregations, (which sometimes get the name *church*, as was noticed,) and that by being called *a congregation of Jesus Christ*.

This is a congregation of Christ's disciples, that have been so far taught by his word and Spirit, as to be able to confess the faith which is in him. No man can call *Jesus the Lord, without his Spirit*, 1 Cor. xii. 3. The Apostle there speaks of the common operations and gifts of the Spirit of Christ. Compare ver. 13. with chap. xiii. We cannot discern betwixt the common and special operations of the Spirit in others, or betwixt a temporary believer, who may fall away, and them that believe to the saving of the soul. *But as he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is (undoubtedly) none of his*, Rom. viii. 9.; so he that no way appears, by his profession of the faith, to have the Spirit, no way appears to be one of Christ's; and so is no fit member of a congregation of Jesus Christ.

Now, the faith that is confessed by the disciples of Christ, respects the three glorious, equal, and distinct persons of the one only Godhead, in whose name we are baptized; and it respects them as they appear to us in the gospel-revelation of redemption and salvation in Jesus Christ: Matth. xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in*
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the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The faith of Christians is the faith of Christ, the Son of God, Matth. xvi. 16. 17. 18. Acts viii. 36. 37.; and more especially under the New Testament, it is “faith in his blood,” Rom. iii. 25. and in him, as “delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification,” Rom. iv. 23. 24. 25. Rom. x. 6. 8. 9. 10. “But the righteousness which is of faith, faith—The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

From this it may appear, that there is more in this confession of the faith than a bare assenting unto, or subscribing any form of words expressing the doctrine of faith: for though it may be very useful for a church, or many churches, to publish their faith to the world, and make it known in every age, so as to point out the word of God, and their sense of it, in opposition to the heresies and errors prevailing in the day wherein they live; yet it will require another sort of a confession, than a bare assent unto any such form of words, (especially if it be under any worldly constraint), to make a man accounted of as a disciple of Christ, and so a fit member of a church of his. He must confess with the mouth, so as it may appear some way that it comes from his heart. And however weak and indistinct his confession of the faith be, yet it must appear unto others, who should account him a disciple, to be hearty: “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made.” Thus we find, when the eunuch asks Philip, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” he answers, “If thou believest with all thine heart,

heart, thou mayest;" and when he satisfied him of this, by his confession, in consequence of Philip's preaching, he baptized him, Acts viii. 35.—38. To the same purpose we may consider, Acts v. 12. 13. 14. which more nearly touches the case of membership in a particular church or congregation of Jesus Christ: "They were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself unto them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." Might not the people that magnified them, have been admitted among them, and charitably thought of? No; they durst not join themselves to them: for they could not yet find in their hearts to confess the faith, whatever strivings of the spirit they had been under; and there was such an awe of God upon them, by means of what befel Ananias and Saphira, that they durst not feign a confession, and join themselves. This was the great advantage of that church, a glorious fruit of that awakening providence in the church. But was not the success of the gospel marred by this strict separation of the disciples from others? No; the success of the gospel was the greater, and the church increased the more in number: "For multitudes both of men and women were added to the Lord." And what were they? How are they distinguished from the people that magnified them, and durst not join themselves unto them? They were believers, accounted so to be in the judgement of charity, upon the confession they made of the faith of Christ. And there was great care among the disciples in Jerusalem to keep off such as they believed not to be disciples from their communion; as we see in that instance, Acts ix. 26. 27. 28. "When Saul assayed to join himself to the disciples, they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple;" and so received him not, till the apostles "received satisfaction from Barnabas about him." And when

when this church was first erected, after the coming of the Holy Ghost, it was made up of them that had been pricked in their hearts, and gladly received the word, Acts ii. 37.—40. 41. They made a seemingly hearty confession of the faith, were added unto the hundred and twenty, became with them one church, and so separated themselves from that untoward generation, according to Peter's exhortation.

There is an unity of the faith of Christ's disciples, Eph. iv. 3. 5. 13. And as the salvation of Christ is the common privilege of all that believe in all nations, Jude 3. Rev. v. 9. *And the righteousness of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe, without difference,* Rom. iii. 21. 22.; so there is but one faith; and the confession of this faith, as it is one, in all them that are Christ's throughout the world, qualifies a man for being a member of a church of Jesus Christ. By this means a fit member of any one church, may be a member of any true church of Christ throughout the world. And this was the catholicism that took place in the beginning of Christianity. But a church of which a man cannot be a member by a hearty confession of this one faith, without a confession of the faith of doctrines about which the disciples of Christ, by reason of different measures of light, have differed, and with respect to which they are commanded to forbear one another in love, keeping the unity of the Spirit, is off from the catholic footing upon which church-communion went from the beginning. Let a man confess what doctrines he will, yet if he appear not hearty in the confession of the one faith, he cannot be a member of a congregation of Christ's disciples; and they ought not to hold communion with him as a disciple: but however any man differ from other disciples of Christ, if he shew a hearty agreement with them in the confession of the faith, as it is one, and essay to join himself to any congregation of Christ's disciples, they are bound to receive him. If he decline to join to a company of
disciples,

disciples, separated from the unbelieving world, and joined together in the confession of the one faith, and that because they do not all think in all things as he does, then he is, in this point, guilty of a breach of the catholic unity, and not they. Every disciple of Christ must confess the whole truths of Christ, the very least of them, at all hazards, so far as he knows them; but it is the confession of the one faith that makes a man a proper member of a church of Christ, or a proper object of brotherly love.

The disciples of Christ that confess the faith of the Son of God, delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, do also call him Lord: for to this end "Christ both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living:" so that "whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's," Rom. xiv. 7. 8. 9. "The love of Christ constrains his disciples, because they thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. v. 14. 15.

As it is a vain thing to call Christ Lord, and not study to do the things that he says; so, whosoever appears not to have a sense of his authority upon his conscience, but lives in open disobedience to his laws, and professes not repentance from dead works, nor a desire to observe whatsoever he commands, cannot be, in the judgement of charity, accounted a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The disciples of Christ, therefore, are observers of his institutions, so far as they know them: they call on the name of the Lord Jesus; they are studying to follow him in those commandments of God that are chiefly insisted on in his word: such as, the command to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross and follow him; the command to love our enemies, and bless them, and pray for them, and the like.

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But the trying commandment of the New Testament, and the distinguishing fruit of faith, whereby the sincerity of our faith, and of all our obedience, is tried and manifested, is the commandment of brotherly love; a peculiar love to the disciples of Christ on his account, and for his sake, John xiii. 34. 35. John xv. 1 Cor. xiii. Heb. vi. 9. 10. 11. and 1 John. There must be a profession of this in all them that are to be accounted disciples of Christ; “For by this shall all men know that we are his disciples, if we have love one to another. And he that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now; he that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.”

It seems to be one great end of the institution of a gospel-church, that the disciples may be in the constant and regular practice of the duties of this love toward one another. This love respects all the saints, all the disciples of Christ throughout the world: but in vain do we pretend to love all the saints, while we shew forth no more love to such of them as we have seen, than to the rest of the world. Our love to God is to be tried by our love to our brother, whom we have seen, 1 John iv. 20.; and our love to our Lord Jesus will be measured by our love to them at the last day, Matth. xxv. from ver. 34. to the end. Now, there may be many of the disciples of Christ whom we have but seldom access to see, and so cannot perform the duties of this love towards them but occasionally, and as providence sometimes offers opportunity; but it is necessary, unto the establishment in the faith, the comfort and full assurance of hope, in the disciples of Christ, and unto their mutual edification in love, that they be constantly and regularly in the exercise of the duties of this love towards one another, where there is any company of them, that, by dwellings and circumstances, can conveniently perform these duties toward one another. Heb. vi. 10. 11. “God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love,
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which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministred unto the faints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end." Col. ii. 1. 2. "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh: that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God," &c. Heb. iii. 12. 13. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called, Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Heb. x. 23. 24. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering;—and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another," &c. 1 Thess. v. 11. "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." 1 Cor. xii. 25. 26. 27.

From these and such like places, it appears, that this constant and regular practice of the duties of this love, must be in a congregation, or a company of disciples joined together, and assembling themselves together for that purpose; and this cannot take place but in a congregation of disciples. So this is one great end of the Lord's institution of a gospel-church.

But unto this it is necessary that all the members of such churches be fit objects of this brotherly love, and the duties of it. Therefore we find the members of the apostolic churches called the brethren, and brethren for whom Christ died, according to the Lord's commandment: *That we should love one another, even as he loved us.* The Apostle's exhortation to the elders of the church of Ephesus, is remarkable to this purpose: "Take heed," says he, "to all
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“ the flock—to feed the church of God which he
 “ hath purchased with his own blood.” If there was
 any one of that flock or church of whom it could not be
 said, in the judgement of charity, that he was purcha-
 sed with the blood of God, the strength of the Apo-
 stle’s argument for their taking heed to all the flock,
 and feeding them, would be gone with respect to that
 person. The church of the Thessalonians, 2 Thess. i. 3.
 is commended for this, that “ the charity of every
 “ one of them all toward each other abounded :”
 which could not be, if every one of them all had not
 been meet objects of this charity or brotherly love ;
 for this love has only brethren in Christ for the ob-
 jects of it, 1 Thess. iv. 9. 10. To what purpose
 would all the members of the churches be so frequent-
 ly exhorted to love one another with this love, if
 this were not to be supposed, that they were all pro-
 per objects of this love, and the duties of it ? We find
 the church at Ephesus, Rev. ii. 4. 5. condemned
 by the Lord for the decay of this love, and the
 fruits of it among them, and threatened with the dis-
 solution of their church, the taking away of their
 candlestick out of its place, on that account : for
 thus they came short of the end of their being a church.
 Some of the other Asian churches are condemned for
 holding in their communion such as were not meet
 objects of this love. The church of Corinth is cal-
 led to refuse communion with every one called a bro-
 ther, and living scandalously ; and to purge out the
 old leaven, that they may be a new lump, 1 Cor. v.
 And for their enlargement, and that they might not
 be straitened in their own bowels, they are exhorted,
 2 Cor. vi. not to be unequally yoked together with
 unbelievers. Perhaps there may be some view there
 unto some among them, who began to deny the re-
 surrection, after they had confessed the faith of Christ.
 We are called in this matter of Christian communion,
To turn away from such as have a form of godliness,
denying the power of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. ; and *to with-*
 VOL. I. * E c draw

draw ourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, in disobedience to the commands of Christ, 2 Thess. iii. 6. And that great rule of discipline laid down by our Lord Matth. xviii. is subservient to the new commandment of love among his disciples in a church; as appears from the context: for when a brother trespasses, so as our brotherly love to him may cool, we are to take the pains there prescribed to reclaim him; but if he obstinately persist against the endeavours of the church, then we are commanded to refuse communion, and not to walk in the peculiar duties of this love with him.

As the confession of the one faith gives a man a right to the title of a disciple; so this brotherly love must proceed upon this unity of the faith: for otherwise it will be no more Christian brotherly love, but sectarian and party love, like that which takes place among the factions and parties of this world. In the profession of this catholic faith and love in Christ, with the fruits of it, the first Christians were distinguished from the rest of the world, and united among themselves, and were conformed to their Lord Jesus Christ: so they were designed *saints*, the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus; and all the first churches *were churches of such saints*, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. They were also represented in the vision to John by golden candlesticks, on account of the matter of which they ought to be made up.

But against the subserviency of Christ's institution of a church, consisting only of his disciples, unto this new commandment of brotherly love, it is objected, not only that it serves to make division, and raise animosities in the world, but that it always, in all the ways wherein it has been attempted in later ages, has occasioned division among the disciples of Christ, and their separation from one another.

As to the first thing in this objection, it lies as well against Christianity itself, and against the new commandment of brotherly love, as against a church,

church, consisting only of proper objects of brotherly love. For it is certain, that commandment of Christ, wherein we are enjoined to take a peculiar complacence in his disciples on his account, and to love them for the peculiar relation they have to him, does not oblige us to bestow this love upon all men : and, because in the duties of this love to them, we express our love to Jesus Christ, whom the world hates, and so appear to the men of this world to be on his side of that controversy betwixt the seed of the woman and of the serpent, it is no marvel if the men of this world hate us; hence there will be an open division betwixt the disciples of Christ, in their obedience to this command, and the men of this world, as our Lord hath warned us; and for this the world will be condemned at the last day. See John xv. from ver. 17. to the end, and xvi. 1. 2. 3. 2 Thess. i. 3.—6. 1 John iii. 11. 12. 13.

But it is much to be lamented that since a sort of Christians have been made in great numbers, by the influence of the powers of the earth, and not by the influence of the gospel upon their minds and hearts, and since the outer court of God's house has been trodden under foot by the Gentiles under Antichrist, the disciples of Christ, the objects of brotherly love, have been divided and separated from one another, upon attempts to revive Christ's institution in this matter. Yet the blame cannot be laid upon his institution, but upon the disciples themselves. And for this consider, 1. In several of the steps of reformation from the corruptions of Antichrist, the disciples of Christ, through different measures of light, have been wofully divided from one another. Take, for instance, that division betwixt Luther, and those that stood with him, on the one hand, and Zuinglius and Calvin, and those that were with them, on the other, about the Lord's supper. 2. By means of imposition, and the driving of uniformity, the disciples of Christ have been so far engaged in sects and parties,

and have been trained up in such a regard every one to the way of his own sect, that any attempt to bring them into communion in love upon those things wherein they all are one, and all divided from the men of this world, however strictly joined with them in their sects, must meet with great opposition from them. And much of this is owing to some of their teachers, by whom they have received the gospel, who press upon them the peculiarities of their own sect, which have nothing to support them, for most part, but human authority, and that with such zeal, as if religion were to stand and fall with them. 3. As has been noticed, obedience to the Lord's new commandment, and the following of his institution in this matter, according to it, cannot miss of exposing the disciples of Christ to the hatred of the men of this world. And it is also to be noticed, that we have all a strong bias toward the friendship and fellowship of this world, and toward conformity to a present world, and that it is not easy to reconcile us to the cross; so that it is no wonder to see many of the disciples contenting themselves in a way of religion, much magnified and extolled, that does not expose them much to the world's hatred, and wherein they may indulge themselves in compliances with, and conformity to the world; and rising up against a way that exposes them to the cross, and has no worldly advantages attending it. We want not instances of this in the New Testament; and what has been, may be again.

By these and such like considerations, it may appear, that the blame of divisions arising upon Christ's disciples their attempting to follow his institution, in this matter, is not to be cast on his institution, which serves to join them all together in love in that wherein they are all one, and divided from the world; but it must lie upon the disciples themselves: and while those disciples of his that do oppose it are so far guilty of schism, the infirmities and corruptions attend-
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ing those, that have from time to time attempted to follow the commandment of Christ in this matter, should not be justified, nor should their faults be improved against the pure and holy commandment of Jesus Christ.

However many disciples of his may oppose it, yet it is most agreeable to the new nature in them, which leads to separation from the men of this world, and constant communion in love with the disciples of the Lord. And though we be bound to forbear the practice of indifferent things, in the case of offending weak brethren; yet no man will alledge, that we ought to forbear commanded duty, for fear of offending weak brethren; or that we ought to set about no step of reformation from any corrupt state of things, under which the disciples are, till they be all satisfied in it. The disciples that openly confessed Christ, and followed him, were not to be blamed for transgressing the law of brotherly love; because they differed therein from those that would not confess him for fear, and because they were afraid of being put out of the synagogue, and because *they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* The hundred and twenty disciples, Acts i. *waited not for the rest of Christ's disciples at that time; and upon them came the Spirit.* See Heb. x. 25.

3. There remains yet a third thing that belongs to the scripture-notion of a disciple of Christ, and member of a church of his; and that is, the confession of the Christian hope, *the one hope.* This hope is one of those notable three of which the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xiii. 8.—13. *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.* Concerning this hope, and the profession of it, see these texts, Heb. iii. 6.—*But Christ as a Son over his own house: whose house are we, if we hold fast*

fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Col. i. 23. If ye continue in the faith,—and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel. Heb x. 23. 24. 25. Let us hold fast the profession of our hope (as in the first language) without wavering, (for he is faithful that promised.) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, &c.

He does not appear to be a disciple of Christ, who does not appear to prefer that eternal life contained in the promises of the gospel, and hid with Christ in God, to appear when he appears, unto a life in this world; and who does not confess himself denied to the one, in the hope of the other; or does not confess Moses's choice, and own himself a stranger on earth, looking for the heavenly country, and counting all things loss to be found in Christ, having his righteousness, *and to attain to the glorious resurrection of the dead.* There are doubtless various degrees of this hope, and of the profession of it. There is hope, and the assurance of hope; and there is the assurance, and the full assurance of this hope: but something less or more of this hope, in the profession of it, belongs unto the notion the scripture gives us of a disciple of Christ, and a member of the church. This hope in us, as it is influenced by faith in Christ, our righteousness, and love in him to all the saints, so it *will be according to the measure of that faith and love, Col. i. 3. 4. 5. 1 Thess. i. 3. Heb. xi. 1. Heb. vi. 10. 11. 1 John iii. from ver. 18. to the end.* When the profession of faith and love was lively, so was the profession of this hope; and there is no greater evidence of the decay of faith and love, than the want of that confidence and rejoicing of the hope, in the very profession of it that appeared in the first Christians, the first members of the churches of Christ.

In the beginning, when men became Christians only by the influence of the gospel of Christ, and
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when there was no worldly advantage attending Christianity, it appeared in their profession of the faith of Christ, that they were in earnest about the eternal life revealed in the gospel, and that they preferred it unto a life in this world, and that they believed the truth of the gospel; and when they became companions of the suffering disciples, there was no reason to question their love to them. And when they confessed Christ with joy, in the face of persecution, and with the hazard of all that was near and dear unto them in this world, it was a good evidence of their hope in the other world. Even then there were hypocrites among them; but there was no ground to question their sincerity, while they held fast this profession. Yet there was in those days care taken about the profession of them that were admitted unto full communion in the churches of Christ. Some professed a good liking to Christianity, that were not presently admitted to full communion in the churches; but were kept under instruction, till they were some way able to profess the Christian faith, love, and hope, and then they were called the *perfect*, Phil. iii. 15. But when the profession of Christianity came to be attended with worldly advantages, there was more need of nice scrutiny. Yet it fell out quite otherwise, unto the great dishonour of the Christian profession. Whole nations were brought to a sort of profession of the name of Christ; not by the influence of the gospel, but of the magistrate: and their profession was suitable unto the influence by which it was brought about. Ten thousand such converts were then baptized in one day; and, no doubt, there would be great joy among them that had the dispensing of that ordinance in their hands, to see so many Christians; but there was more than reason for that question, which was proposed when *Saul was seen among the prophets, Who is their Father?* And the ancient profession of the Christian hope, which took place when the Christian profession exposed men to
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the loss of their all in this world, was lost, now, when it was no loss to a man's interest in this world, but his great advantage, to call himself a Christian. Thus Christianity (if that sort of it may be so called) became national, intertwined with the civil rights of mankind, attended with a hope in this life, and Christ's kingdom of this world. After this, the nations that were Heathen, becoming thus Christian, were corrupted or reformed, according to the influence of the clergy, now dignified, and great men in the earth, and according to the influence of the princes of the earth, whose power was serviceable to the clergy. It was easy for the nations, thus brought from Heathenism to Christianity, to become Antichristian and idolatrous. And though the Lord's hand was remarkably seen at the Reformation, in reviving the light of the glorious gospel, and making *some of the kings of the earth, in some measure, withdraw their power from the beast*: yet the reformation became national no otherwise than Christianity became so at first; that is, by their submitting to an external form of national reformation under the influence of those in power. But while church-membership goes not upon the footing of the ancient profession of faith, hope, and charity, Christianity will not appear in its primitive beauty and glory.

There have been attempts, since the Babylonish captivity, to revive this, and it has been much opposed: but, as was said of the second temple, when compared with the first, so it may be said in this case, *Is it not as nothing in your eyes?* Yet we may be encouraged to build by this, *That the Lord will come to this second building. Let us, therefore, not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but exhort one another; and so much the more, as we see the day approaching.*

So much has been said of the members of which a church of Jesus Christ is made up. And by this it is distinguished from all other congregations, even though they should be called *Christian*, which do
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not consist of the disciples of the Lord Jesus. By their being joined together in the confession of the catholic faith, love, and hope, which is in him, they are distinguished from all sectarian societies. For thus the disciples are builded together in him, *for an habitation of God, through the Spirit*, Eph. ii. 22. *Christ the corner-stone, in whom all the building of God, the catholic church, is fitly framed together*, is also the foundation and corner in this little building, compare ver. 21. So a company of his disciples, joined together in him, as he stands in the confession of their faith, love, and hope, is a church of his. And this church is distinguished from the church-catholic by the disciples their being joined together thus, for holding constant communion in the ordinances of worship, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus, and glorifying the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *with one mind, [ὁμοθυμαδον] in one mouth*, Rom. xv. 5. 6. 7. and for the constant regular performance of the duties of brotherly love toward one another, and assembling themselves together from time to time, with one accord, in one place.

Such a congregation is a church of Jesus Christ. And it is *a habitation, a temple of God*, Eph. ii. 22.; *a dwelling-place and assembly of Mount Zion*, Isa. iv. 5. The church at Corinth is called *God's temple*, 2 Cor. vi. 16. and 1 Cor. iii. 9. 16. 17. *Ye are God's building.—Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.* The Apostle tells them he laid Christ for a foundation unto this building of God at Corinth, and calls every one that comes after him to carry on this building, to take heed how he builds up such a building that has such a foundation. It has been thought, that it is every particular believer that is there called the building or temple of God by himself; but a real believer cannot be destroyed, as they that defiled this temple at Corinth

might be destroyed. It has been also thought, that it is of a building of doctrine that the Apostle is there speaking. No doubt, members of churches are framed and built in a church, and built up in it by means of doctrine; but it is of a building of persons that the Apostle is speaking: *Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building, ye are the temple of God.* And, seeing the Apostle, as the master-builder of the church at Corinth, laid Christ for the foundation of it, and all sorts of materials are not fit for a building that has such a precious foundation, he calls all that come after him, *to take heed, not only that they lay no other foundation for a building there, but also, that they build on this foundation, such materials as are suitable to it.* And the reason he gives for their taking heed to this is, that *every such building, every man's work in it, must be tried with fire.* Christ walks in the midst of the churches, *with his feet of fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and all the churches shall know that he searcheth the hearts and reins, to render unto every man according to his works,* Rev. i. 15. and ii. 18. 23. There must be fiery trials, temptations, and persecutions, because of the word; and by these every man's work will be tried of what sort it is. The Lord himself is notably at work in every such church of his, for the trial and discovery of hypocrites: and as the Apostle compares the church at Corinth to a husbandry; so our Lord, making the like comparison, shews us this trial of his disciples, John xv. 1. 2.: and it is the same thing that the Apostle here calls *a trial by fire.* Says our Lord, *I am the vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit.* This trial will be perfect at the second appearance of Jesus Christ. Now, says the Apostle, *If any man's work, in this building of God, shall abide the trial, as the gold, silver, precious stones, abide the fire; he shall receive a reward as*

a good workman, and shall have joy in his work: but if any workman build such materials upon this foundation, laid in the church at Corinth, as will not abide the trial, like the *wood, hay, and stubble*, that cannot abide the fire; he shall suffer the loss of his labour: “And though he himself may be saved,” because he held the foundation; yet it shall be “as by fire,” like a man that hardly escapes in a burning, losing all his effects.

What has been said may serve for explication of the first thing in the proposition, and for clearing our way to the other things in it. But before we proceed to them, we must notice, that unto such a church or congregation of Christ do belong the infants of the members, who are pointed out to us, as, with any one of their parents, the objects of brotherly love; “For they are holy,” 1 Cor. vii. 14. and they have right to baptism with their parents, by their parents profession, Acts ii. 38. 39. Though yet it must be owned, that baptism is not confined to a membership in any particular church; for we see such baptized as were not yet members of any particular church, but only members of the catholic. The instance of the eunuch is very clear to this purpose, Acts viii. And baptism seems to have gone before adding unto a particular congregation of Christians. We are baptized into the church-catholic, and not into any particular church, of whatsoever sort or size, as many imagine; and from this imagination have proceeded uncharitable and unchristian controversies about baptism.

But the Lord's supper is an ordinance of communion in such a congregation or church of Christ as has been described. It is the most high and eminent act of communion in such a church, and therein the disciples make the highest profession of the one faith, which is in the blood of the Son of God; and of the catholic brotherly love toward one another, even as Christ hath loved them; and of the one hope, shew-

ing forth the Lord's death till he come. This ordinance was always gone about in a congregation of disciples; for there must be a visible communion of disciples in it. The church in Jerufalem "continued stedfastly in breaking of bread." The disciples at Troas "came together on the first day of the week, to break bread," Acts xx. 7. The church at Corinth "assembled and came together in one place to eat the Lord's supper," 1 Cor. xi. And the Apostle there condemns them, for their not "tarrying one for another," for the want of brotherly love in setting about that great ordinance of communion, and because the rich indulged themselves at the love-feasts, to the neglect of the poor. Very great corruptions indeed, but such as were not absolutely inconsistent with a state of grace: for he tells them, for these things *they were judged, and chastened of the Lord, that they might not be condemned with the world; and so many were weak and sickly among them, and many slept.* And because these abuses were common in that church, and not confined to a few members, he solemnly warns and calls the whole body to reformation in this point, and that speedily, leaving other things to be set in order till he should come. It has been very surprizing to see some men pleading, from this instance in the church at Corinth, for a settled, constant, impure communion of disciples and no-disciples in the Lord's supper. But passing this, we only notice a difference very obvious betwixt baptism and the Lord's supper. Baptism was administered to a single person, upon the satisfaction of him that baptized, in the profession of such as were baptized with their infants. But there was still a visible communion of disciples, professing mutual brotherly love in Christ, and all satisfied in one another as disciples, in the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. x. 16. 17.

II. We proceed now to consider, what should be understood by *the presbytery of a church, or congregation of Jesus Christ.*

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And here we may observe, that all church-offices under Jesus Christ, the only head of the church, was at first in the hands of the apostles, who were employed in the first setting up, and laying the plan of gospel-churches. So soon as they, by the preaching of the gospel, made disciples of Christ in Jerusalem, and joined them together, they exercised all church-offices among them. They were deacons in that church; and when that became too burdensome for them, some of the disciples were set apart unto that office, after the manner of which we read, Acts vi. They were elders unto that church: For the apostles were also elders, 1 Pet. v. 1. and where ever they they came, and assembled themselves with any church, they acted therein as elders. When there was necessity for it, they also set apart some in the church at Jerusalem unto the office of elders. So we read of elders in that church, Acts xv. and xxi. Even as Moses, who at first had the whole ruling power in the church of Israel, under the Lord, in his hand, when that was found too weighty for him, did, at the divine direction, set apart the seventy elders, Numb. xi. and appointed other judges, which continued after the removal of that extraordinary officer appointed for the first setting up of that national church.

Thus we find, in the church at Jerusalem, the elder, and the deacon, the only ordinary church-officers under the New-Testament. There is no need of insisting to shew, that the guidance and government in churches belonged to the *elders of those churches*, Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Tim. v. 17. Neither shall we stay on that dispute, Whether there were elders that only ruled or presided in the church, and did not labour in the word and doctrine? And it is needless to labour in shewing, that the New-Testament elder or presbyter and bishop are the same thing. This has been abundantly shewed by many. But that which must be noticed here is, that there was in every church a company of these bishops, or elders, or presbyters,

presbyters, Acts xiv. 23. *When they had ordained them elders in every church.* Such a company of elders was in the church at Ephesus, Acts xx. They were pastors : For they are exhorted to *feed the flock* ; and their business was *to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which they were overseers, or bishops.* Of these elders that were in every church, there seem to have been more than one, perhaps many, in some churches, *labouring in the word and doctrine.* And whatever may be said as to the being of order in a church, yet unto the well-being of it, more such elders or bishops than one seem necessary ; else they would not have been set in the first churches. And there is no ground in the New Testament for that saying, which afterwards became common, *One bishop and one church* : for at first every church had more bishops. Now, the company of presbyters, elders, or bishops, taking heed to themselves, and to all the flock, is the presbytery of that flock, that congregation or church of Jesus Christ. Such a presbytery was in the congregation at Jerusalem, and such a presbytery was in the congregation at Antioch, Acts xiii. 1. 2. 3. The Holy Ghost employed that presbytery to set apart and send forth Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel through the world. And of no other kind was that presbytery *that laid hands on Timothy,* 1 Tim. iv. 14. A company of such elders, placed in a church or congregation of Christ's disciples, is in the best situation for spreading the gospel. The light is then set on a golden candlestick, Rev. i. 20. and so it shines round about. For as every member of such a church is some way a witness for Christ, and much more all together, in their joint confession of the faith of Christ ; so they that labour among them in the word and doctrine are as a light set on a candlestick, that it may shine to the world. When men are sent out by such a presbytery to preach the gospel in the world, or when the gospel comes out from such a church, it then goes forth in the most orderly
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regular way, and unto the best advantage: for thus it was at first spread through the world. So soon as it is successful in any place where it comes, so as that there is a number of disciples, then it is the duty of such a church, with its presbytery, to assist the disciples there, in bringing themselves into church-order, and furnishing them with presbyters or overseers, Acts viii. 14. Acts xi. 22.—26.

The rule and government of this presbytery, or eldership, in a church of Jesus Christ, is not their own, but Christ's. "They are not lords over God's heritage." 1 Pet. v. 1. 2. 3. "The elders which are among you, I exhort, who also am an elder:—Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; nor for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." They that "labour in the word and doctrine," must not "preach themselves," the lords of the disciples, "but Christ Jesus the Lord, and themselves their servants for Jesus sake: Even as the Son of man came not be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many." Their proper power and authority over the flock goes as far as they are furnished and enabled by the Holy Ghost, for representing the authority of the Lord Christ in his word unto them, and as far as they can manage that, with spiritual wisdom upon their consciences. He that has no measure of a gift of this sort from Jesus Christ, and has no skill in the application of his words and commandments unto the consciences of them that profess subjection unto him, is no way fit to be an overseer or presbyter in one of his churches, which are free from the doctrines and commandments of men.

No company of elders can pretend to more power over the disciples of Christ in a church, than the apostles had. And when we look to their administrations in the church at Jerusalem, and other churches
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where they acted as elders, it does not appear, that they did any thing of common concern to the church, without the consent of the multitude. Thus we have the Holy Ghost noting down to us the consent of the multitude, before such things were fully concluded and done. See an instance of this Acts vi. 1.-----6. And even in that determination of the great question by the apostles and elders Acts xv. we are told, ver. 22. "It pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church"*. Yea, and it seems they thought it necessary to judge and determine in discipline in the presence of the church, 1 Cor. v. 3. 4. 5.

But it is time now to inquire about the discipline of a church of Christ. Only let us first notice, with respect to this scripture-word *presbytery*, that it has been treated the same very way, as the word *bishop*. A bishop at first was an overseer of a flock or congregation of Christians; but afterwards it came to signify a ruler over many presbyters, and many such flocks, as have taken place in later ages.

Just so, the scripture-presbytery is the eldership of a congregation of Jesus Christ, as has been said; but, in process of time, the word *presbytery* has come to signify a company of elders gathered out of many parishes and sessions, and having jurisdiction over those sessions and parishes; of which parishes and sessions, and of which presbytery, the scripture speaks nothing. But thus have men set off their own contrivances with scripture-names, to make them well-pleasing to themselves, and recommend them to the world. So some, when they find the word *bishop* in the Bible, never question but it is the diocesan bishop. And others, who have learned to know, that the scripture bishop is only the bishop of a congregation; yet when they find the word *presbytery*, they are sure it is their modern presbytery, having jurisdiction over many sessions and congregations. But what will they
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* See Calvin upon the place.

do, if they cannot find sessions in congregations under the jurisdiction of a common presbytery? Why then, if sessions be not to be found in the Bible, nor many congregations under a presbytery, they must either give over troubling their heads with the Bible, and think as honest men and fathers have thought before them; or else they must rest content with the presbytery of a congregation, and say the same thing of the scripture-presbytery that they used to say of the scripture-bishop. But then they'll pass under the name of *Independents* and *schismatics*; and perhaps be made to know, that the presbytery can act the same part to them, to bring them to an orderly way of thinking, as the bishop did to others before them.

III. Now we come to speak somewhat of the discipline of a church of Jesus Christ, having a presbytery or eldership, taking heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which they are overseers.

On this head of discipline there has been much work about the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the binding and loosing spoken of by our Lord, Matth. xvi. 19. and Matth. xviii. 18. In the first of those texts, what he says of the keys, and of binding and loosing, is spoken to Peter on occasion of his making that notable confession of the great fundamental truth of the gospel concerning him, *The Christ, the Son of the living God; upon which rock, in Peter's confession, he says, he will build his church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* This must chiefly be understood of the invisible church, the whole body of Christ, no part of which can perish. As to the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the binding and loosing spoke of on that occasion, there is a distinction made betwixt the key of knowledge or doctrine, and the key of discipline; and so likewise betwixt binding and loosing doctrinally, and binding and loosing in a way of discipline*. And there is some

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* See the Palatine catechism, qu. 83. 84. 85.

foundation for this distinction: for there may be a binding and loosing doctrinally, where there is no manner of discipline. The text, Matth. xvi. seems chiefly to speak of this doctrinal binding and loosing, as does John, xx. 23. But we cannot exclude the key of discipline in that place, and the binding and loosing in a way of discipline, which we have more largely and clearly spoken of Matth. xviii. 15.—18. which plainly speaks of that which is commonly called *discipline*; and the church there is evidently a particular visible church; *Tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church.* It cannot be the universal church that the offended brother is obliged to tell his brother's fault to, and the offending brother is to hear; but a particular visible church, wherein they are concerned, and which they have access to speak to, and hear.

Now, it is observable, with respect to that fundamental rule of discipline laid down there by our Lord,

1. That the persons concerned in the whole of this discourse, from the beginning to the end of it, are the disciples, the brethren, and they that are to be accounted of by us as believers in him. All these, from the greatest to the least of them, are concerned in this discourse of our Lord: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me," ver. 6. Other men, whom he distinguishes from them by the name of *the world*, are no farther touched in the whole discourse than thus: "Whoso shall offend one of these;" and, "Wo to the world because of offences." The rule of discipline here given by our Lord is clearly for the brethren: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee." See 1 Cor. v. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13.

2. It is also very remarkable, that this discourse of our Lord, being occasioned by the disciples their proposing this question, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* is intended against that pride and self-

self-seeking through which his disciples would lord over one another, and from whence offences, persecutions, wars, and fightings among them do flow. He presses humility and self-denial, meekness, harmlessness, and forbearance toward one another, and that in the most awful and moving manner; and vehemently presses a direction unto the mortification of this lust of the flesh, this wicked desire of the mind, imported in the disciples question to him. He set a little child in the midst of them, and said, *Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.—Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Wo unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh. Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, &c.—Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray—Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Take heed that ye despise not one of the little ones that believe in Christ: The angels of God are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them, to serve them; the Son of man came to save them when lost, to minister to them, and give “his life a ransom for them, and rejoices in their salvation;” the Father is concerned in their salvation, despises not nor rejects them; is not*

careless about them, but delights in their salvation; "Take heed that ye despise not nor reject them, nor disdain to serve them." O! that this introduction unto the fundamental rule of discipline had been attended to always by them that have taken the management of church-discipline in their hands! And, considering what has fallen out in the world since, under pretence of discipline, does not infinite wisdom appear in introducing the matter of binding and loosing in discipline with such a discourse as this?

3. It must further be carefully noticed, that our Lord intends here, that tenderness of mutual brotherly love among his disciples, and that of their mutual edification in this love unto their salvation, to which that pride and self through which they lord over, persecute, despise, provoke, and envy one another, unto their mutual destruction, is entirely opposite. "Whofo," says he, "shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But whofo shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in me," &c. "How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray." See ver. 21. 22. and from thence to the end of the chapter. Peter said, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants.—Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him unto the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts

hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Suitable to our Lord's great scope in this chapter, where the rule of discipline is laid down, are these exhortations of the Apostle, Rom. xii. 9. 10. 16. "Let love be without dissimulation.—Be kindly affectioned unto one another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another.—Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceit." Gal. v. 26. and vi. 1. 2. "Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault,—restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one anothers burthens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Eph. iv. 1. 2. 3.—"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." Phil. ii. 1.—5. See also to this purpose what our Lord says on this same subject recorded by the other evangelists, Mark ix. from ver. 23. to the end. "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." Luke ix. 46.—50. and xviii. 1.—5.

Now, seeing our Lord plainly intends the maintaining of this brotherly love among his disciples, in giving this rule with respect to binding and loosing, it is plain they must all have a hand in it, and it cannot be transacted without them. The trespass that he speaks of to our brother is such as may give us just ground to suspect him, or may cool our brotherly love to him, and our dealing and the church's dealing with him is for gaining him, and for his recovery and edification in love. If he continue obstinately in his trespass, and hear not the church, he discharges us from the duties of brotherly love to him.

4. We may likewise notice, that in this great matter of binding and loosing, the disciples must meet together *in the name of the Lord Jesus*; not in their own names. It is his business they are doing, not their own: and it must be done by agreement, not through strife, or by parties over-ruling one another, Jam. iii. from ver. 13. to the end. And further, it must be managed by *the word and prayer*, the proper weapons of the church. It must not be carried on with worldly wisdom, which defiles the temple of God; and as to which a man must *become a fool, that he may be wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 16.—19. Neither is there any worldly power in this discipline, or belonging to it. Human laws, with civil sanctions, have no place here; but the Spirit and power of the Lord Jesus, in whose name the thing is done, 1 Cor. v. 4.

If he will not hear thee.—If he neglect to hear the church.. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Now, this discipline consists, 1. In the admitting or receiving of the disciples into the church, in the censuring of offending brethren unto excommunication, and in absolving the penitent, Matth. xviii. 5. Acts ii. 41. Matth. xviii. 15. 16. 17. 1 Cor. v. 2 Cor. ii. 6. 7. 8. 2. Unto this discipline is also reckoned the admitting and setting apart of men to bear office in the church, and the setting of them aside. As to the first of these, we have an instance of it, Acts vi. in the ordination of the first deacons in the church at Jerusalem; where we see what is the people's part, and what is the part of the eldership, in that matter. We have also an account of the setting apart of a disciple to bear office among the apostles in the room of Judas. There was something there extraordinary; as, the qualifications of the person, and the casting of lots; because it behoved the
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the apostolic call to be immediate. But there was something in that transaction agreeing with the ordination of ordinary officers, and which serves for a precedent. See Acts i. 16. 21. 22. 23. We have not such a particular account of the ordination of elders in a church. We hear of the setting apart of Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel through the world, by the presbytery at Antioch; and of Timothy to the work of an evangelist, by the *laying on of the hands of the presbytery* of some other church: but of the setting of elders in a church we have not an account so particular. Only, from Acts xiv. 23. we may gather, that they were set apart to their office, after the same manner as the deacons, Acts vi. Considering what has happened in after-ages about ordination, (the holding of some for ministers, because they have been brought through some forms, without being qualified for that office by Jesus Christ, or accepted by his people; and the rejecting of others qualified by Christ, and accepted by his disciples, because they have not passed through all the forms that some men judge necessary), it may be conceived, that there is a providence in the scripture's speaking not so full and clear about some things in their ordination. The most successful minister that ever was in Scotland, Mr Robert Bruce, never received, nor would admit of the very scriptural ceremony of *laying on of hands** in his ordination to the ministry; but he was notably furnished by Christ, and obliged in his conscience to use his talent, and was heartily accepted by the disciples, and had his ministry *crowned with success*.

As to the setting aside of church-officers, particularly false teachers, we have a general rule to the elders at Ephesus, "to take heed to themselves as well as to the flock;" and the disciples are commanded to "beware of them," and not to "hear them,"
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* See the first book of discipline.

or “receive them.” And we may find excommunication, the censure common to them with other disciples, inflicted on them: but of that which goes now under the name of suspension or deposition, we have no instance nor example in all the word of God; nor any rule laid down for it further. And yet we have heard some, in a fever of national zeal, crying out, that suspension is God’s great ordinance, which they were highly bound in conscience to observe, and which they reckoned other mens consciences could not easily withstand.

IV. There remains yet a fourth thing in the proposition, which deserves serious consideration; and it will be the clearer unto us, that we have considered what is alledged on the foregoing heads:

If Jesus Christ hath subjected a congregation of his, with its presbytery, in its discipline, unto any jurisdiction under heaven, the proposition is false, and must be rejected; if he hath not, then it is clear and manifest: therefore the scripture must be carefully searched upon this head; and till something be produced from thence to make it appear, that he hath subjected a church of his in this matter, unto any jurisdiction under heaven, the proposition must hold good.

But some things may be said from the scriptures, which may serve to manifest the truth of the proposition to them that take to themselves no other rule in these matters but the word of God.

If we look through all the instances of discipline recorded in the word, we shall find, if we have considered what is before said, they went not beyond a congregation and its presbytery.

The same thing appears from the fundamental rule of discipline, of which we have been speaking, Matth. xviii. 15. to 20. It is thus: “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 gained thy brother. But if he will not
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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 unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, astouching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Much dust has been raised to obscure these plain words; and odd shifts have been made about the import of the word *church* here. But it is plain, that our Lord gives here a standing rule for discipline among his disciples, in the kingdom of heaven, unto the end of the world; and that the import of the word *church* must be taken from the apostles, who have more fully laid open to us the words "that began to be spoken by the Lord himself," in his ministry on the earth. We have already noticed, that a church-representative, as it is called, is an utter stranger to the apostolic style and way of writing; and we have heard the account they give of a visible particular church. It is also very plain, that our Lord speaks here of a particular visible church, before which the brethren may bring their cause, and which the trespassing brother must hear: so that we can be in no great strait to understand what is meant by the *church* in that notable text; and so to understand where the power of this binding and loosing is lodged. But after the offending brother has neglected to hear the one or two more, where goes the offended brother next to tell his trespass? Is he at first to leap over the congregation whereof he is a member, with its presbytery? Or is his first step beyond that?

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No, this cannot be said. And where should he go next? Or if the other brother judge himself lesed, where should he go for redrefs? No where that our Lord speaks of, but heaven.

Without question, the congregation of which the two brethren are members, and wherein they have been walking together in brotherly love and communion, with the presbytery of that congregation, their immediate overseers, are the fittest of any to determine in this matter. And our Lord is very particular in telling the steps that the offended brother is to take: *Tell him his fault; take with thee one or two more; tell it to the church.* But there it lands, and further it goes not, if the trespasser hear not the church. Yet it is pleaded, that because the offended brother must go first to the trespasser, and he must hear him; and then to the one or two more, and he must hear them next; and then to the church; therefore, by parity of reason, there must be a going from inferior to superior church-judicatures. But better reason requires, that Christ's servants should stop where he would have them stop; and what he takes wholly in his own hand, no judicature on earth can take from him. He also is wise, and foresaw all the consequences that we have seen or can see; and he knew best what is for his own glory, and the unity and peace of his people, and the advancement of his kingdom: *For what can the man do that cometh after this King?*

The account we have of the first churches set up by him after his ascension, as patterns to all that should follow after, is altogether agreeable to this. They were no more but congregations, as has been shewn, and they had every one their own presbytery: they bound and loosed in a way of discipline, 1 Cor. v. 2 Cor. ii. And they are not subjected herein unto any jurisdiction, but that of Christ in heaven, who also is in the midst of them that are duly gathered in his name. Therefore when the apostles or-
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dained elders in every church, and left them, they did not commend them to the care of any superior judicature, or to the care of a diocesan bishop, or many bishops joined together, and having a common oversight and jurisdiction over them: but commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed, as now wanting nothing to complete their church state and order, Acts xiv. 21. 22. 23. Tit. i. 5. To the same purpose we may observe, how Paul takes his leave of the elders of Ephesus, when he tells them, he should see them and that church no more, Acts xx. He commends the flock to their diligent care, and calls them to *take heed to themselves*; but not a word of a superior judicature; not an insinuation of an advice to have recourse to it, or to any thing of that kind; but to *the Lord*, and to *the word of his grace*. And yet he forewarns them of that very case, for which some men judge a subordination of judicatures absolutely necessary. He tells them, that, after *his departing, grievous wolves should enter in among them, not sparing the flock*; and that of their own selves *men should arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them*. Here was occasion to speak of a superior judicature, if the Lord Jesus had seen occasion for it. And what remedy does his Apostle propose for it? Not that which man's wisdom judgeth best, but a remedy very agreeable to the spirit of the gospel, and the mind of Christ. *Take heed, says he, unto yourselves, and to all the flock.—For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves, &c. Therefore watch; and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance, &c.* His discourse is well worth the considering to the end of it.

Binding and loosing is an ordinance of Christ; and if it be done agreeable to his word, in the way wherein

he hath appointed it to be done, then it is also done by him in heaven; and we see he has left this matter in the hands of a congregation of his with its presbytery, with a promise of being in the midst of them; so that they have power from him to assemble in his name, and bind and loose, being therein made accountable to no other lord or lords but himself alone. Thus, every *dwelling-place of Mount Zion*, every gospel-church, having its *pillar of the cloud and of fire*, according to the prophecy, Isa. iv. 5. as the national congregation had its *pillar of the cloud and of fire*, of old, has all power of discipline within itself.

Let us now see what is produced from the word with any colour against this. First, we are told of general rules laid down in the word, which must necessarily carry us beyond a congregation with our discipline. And what are these rules? They are these: *The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; and, Let all things be done decently and in order,* 1 Cor. xiv. 31. 32. 33. 40. But from that context, and the epistle, it is visible, these rules are laid down for a congregation meeting from time to time in one place, to prophesy, and hear prophesying, and to partake of the Lord's supper: and the Apostle tells them, *God is not the author of confusion, but of peace,* and this in all the churches of the faints. So that these rules can carry us no further than congregations or churches of faints.

Further, there has been much labour about that transaction which we have recorded Acts xv.; and that which some men intend at first to make out from thence is this: That, upon a division arising in a church, as in Antioch, which they cannot heal themselves, they should go out unto a council, who have power and authority to determine in the case, make decrees about it, and lay burdens on the disciples and churches. This is all that can be offered to be proved from that passage. From this, when they think they
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have made it evident, there are inferences made, and conclusions of this sort established, as having the stamp of divine authority upon them, *viz.* That there ought to be a national church, with a stated subordination of sessions, presbyteries, provincial and national synods, or general assemblies. Every body may see, it will take no few consequences to bring the stamp of divine authority from Acts xv. upon all this order and government of the church. And after all that has yet appeared from that passage of God's word, it will not carry us beyond a church or congregation of Christ with our discipline, nor shew us any jurisdiction over them in that matter.

For, 1. It has not yet been shown, nor can be, that there is any thing more in that matter, than an occasional submission, by the congregation at Antioch, unto "the apostles and elders of the congregation" at Jerusalem, of a question, a point of doctrine, wherein they were the only fit persons to decide and determine. This point nearly concerned the practice of the Gentile disciples at Antioch, and throughout the world. They had received the gospel from out of the church at Jerusalem; and some came from thence, teaching them, that circumcision, and the keeping of the law of Moses, was necessary unto their salvation; and made a division among them. None were so fit to determine in this case as the eldership of the church at Jerusalem, which consisted of Jews, and where were the apostles. The church at Antioch submits it to them; but we do not hear of any point of discipline submitted: and the apostles and elders determine in it, with the consent of the whole church in Jerusalem. So that, even until now, we have not got out among congregations; and such a practice may take place to the end of the world among them.

2. Nor has it ever yet been shown, that this meeting at Jerusalem, whatever it was, exercised any discipline over any church or church-member at that time,

time. They condemned the doctrine of the false teachers, who troubled the disciples with their words, and subverted their souls, and laid heavy burdens upon them with their doctrine. But did they ever exercise any discipline about them? Nothing like it: they leave that entire to the churches where they came, or where they should enter: and there was nothing of it in the question and case submitted to them. Thus it holds true, for what appears from Acts xv. that Jesus Christ hath not subjected a church of his, with its presbytery, unto any jurisdiction in its discipline. And in this state remained the churches of Christ till towards the end of the second century, when synods and councils began to be held upon the controversy about Easter; and these might have been as well unheld, for any advantage the churches had by them as to unity and peace. But thus uniformity, and impositions, and councils commenced; and how far the catholic unity and peace of the disciples of Christ has been advanced by them, the experience of all ages will declare. Yet it must be owned, that they have been in some things useful, and that they might be tolerable, if they did not assume to themselves that power which Jesus Christ hath lodged elsewhere, *nor lay any burden upon the disciples, which it did not seem good to him to lay upon them.*

Thus far we have been considering the sense of the proposition which was to be explained, and comparing it with the word of God, the only rule by which the truth or falsehood of it can be determined; and so we have had occasion to take a view of the plan of a gospel-church, laid down to us by Christ and his apostles. It is owned, that, in this view, it is not agreeable to the wisdom of this world, to which the whole of the true gospel of Christ is disagreeable; and that there may be many plausible reasonings against it, by them that are fond of that wisdom, as there are against all the parts of the gospel of Christ.

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But there are these things that may be said in the behalf of it.

1. It is the most agreeable to all conditions and circumstances wherein the church of Christ or his disciples can be in this world, especially to times of persecution; and persecution is the most ordinary lot of the disciples and true church of Christ in this world, Matth. xvi. 21.—26. Mark viii. 34. 2 Tim. iii. 12. 13. In the most peaceable times, when the powers of the earth are employed to divert the violent course of persecution, we are told, *the dragon will be making war with the remnant of the woman's seed, that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*, Rev. xii. 16. 17.

2. It interferes the least of all with Cæsar's kingdom, and can give the least disturbance to the kingdoms of this world; and it is most agreeable to our Lord's account of his kingdom, John xviii. 36. 37. The congregational frame, as it has been described from the word of God, is far less intangled with the matters of state in the kingdoms of this world, than any other frame of the church: and if the thoughts of Christ's disciples about the church were regulated by his word, their consciences would soon be freed from many intanglements they have come under by their principles about a national state of the church interfering with Cæsar's kingdom.

3. It is most agreeable to the spirit of the gospel, and to the strain of the New Testament, particularly to our Lord's new commandment of brotherly love, as has been shewed; and to what is so frequently said, in the word of God, against the pride and lordship of the ministry over God's heritage. If the plan of a gospel church given in the New Testament had continued, Antichrist had never been. Therefore we find the Apostle, when warning the church of the Thessalonians of Antichrist, gives them this direction: *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which*

which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle, 2 Theff. ii. 15.

4. There is no other state of the church wherein all the disciples of Christ will more easily agree, when they take the word of God alone for their rule in this matter, and when other frames of the church which they are contending for are stripped of all the worldly privileges that attend them. Christ has pointed out to us in his word what is necessary in this matter, and what all contending parties must own to be necessary; but the disputes, wars, and fightings, have been about things that man's wisdom saw further necessary, as if his institution of a gospel visible church had not been sufficient to answer all the ends for which he appointed it. But if we should take that wherein all the contending parties of Christ's disciples are agreed in this matter, it will be found to come nearest to that which has been described.

5. There is no other state of the church better for preserving and propagating the truth of the gospel, in the purity and power of it: therefore such churches as we have been speaking of, are compared, by the Lord himself, to golden candlesticks for holding the light. It is true, that those of the congregational way in England did, to their great reproach, sinfully grasp at secular power, and upon that project became one party of this world with the sectaries; yet the doctrine of the gospel has been preserved in greater purity in those churches than in other churches of another frame, if we take the preaching in them, and the profession of the members, and not merely public subscribed forms, as the rule of our judging in this case *. And truly a church of that nature, which hath been described, cannot be nor subsist without the word of the gospel coming in power, and bringing forth fruit; and without the spirit of Christ enabling

* See the preface to the faith and order of the congregational churches.

abling the members to confess, that Jesus is the Lord. But it is easy to conceive how other kind of churches may be without this.

6. If this account of a gospel-church be liable to no other sort of objections but what might be made against the apostolic churches, and if it be chargeable with no other kind of consequences but the same, or such like, as attended them, Christians may know what to think of it. What would some men have thought, of the gathering of churches out of a national church, that had once express divine institution, and out of the synagogues, if they had lived in those days? Further, if we shall hear of no other kind of arguing against it, but the old popish cant, about the imperfection or darkness of the scriptures, the authority of the church, fathers, and martyrs; the unity and order of the church, the dreadful schism of the reformers and reformed churches, and the invalidity of their call to the ministry, and of their ordination; Protestants will know what to think of it. And then, if Presbyterians be obliged to have recourse to the same sort of tools against it wherewith they themselves have been long annoyed by the Episcopal men, some Presbyterians, at least, may not be altogether at a loss how to form their thoughts about it.

7. It cannot overthrow the national establishment, which is by law. For, 1st, It cannot come in the place of it, as another constitution of a national church might do. There is nothing of parishes with fellows, nor presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies, in all this view of the plan of a gospel-church given us in the New-Testament. 2^{dly}, The national church is not settled by law upon the foundation of God's word, but upon the inclinations of the people of the land, which this frame that has been described can never pretend to; or if it might any where, for some time, pretend to it, as in the case of a colony, it could not subsist long without a considerable variation from itself. Of all ways of

establishing a national church by law, that of this nation is the best; and it were to be wished, that they who have the management of such a church would attend to the bottom on which it stands, the *people's claim of right*. This might at least be a check upon them in the affair of persecution.

Christ's institution of a gospel-church seeks no more for its taking place in the world, but the natural right of mankind, liberty of conscience; and cannot be disturbed by the powers of the earth, but by their breaking in upon that; which if they do, there is one above them, who can order things so, that his kingdom will be advanced in spite of all opposition, and in the face of persecution, as we see in the persecution of the church at Jerusalem.

3dly, This national church has never meddled much with the business of communion in the Lord's supper, but left it to the ministers in their several parishes; and the Confession of Faith affords them some direction whom to admit to that ordinance, and whom to debar. The practice of such of them as do not admit the whole parish, but some way attend to the principles of the Confession in that point, is, in effect, a gathering of a communicating church out of a parish, which some men call a church. And if two or three ministers in a country should admit none to that ordinance but proper objects of brotherly love, and join their communicants together with their own consent, and oversee them unto the maintaining of communion in brotherly love among them all, and unto their edification in that love, (while in all other things relating unto the parish order, they submit to the presbytery, and are accountable to it), this would come pretty near unto the scriptural account of a gospel-church; and if they that manage the national church could bear it, as they bear with meetings for prayer, it is not easy to see the harm it could do to their church. But if men will still urge an inconsistency betwixt this national church and the institution
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of Christ, and by any means² make them incompatible, and so proceed to persecute all of that way, then we may know what to do *for delivering our own souls*, Rev. xviii. 4. Jer. li. 6. and l. 8. and must change our thoughts of the national church, that hitherto has been stated in opposition to Antichristian tyranny.

And this may serve for clearing, how far a practice suitable to the proposition may take place under the present establishment, or without prejudice to it. If any want to be further satisfied on this head, they may see what is said upon it by the compilers of the faith and order of the congregational churches that met at Savoy 1658. They speak thus in their account of the institution of churches, and the order appointed in them by Jesus Christ, par. 14. "However, they who are engaged in the work of public preaching, and enjoy the public maintenance upon that account, are not thereby obliged to dispense the seals to any other than such as (being saints by calling, and gathered according to the order of the gospel) they stand related to as pastors or teachers; yet ought they not to neglect others, living within the parochial bounds; but, besides their constant public preaching to them, they ought to inquire after their profiting by the word, instructing them in, and pressing upon them (whether old or young) the great doctrines of the gospel, even personally and particularly, so far as their strength and time will admit."

Some considerations that prove, that communicating with persons that receive unworthily, doth not make a person an unworthy receiver.

1. “**E**Very man shall bear his own burden,” Gal. vi. 5. If another be wicked, how can his wickedness unsettle my faith, or disorder my devotion, except I consent to his impiety, or suffer myself to be enticed by it? He that is free from the other’s offence, shall be freed also from the penalty due to the offence, and then what hurt can I receive from an ill man’s communicating in my company? Why should I share in his guilt, when I both abhor it, and keep myself from the infection? *The soul that sins shall die*, is God’s standing rule. If therefore I approach with a practical faith, and another with unbelief, or, which is all one, with a *faith without works*, shall his unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? Rom. iii. 3.

2. What hurt did the guests receive at the wedding-feast, Matth. xxii. 11. 12. by eating with the man who had no *wedding-garment*? Were they rejected by the master of the feast, because they feasted in his company? No; all that came adorned with a suitable temper, and in whose *spirit there was no guile*, received the caresses of the King, and none but the profane wretch felt the thunder of the Prince’s anger: As he was singular in his sin, so was he singular in his punishment. The master doth not so much as frown upon the rest, doth not so much as give them an angry word; nor doth he expostulate with them, why they did bear him company? They charitably believed he was a good man, because he was invited with them.

3. If I see another man, whom I know to be or to have been a notorious sinner, sit down by me at this holy table, he must not therefore be an object of my scorn, but of my pity and compassion. I can make

an excellent use of seeing him in my company: for I can pray for him, and beg of God, that he would overawe his spirit with a sense of the death of Christ, and strike him into repentance and humiliation; I can intreat my heavenly Father to give him a sight of the error of his ways; I can pray, that his sight of the bleeding Jesus may work upon his soul, and fill his heart with holy compunctions, and his eyes with tears; I can pray, that, after this communion, he may take heed and sin no more: and where I do so, I do at once exercise my pity, and raise mine own devotion; and this, sure, cannot make me an unworthy receiver.

4. Who hath given me a key to other mens hearts, whereby I can judge, at the receiving of the sacrament, that my neighbour receives unworthily? How do I know, but that he who was vicious a week ago, may become a penitent that day? or, who assures me, that he who cast God's laws behind him yesterday, may not this day cry out, *O wretched man that I am!* Who bids me trouble my head about another's receiving, when I have enough to do with mine own heart? and, while I give myself liberty to judge another, is it not a very great sign that I am not very sensible of mine own vilencs? If I give myself to censoriousness at such times, I lose my charity and humility; and if the rule be, to esteem others better than ourselves, I do not very heartily obey that precept, while I suffer my mind to dwell upon other mens faults and errors. Christianity bids me have humble thoughts of myself; and if I think that all that receive with me may be, for ought I know, better than myself, I assuredly prepare for God's favour, who ever gives grace to the humble.

5. If Judas the traitor was present at this sacrament, as well as the other apostles, and his being present did not make the rest unworthy receivers, why should I think, that a wicked man's coming with me to this table should make me one? That
Judas

Judas was present at the sacrament, we have the concurring testimony of three evangelists; for they all confess, that Jesus *sat down with the twelve to the eating*; and while they were eating, Jesus administered the holy sacrament unto them. And whereas it is objected, that the sacrament could not have been conveniently administered if the traitor had been present; that is a supposition which contradicts the matter of fact recorded by the evangelists; and who can judge so well of the conveniency or inconveniency of things as Christ himself? If Christ thought it convenient to give it him, who can say it was not so? Nor could the disciples be much surpris'd at it, when they had so often heard their Master say, that *the tares and the wheat must grow together untill the harvest*, and that the kingdom of heaven, or the church-militant, *was like a net, containing good fish and bad*: and though the words of Christ used in this sacrament, *This is my body, which is given for you*, and, *This is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins*, cannot be directly applied to Judas; yet, since these blessings are promised conditionally in other places of scripture, they might belong to Judas conditionally, in case he repented, or *brought forth fruits meet for repentance*, as they belonged to the other disciples absolutely, because their hearts were sincere and without hypocrisy. Nor is it strange that Christ should say, in the presence of Judas, *I will not henceforth drink of the vine, untill I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom*; for there is nothing more common in the writings of the apostles, when they address themselves to a whole church, than to apply to them in general the promises of the gospel, though true believers only have a right to them; and therefore, when Christ spoke these words to the disciples, Judas being present, it was enough that they belonged to the major part of them, and those that were qualified for that mercy might appropriate it to themselves. But
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it is usually pleaded, that if Judas was present at this sacrament, yet still he had a good outside; he was far from being a scandalous sinner, so that the congregation could not be offended. But this argument is of no weight at all: for whether he were a scandalous sinner or no, as long as Christ had declared him a devil and a traitor, it was as much as if he had been a scandalous sinner; and the disciples might be as confident of it, as if they had seen him run into excess of riot: so that Judas being present at the sacrament, and his presence not interfering with the worthy receiving of the other disciples, it follows, that another man receiving unworthily, cannot make us, that come with suitable virtues, unworthy receivers. And yet, after all this, I would not be understood, as if scandalous sinners were not to be separated from this holy table, by those whose office it is to forbid and hinder them; but then it is fit withal that the church should excommunicate such persons first, that there may be a mark set upon them, whereby we may know them to be so, and avoid their company. If the church, either by reason of the multitude of such sinners, or for want of sufficient information, cannot, or through neglect doth not, a private Christian is not therefore to be scandalized at such persons when they come to the sacrament, nor think himself therefore an unworthy communicant because such are present, there being no public mark set upon them, whereby he is authorized not to eat with them.

The LETTER written in answer to the preceding paper.

S I R,

AT your desire I have considered the paper you sent me, containing some considerations that prove, that communicating with persons that receive unworthily, doth not make a person an unworthy receiver. For

For my part, this answer might be sufficient, That I agree with the proposition which is laid down to be proven: for, in the purest external communion that can be expected in a visible church, there will be hypocrites, foolish virgins with the wise, Matth. xxv. from the beginning, and branches in Christ not bearing fruit, John xv. from the beginning. These may receive unworthily, though they be not discerned so to do by any besides him *before whom all things are naked and open*. Their receiving unworthily is so far from making believers joined with them unworthy receivers, that it can in no wise touch them; seeing none but the searcher of the hearts can meddle with it. Real believers, not so scandalous as to be excommunicated from that ordinance of the supper, may receive unworthily; as appears from the Apostle's discourse on that subject to the church at Corinth, 1 Cor. xi. For he speaks of such chastisements as might befall justified persons for their communicating unworthily: *When we are judged, says he, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world*. And we cannot say, that partaking in the supper with a real believer, receiving unworthily, makes him that so partakes an unworthy receiver. Though yet, at the same time, it must be owned, that unworthy receiving, if it shall appear in them that we are bound to look upon as believers, and be tolerated in a church, will bring down divine judgments upon the church. Neither is communion with them that are not, by the law of Christ, to be looked upon as believers, scrupled at or refused, on this very account, that it makes them that hold such communion unworthy receivers; but on the account of the nature of the ordinance, the communion that is proper to it, and ought therein to be held; and on the account of the command of Christ, forbidding communion with such persons.

It might be pleaded, that kneeling at the communion-table does not make him that so partakes an unworthy

worthy receiver; and yet Scottish Presbyterians will not hereby justify that way of partaking: and some might perhaps contend, that partaking of the bread, if the cup should be denied to the people, does not make the believer an unworthy receiver of the bread; yet no Protestant would by this justify himself in that way of receiving the Lord's supper.

If the author of this paper had seen meet to impugn the answer to the synod's query upon this subject, or what is advanced upon it in the Narrative, from p. 167. to p. 174. it might have served better to clear this subject of difference, than the proof of a proposition never denied by me.

But, upon a view of what is advanced in the proof of this proposition, it would seem to me as if the author would have it thought, that we are not concerned with our fellow-communicants in the Lord's supper; and that to communicate with them that have no appearance of being disciples of Christ, and are known to be wicked, cannot touch us at all in that ordinance. And if this be his scope, to make us easy with whom we communicate, I must differ from him; because I see nothing in the word to give countenance to it, but very much against it.

I shall take a look of what he says on the five heads of argument, and consider how far it serves to free us of all scruples at promiscuous communion, and make us easy what they be with whom we communicate. And,

1. Is it so, That it belongs not to us to be satisfied, in the judgment of charity, concerning those with whom we communicate; because *every man shall bear his own burden*? If we look that context, we shall see, that as *every man must bear his own burden* before the Lord, so it is the great duty of the disciples of Christ to *bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*, Gal. vi. 1.—5. Does not the new commandment of Christ oblige us to make a difference between the disciples of Christ and the rest of

the world? to know them, do the peculiar duties of brotherly love to them, and to hold special communion with them our brethren *whom we have seen*? And is not this ordinance the highest instance of that communion, wherein the disciples give the greatest expression of their love to one another? Are not we, in proving ourselves and our own work, to have an eye upon this mark of love to our brethren whom we have seen, without which none of our works are good works, and without which we can *have no rejoicing in ourselves*? See the first epistle of John. And is not every man *to bear his own burden*, with respect to this commandment of Christ, *at the last day*? See Matth. xxv. and 1 John iv. 17. 20.

I have heard it also alledged, *That because we are called to examine ourselves, in order to our partaking of the Lord's supper: therefore we are not concerned to inquire about others, for making the judgment of charity about them with whom we communicate.* Yct, in that same context, the disciples are called *to tarry one for another, that they come not together unto condemnation*; and they are distinguished from other men, whom the Apostle calls *the world*. This plainly imports, that they had to do with one another in coming together to eat the Lord's supper; and that every one of them was not to look to himself only, without regard to any other, or any concern to know whether they were communicating with disciples or infidels. And further, it is plain, that their want of the exercise of brotherly love to one another in coming together, appearing in their not tarrying one for another, and in the divisions that were among them, was one reason of their being chastened of the Lord, and of their coming together to condemnation. See 1 Cor. xi. from ver. 17. to the end. If a man examine himself as he ought, he will see abundant reason in himself not to despise any of Christ's *little ones*, and to make him judge charitably, and reckon himself *less than the least* of them; and this is an excellent mean to pre-
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serve from that pride and self-conceit which is inconsistent with brotherly love. But if we examine ourselves by the rules and marks laid down in the word of God, we shall find ourselves concerned to make a difference between the little ones that believe in Christ, and the world; and that we have much to do with them, in coming together with them *to eat the Lord's supper*, that we have not to do with the world.

If a believer, joined in partaking of the ordinance, and in church-communion, with an open unbeliever or wicked person, do abhor his guilt, and keep himself from the infection, he does well; but it must be at least owned, he is not using the means appointed by Christ for that end; while he is yoked together in the most eminent part of Christian communion with that person, and is declaring himself *one bread* and *one body* with him, by partaking with him in that *one bread*, which is the *communion of the body of Christ*; and this after Christ has commanded him to turn away from such. See 1 Cor. chap. v. *We are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed may be taken away from among you. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not, that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened, &c.*

2. For what appears in the parable of the man among the guests wanting the wedding-garment, he is discerned by none but the all-seeing master of the feast, and might be the object of the brotherly love of the other guests, who might be approved in the exercise of this love toward him as a suitable object of it, and yet he himself bear his own burden. The ground of their charity toward him could not be, that he was an object of the gospel-call; for so were they that were invited and would not come; but that he appeared to them to give obedience to it, and joined himself with the guests, appearing to be a guest, and a partaker of the heavenly calling. Many such ob-

jects of brotherly love will be found by the master of the feast at length to want the wedding-garment. But if our charity be to go upon a man's being invited by the gospel-call unto fellowship with Christ and his people, then there will be as many objects of brotherly love as there are hearers of the gospel; and all to whom the gospel is preached might, without more, partake of the Lord's supper; which must be a great absurdity with them that are of the principles professed in the church established by law.

3. Without question, a notorious sinner is not to be the object of our scorn, but of our pity and compassion; and there are duties of benevolence and compassion suitable to the gospel, to be done toward that man: but is this to be our work about our fellow-communicants in partaking with them in that bread and cup? Be this exercise about the notorious sinner what it will, it is not communicating; and if I be not otherwise employed in that ordinance, I am not communicating at all. If I should pray that the Lord's supper may be a mean of conversion to such a sinner, I know not if I would be praying in faith: for that ordinance is no mean of Christ's appointment for that end. The preaching of the gospel of Christ at a communion-table, (though that be not a proper way of doing it), may be a mean of conversion to a notorious sinner, and a mean also of edifying a believer; but hearing the gospel, though it be in faith, and communicating, are two very distinct things. An onlooker, that is not partaking in the bread and cup, may perceive a representation of a crucified Christ in that blessed bread and cup, wherein he sees others partaking, and perhaps may be very much affected with it; but it cannot be said, that this person is communicating in the Lord's supper: and if there be no more but this in the case of a person sitting at the table, and eating the bread and drinking the wine, without having any thing to do therein with his fellow-communicants, I very much question if
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that person be communicating at all. We cannot expect that he who never *saw Christ*, or *believed* in him as exhibited to all in the preaching of the gospel, will *discern the Lord's body* in the supper as set forth there only to disciples, to be discerned by them in their partaking of it together as one body, for the confirmation of their faith and love, and for *sealing believers unto the day of redemption*. We are not to despise, but pity and pray for a company of Infidels, Jews, Mahometans, or Heathens: but would it be lawful for us to partake with them in the Lord's supper (supposing them to be some way or other compelled to it) till we should be satisfied of their conversion? or could we in that case exercise communicating graces with respect to them? And if we compare the condition of these infidels with that of infidels going under the Christian name, and claiming interest in the Christian privileges, we may come to find the other sort of infidels having, in several respects, the better of them.

4. Christ has kept the key of hearts in his own hand; but, by his new commandment, he has enjoined his disciples the knowing and acknowledging of the proper objects of that peculiar brotherly love; else that his commandment would be in vain. For, if those whom he commands us to love with this love, cannot be known by all his disciples, distinguished from others, to what purpose is this his commandment unto all the disciples? And though he hath not given any of them the key to mens hearts, yet he hath pointed out to all, in his word, the objects of this brotherly love, with whom he commands us to hold communion, and those from whom he commands us to turn away. Communicants must be the objects of this love, and we must know so much concerning them with whom we communicate, before we eat of that bread and drink of that cup with them: and so we have no occasion for troubling ourselves, in communicating, with censoriousness,
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and dwelling upon one another's faults; but we rather thus come together, every one of us fearing concerning himself, lest he be the only person in all the company whom the Lord shall find wanting the wedding-garment.

As to what is said for preparing for God's favour, by humble thoughts of myself; it is an unguarded expression, that may be taken in a sense very derogatory to God's grace, and there may be much abominable pride in applying after this manner for God's favour in that ordinance.

However, it is safer to hold by the scripture way of speaking, *He resisteth the proud, and gives grace to the humble; and if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

5. As to Judas's communicating, see Gillespie, and what he says against Judas's being a partaker in the Lord's supper.

Yet let us suppose, that Judas *did eat of that bread, and drink of that cup*; was not Judas then such a person, in the eyes of the disciples, that when the Lord told them, *one of them should betray him*, they suspected every one himself rather than Judas? And though the Lord had told them before, that one of them was a devil; yet none of them, for ought we hear, suspected Judas, or could know, from any thing that our Lord said, that it was he, till such time as he had received the sop, and immediately he went forth; so that the disciples were called to no further communion with him, after he was thus discovered to the beloved disciple. Our Lord, who alone knew their hearts, knew from the *beginning who should betray him*. Notwithstanding this, he made him an apostle. No man would by this justify our setting apart of one to the ministry, whom we know certainly to be a devil and a traitor: neither will his admitting him to the supper, (which it can never be shown that he did), who, before his all-seeing eye, was a devil, give ground to his disciples to admit those,

those, or to communicate with those, whom they know to be such, judging by what appears to man's eye. Our Lord, in giving the supper, acted as the prime minister of the New Testament, giving a pattern to his ministers to follow in that matter; and none of them can copy after him in his omniscience. He hath not given them the key to mens hearts. but reserved it to himself, and left them to judge by what appears to them, according to his word.

The net, containing good and bad fish together, may some way answer unto the case of Judas's being among the disciples. That parable speaks of people gathered out of all nations into fellowship together, by the influence of the gospel; and not by such influence as has made many pass under the Christian name, that never felt any thing of the power of the gospel gathering them with the people of Christ, unto the great reproach and dishonour of that name, which at first belonged to none but disciples, made so by the hand of the Lord with the gospel, and gathered together by means of the gospel, upon an appearance of the grace of God in them. See Acts xi. 19.—26. But there is another thing intended in the parable of the tares and the wheat; as is to be seen in the letter published by Walker.

As to what is said of the words of the institution:
 1. I cannot approve of the style, speaking as if Christ's blood had been shed conditionally for the remission of sins, and the condition repentance, with its fruits, and sincerity; and as if Christ's blood, while said to be shed for men conditionally, became absolute to them that fulfil the condition of repentance and sincerity. Neither can I think, that those who are pleased with such a style will be able to maintain, that all ought to partake in the Lord's supper, to whom they think that may be said conditionally, *This blood was shed FOR YOU, for the remission of sins*; for that, they think, may be said to all mankind without exception.
 2. Neither am I satisfied in what he says of
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the apostles speaking of the major part in the churches: for I cannot be certain, that the major part in these churches were true believers and sincere penitents; or, if he will have it, that the major part in these churches were real believers. What manner of churches, then, were they? It is not easy to suppose, that a church made up according to the scope of this paper, will consist, for the most part, of real believers. I have better ground to think, that the apostles speak not of them, as seeing their hearts, and finding the major part real believers; but in the judgement of charity, upon the outward evidence they all gave *of faith in the Lord Jesus, love to all the saints, and the Christian hope.* Sure the Apostle speaks not of the major part of the church of the Thessalonians, 2d Epist. i. 3. If we look to the two prime Christian churches, Jerusalem, the first of the Jews, and Antioch, the first of the Gentiles, we shall see of what sort of persons they were made up, and that there was no searching of hearts in the case, but a positive judgement of charity upon what appeared. And certainly the first of a kind is a very good rule for all that follows of the same kind. See Acts ii. 37. 40. 41. 42. and Acts xi. from ver. 19. to the end. According to this judgement of charity, this could have been said of Judas, and the disciples could all have held communion with him upon that footing. As for what appeared about him to the omniscient eye, the disciples had nothing to do with that; and our Lord gave not his ordinance after the rule of his omniscience, and his judgement thereby, but in such a manner as might be imitated by his servants in all ages. Yet, for my part, I see nothing that should move me to think, that Judas was a partaker in that ordinance. There appears to me no ground for such a thought in the evangelists. And by what is above said, you may perceive how little ground there is for all this noise about Judas, even supposing him to have been a partaker.

After

After all that the author of this paper has said to the contrary, he is still for a separation in this matter of communion in the Lord's supper; but he leaves the marks in the dark, as a secret to be kept among the clergy, to whom he commits the whole affair: so that we are to forbear communion with none in the Lord's supper but such persons as have a public mark set upon them by them, authorising us not to eat with them; and if they neglect to do their duty, in separating from that holy table such as ought to be separated from it, there is nothing left to the people in that case, but to follow them, and hold communion in that ordinance with as many as they think fit to admit. But seeing the author of this paper is against the admission of all to that holy table, I would desire to know, if he holds this only as a common prevailing opinion, which he thinks reasonable, or if he himself be satisfied in the truth of it, upon scripture-evidence? And if he consider the scripture-evidence for it, I am mistaken if he do not find, that the people, the communicants, have a concern in it, and a duty incumbent on them about it, as to which they must be answerable to the head of the church, as well as their officers, and that they shall bear their own burden with respect to this, as well as they. I shall freely own to the author of this paper, that if the overseers of the communion of Christ's disciples would do their duty in this matter, the people would have no just ground of offence, and would be *transgressors of the law of Christ* if they gave their overseers any disturbance in that matter, and so ought to be marked: *For God is not the author of confusion*, in the churches of the saints. And, on the other hand, if the overseers of the church openly neglect their duty in this matter, I reckon he must also agree with me, that the disciples of Christ have a judgement of discretion with respect to those with whom he commands them to *walk in brotherly love* and Christian communion, and those from whom he

commands them to turn away; and withdraw themselves; and that it is in the power of none to oblige them to hold communion in the Lord's supper with any from whom he obliges them to withdraw.

We have had some considerations, on the one hand, tending to make us easy with whom we communicate, and to encourage us to continue in promiscuous communion in the Lord's supper; and there are also some considerations, on the other hand, that serve to satisfy us, that it is our duty to forbear communion in the Lord's supper with them that have no appearance of being disciples of Christ, Believers in him, and are not objects of that brotherly love required in the new commandment; and to withdraw, in that ordinance, from every brother walking in open notour disobedience to the commands of Christ, and to seek after such communion in that ordinance as the Lord requires in his word, and in his new commandment.

1. They that believe there is such a thing as Christian communion, and a visible communion of saints by profession, must acknowledge, that the Lord's supper is the highest instance of that communion. It is peculiarly designed for this beyond any other ordinance of worship in a visible church: for in our eating of that bread and drinking of that cup together, we have the clearest and most evident outward representation made to us of the glorious mystical union and communion in the body of Christ mystical. Our mystical union and communion with Christ is evidently set forth to the believer in this ordinance; so that the believer, in eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, may know the riches of that glorious mystery, John .vi. 56. 57. *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* And, at the same time, the mystical union and communion of the members of Christ, in him crucified, is evidently set forth to the believer in our partaking all of that one bread and cup. 1 Cor. x. 16.

17. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.* If it were not so, why might not the Lord's supper be given where there is but one to receive it, as well as baptism? Now, if it be so, that there is, in that ordinance, an outward representation made of the glorious mystical union and communion of the members of the body of Christ, how is that representation made to the believer, if it be not in the apparent members of Christ their partaking together in that one bread and cup of blessing? Thus they that partake together in the *cup of blessing which we bless*, and in that *bread which we break*, must look upon themselves, if they would discern what is set before them in the ordinance, as very nearly related to one another, even as one bread and one body; and this by their being all partakers of that bread and cup which is the communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Now, in a mixed communion of apparent members of the body of Christ, with them that have no appearance of being members of that body, this blessed representation of the glorious union and communion in the mystical body of Christ is destroyed; and further, we become as much one body and bread with them that appear not to be members of Christ, as with them that do, as far as our partaking in that one bread can make us so: and how much this is consistent with the nature of the ordinance, and the graces that ought suitably thereto to be exercised toward Christ, and toward one another, in it, we may see by what has been said. This was the doctrine of the reformers. See the Palatine catechism, qu. 76. and 77.

“What is it to eat the body of Christ, and to drink his blood that was shed?”

Ans. It is not only with certain assiance of mind to lay hold on the whole passion and death of Christ,

and thereby to obtain forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting*; but also by the spirit of Christ, which dwelleth at one time both in Christ and us, in such sort more and more to be united unto his holy body†; that although he be in heaven and we upon earth, yet, notwithstanding, we are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone‡; and as all the members of the body are quickened and governed by one soul, so are we all by one and the same spirit||.

Quest. 77. Where hath Christ promised, that he will as certainly give unto the believer his body and his blood in this manner to be eaten and drunk, as they do eat this bread being broken, and drink this cup?

Ans. In the institution of the supper, the words whereof are these,—1 Cor. xi. 23. 24. 25. 26. Matth. xxvi. 26. 27. 28. Mark xiv. 22. 23. 24. Luke xxii. 19. 20. This promise is repeated by Paul, when he saith,—1 Cor. x. 16. 17.”

2. We are solemnly called and encouraged by great promises, not to be *unequally yoked together, believers with unbelievers, and to come out from among them, and be separated*, 2 Cor. vi. from ver. 11. to the end. Whatever wrong use has been made of this place by them that have, upon unscriptural grounds, separated from the ministers and people of Christ, and have made up themselves into sects and parties, quite off from the Christian catholic footing; yet we must think this word of the Lord has some sense, and that herein we are called to something, which would be of great advantage to us, if we shall comply with the call.

But the great question is, What this yoking together,

* John vi. 35. 40. 47. 48. 50. 51. 52. 54. 58.

† John vi. 55. 56. 57. Acts, i. 3. 21. 1 Cor. xi. 26. Col. iii. 1.

‡ Eph. v. 30. 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

|| John vi. 57. & xv. 1.—6. Eph. iii. 16. & iv. 15. 16. 1 John iii. 24. & iv. 13.

gether, and this separation, should mean? Marriage it cannot be: for supposing a believer to be yoked together in marriage with a very gross unbeliever, can it be said, that it is the great duty of the believer to come out from and be separated from the unbelieving yoke-fellow in marriage? But this is the case here, that they who are unequally yoked together, believers with unbelievers, are called to come out from among them, and be separate. Civil communion it cannot be either: for separation in this respect would be to go out of the world, or turn monks, and transgress many commandments of Jesus Christ. The Apostle here refers to the prohibition in the law, of yoking an ox and an ass together; and speaks of such a yoke, wherein believers ought not to be yoked with unbelievers, because of the unsuitableness of these two sorts of persons for that same yoke: and this he aggravates in several expressions: *What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? And 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?* And the Apostle speaks here of such a yoke as believers ought not to be joined in with unbelievers, because of the unsuitableness of unbelievers for that yoke: *Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:—For ye are the temple of God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.* Further, This is such a yoking together, such a communion and fellowship, such a having part with and agreement with unbelievers, as whereby the church at Corinth, the people of Christ joined in a church there, were straitened in their own bowels; for it is given as a direction to them, for their enlargement, when straitened in their own bowels, *Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;* so that it

is a direction of the same sort with that which was given in the 5th chapter of the 1st epistle, *Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.* And as he is calling them there to clear their church-communion of such as were unworthy of it, so he does here. He had spoke of some among them that began to deny the resurrection of the dead, after they had professed the faith, 1 Cor. xv. and what he says here may point to them; but he extends his exhortation, and makes it more general, and calls for a separation betwixt believers and unbelievers: no doubt, such a separation as the Corinthians were able to make, who could not search mens hearts: and there may be also here some eye to the subject on which he insists, 1 Cor. x. 14.—22.; compare Rev. ii. 14. And now, what is that yoke, that communion and fellowship, wherein believers must be by themselves, and not with unbelievers, if it be not church-communion? And what part of Christian communion is it, wherein they must not be yoked with them, if it be not the highest instance of it, the Lord's supper? The assembly of divines at Westminster, in their confession, apply this text unto the subject of the Lord's supper; and they that have the utmost regard to the mind of that venerable body of men in all points, will not reckon this a false gloss upon the place. And if it shall be granted, as it cannot well be denied, that this place of scripture points to church-communion, then let us consider, whether this exhortation and solemn call, *Be not unequally yoked, &c.* be directed to the overseers of the church of Corinth only, or to every church-member. And I reckon we can be in no strait to find, that every Christian is concerned in it, and will find himself obliged to answer the call; and while he thinks of doing so, he had need to take heed to the direction given in the first verse of the following chapter. We might also observe, how the first converts answered that call, Acts ii. 40. *Save yourselves*

selves from this untoward generation. They that gladly received the word, were added: and they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

3. Every one that professes the faith of the gospel, every disciple of Christ, is bound to have a conversation becoming the gospel; and it is the duty of the meanest disciple of Christ to study this. The Apostle earnestly exhorts the church at Philippi to this, Phil. i. 27. 28. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries.* We plainly see wherein it is that the Apostle desires to find the conversation of the Philippians, and of all such after them, appearing suitable to the gospel: he tells us, it will be becoming the gospel, if they be *standing fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel, against the adversaries of it*; and that so as he may either see it, being present among them, or hear of it being absent, and hearing of their affairs. So that we may observe, that it is the faith of the gospel in the open profession of it that he is speaking of, and calling us to strive for against the adversaries. And while we contend for the faith of the gospel of Christ, as it is distinguished from nature's light, and opposed to the wisdom of man in the things of God; and as it is distinguished from the law of Moses, and opposed to Judaism; are we not also bound to contend for it, as it is the most *holy faith, the faith once delivered to the saints*, Jude 3. 19. 20. in opposition to a carnal, worldly, sensual profession of faith, no wise influenced by the spirit of Christ in the gospel, nor attended with good works? Further, we see the Apostle is speaking of an open strife for the faith in the profession of it, against open adversaries; for it is only such a strife that he could see or hear of, being absent, and hearing of their
their

their affairs. And he is not so much speaking of a man's striving alone in this place, as of a company of Christians living together in a place, and striving together in a body, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together, so as one being present might see, and being at a distance from them might know no otherwise but by report. And this was the church at Philippi. Let them that speak much of a *conversation becoming the gospel*, consider this, that where there is not such a strife for the faith of the gospel as this, there there is something very considerable wanting to make out a *conversation becoming the gospel*. If there be no room nor place now for an open strife for the faith of the gospel of Christ in the profession of it, as it has been described, then there is no place among us at this day for that *conversation becoming the gospel* of which the Apostle speaks in this text: but if there be, as no doubt there is every where, in every place where there are such as those to whom the Apostle writes this epistle; then, if these shall be yoked together in partaking of that blessed bread and cup, which is the communion of the body and blood of Christ, and so become one bread and one body with them that cannot confess that faith of the gospel of Christ, that *holy faith once delivered to the saints*, and with the open adversaries of that faith; might it not be thought, in that case, that the strife of which the Apostle is speaking is composed, and the fire that was kindled by the disciples of Christ, in their being *joined in one spirit, with one mind, striving for the holy faith* of the gospel against the adversaries, is quenched and put out, now when the differing parties are joined together in the closest external bond of Christian union and communion that can be thought of? And we need be at no loss to see, if this exhortation be directed to the bishops at Philippi only, or to all the saints there appearing so to be: and saints we must be, or no Christians. Now, if you shall enquire, what we are contending for in this business about Christian communion,

on, particularly in the Lord's supper? our answer is, We are aiming at a *conversation becoming the gospel*, in striving together for the holy faith of the gospel of Christ, in opposition to a sort of faith not influenced by the gospel, not favouring of Christ, nor of his Spirit, but dead, carnal, worldly, and fruitless, that passes under the name of the Christian faith, and has come instead of the *faith once delivered to the saints*. And *who is sufficient for these things?* But the strength of the Lord Jesus is made perfect in weakness.

4. The exercise of brotherly love toward our fellow-communicants is necessary unto a right partaking with them in the Lord's supper, and there is no more place for the exercise of this grace toward our brethren, whom we have seen at a communion-table, than there is any where else, if our fellow-communicants be not proper objects of this love. I need not add to what is said on this subject in the Narrative; only, if I be to profess brotherly love to my fellow-communicants, as I seem to do in the most eminent manner when I become one bread and one body with them, I cannot do this without abominable hypocrisy and dissimulation, if I look not upon them as the saints and faithful in Christ: and therefore I may say with the Apostle, speaking of church-communion, "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." But I have wearied myself, and I fear will weary you, and I am in haste; and therefore I shall only put you in mind of another consideration:

5. All the disciples of Christ are by him inclined to a peculiar fellowship with their brethren; and it is very agreeable to the new nature in real believers to seek after separate Christian fellowship; therefore you have heard a great complaint of promiscuous com-

munion in the Lord's supper among them from time to time. If they have been conscientiously dissatisfied with it, and yet have continued in it, even when they saw no help for it, no appearance against it; and if in that case the Lord pitied them, as he pitied Israel according to the flesh in Babylon, where they were mingled with the nations, and had not their liberty; they have reason to bless him for it: but now, when they are called to come out, and there is an appearance made against that with which they have all professed dissatisfaction, and that appearance every where opposed; how far can they be answerable to Jesus Christ, if they continue in mixed communion and in bondage, and so do what in them lies to knock that in the head which they have been pretending conscientiously to wish for and to advance, and promote that effectually which they have been so long groaning to be delivered from? Should any worldly incon-
 veniency, or any carnal reasonings and consultings with flesh and blood, against the word and call of Christ, and of their own consciences, divert them, or any way terrify them, from going forth unto him without the camp bearing his reproach? *Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

I am,

S I R,

Yours, &c.

The

The SPEECH of Mr JOHN GLAS before the
Commission of the General Assembly,
March 11. 1730.

I Judge it my duty to lay before this commission such a state of my difference from this national church, as may serve to shew how far it may justify the treatment I have met with upon it; and to manifest, that I differ from this church no farther than the word of God, as I understand it, obliges me to differ. And I am hopeful, that what I now offer, may serve to bring this process to a speedy issue, which is the thing I sincerely desire.

What lies now before the commission to be considered as the matter of my condemnation, may be comprehended under the three following heads.

1. My refusing to subscribe the *Formula*, because I cannot see the government of this national church by kirk-sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and general assemblies, to be founded in the word of God.

2. My refusing to subscribe some passages in the Confession of Faith, touching the magistrate's power *circa sacra*, and liberty of conscience, with some propositions relative thereto, maintained by me.

3. My exercising the ministerial office, after I was forbidden upon these grounds.

I. As to the first of these, I refuse to subscribe the *Formula*, because I cannot see precept or example in scripture for the government of this national church by kirk-sessions, presbyteries, provincial and national synods; and I do not imagine, that the commission will affirm there is such a foundation in the word of God for the foresaid government. And if it should be my opinion, that it requires precept or example in God's word for such a government to warrant me to declare, that it is founded in that word, or if I should affirm, that church-courts, meeting in the

name of Christ, require as much warrant in the word of God, as church-officers, acting in his name; I see not any proposition in the public standards of the church that condemns this: nor can I conceive how it should be a ground of censure; since I have declared, that I look upon this as the best national establishment, and that I am very far from desiring to see it changed for another national church-government.

And though it be by me affirmed, that a congregation or church of Jesus Christ, with its presbytery, is, in its discipline, subject to no jurisdiction under heaven; yet I never intended by this to deny the subjection of a parish, with its kirk-session, unto presbyteries, synods, and assemblies. For, when the magistrate divides his subjects into parcels, to be taught by so many teachers, upon the encouragement by him afforded, the nature of the thing requires, that these teachers should be subject to the oversight of such as, by the law that affords them a maintenance, are appointed to oversee them, and to whom that law makes them accountable. But it will not be affirmed by the commission, that these parishes, and their overseers, are of the same kind with the first Christian churches or congregations, and their presbyteries: for these congregations were gathered together only by the gospel; and were disciples of Christ, voluntarily associated for holding spiritual communion together, and for the observation of the laws of Christ, and the enjoyment of the spiritual privileges of his kingdom, which is not of this world, and they were governed by presbyteries freely chosen and maintained by themselves. Now seeing it is evident, these were quite different things from parishes and kirk-sessions, as I cannot think but parishes are designed unto better ends than to make such churches, as were from the beginning, useless; and set them aside; so I cannot persuade myself, that the commission will judge it a censurable fault in me to hold, that, notwithstanding of the order of parishes, it is still
lawful

lawful for ministers and disciples of Christ, to conform themselves to the first Christian churches, with their presbyteries, 1 Theff. ii. 13. 14. So that, unless I be condemned for saying, that kirk-sessions and parishes are not the same thing with the first Christian presbyteries and congregations, the only thing that remains to be considered, as a ground for the sentence against me upon this head, is, That I affirm these first churches were not subjected in their discipline to any jurisdiction under heaven. But as the Confession and *Formula* (which respects parishes) does not precisely decide this question, nor contain any proposition that expressly contradicts this; so there is no evidence appearing to me from the word of God, that these first churches were subject to any jurisdiction under heaven in their discipline, but much to the contrary. For,

1. Our Lord lodges the power of binding and loosing under himself, in that church, with its presbytery, unto which the offended brother tells his brother's trespass, after he has neglected to hear him with the one or two more, and he promises his presence with the smallest presbytery of such a church in the exercise of that discipline; and that what they do in his name on the earth shall be ratified in heaven, Matth. xviii. 15.—20.

When the Lord warrants the smallest presbytery of such a church to exercise that discipline in the church, I cannot see, that he hereby allows any number of bishops or presbyters, gathered together in any other manner, to bind or loose in his name. Neither can I see, that his directing his disciples in the church to carry toward them that do not hear the church, as the Jews did towards heathen men and publicans, can give any ground to think; that he would by this have his churches to be constituted after the form of the Jewish national church. But if there had been any reference in this place unto the constitution of the Jewish church, then I conceive, that a congregational church

church, with its presbytery, where the worship and the discipline hold pace together, is far more agreeable to the constitution of that church, which was one worshipping congregation, with its presbytery, the Sanhedrim, and where the bounds for the worship and government were the same, and not as in national churches now, where the worship is comprehended in a parish, and the government and discipline extends to the whole nation. And as there were synagogues in the Jewish congregation, where the whole worship of the church could not be performed; so there may be meetings belonging unto a congregational church, wherein some parts of worship, and some things pertaining to the discipline may be done. But as the commission will not allow of a conformity to the Jewish church in the subordination of church-officers, so as little can I see any reason for a conformity to that church in a subordination of church-courts; and it will not be easy to prove, that these two subordinations should not go together.

2. As our Lord has thus committed the whole power of discipline under himself to a congregational church with its presbytery, and left it free from any other jurisdiction; so, when the apostles had erected such churches, with their presbyteries, and were leaving them, they did not recommend them to the care of any superior court or synod, *but to the Lord, on whom they believed, and to the word of his grace*; and this even when they were forewarning them of the case of false teachers, gross errors, and sects, the very case for which synods have been, by the wisdom of man, judged absolutely necessary, Acts xiv. 23. Acts xx. 17. 28.—32. The apostle directs unto means to be used in this case under the Lord, and calls the presbytery to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock; but speaks of no such means as a superior court over such a presbytery.

There were divisions and many evils prevailing, and gross errors held in some of the first churches, as in
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the church at Corinth, and some of the churches in Asia; and these churches are condemned for suffering such things, and commanded to reform themselves, which they could not well do, if it belonged to their superiors; but there is no insinuation of their subjection in this matter unto any superior court under heaven, having jurisdiction over them, nor any reference unto such jurisdiction.

3. The greatest acts of church government and discipline, and the most important decisions in doctrine that the New Testament speaks of, were in congregational churches, and in no other courts; as may appear from the following instances.

1st, Excommunication and absolution was in the power of the church at Corinth, 1 Cor. v. 2 Cor. ii. And to any that will impartially consider 1 Cor. xi. 18. 20. and xiv. 23. it will evidently appear to have been a congregational church. The Apostle indeed speaks of his delivering some unto Satan, 1 Tim. i. 20. but it is not thereby clear, that he did it by himself alone, and not after the manner pointed at 1 Cor. v. 4. 5. even as it does not appear from his saying, the gift was given unto Timothy by the putting on of his hands, 2 Tim. i. 6. that this was not done in the presbytery of a church, as we see it was, 1 Tim. iv. 14. The trying and judging of false apostles was a great business, and this was done by the elders with the flock at Ephesus, Rev. ii. 2. Compare Acts xx. 28. and that whole flock did, in the days of Ignatius, all partake of the Lord's supper, and pray together in one place.

2^d/y. The first instance of ordination is in the church at Jerusalem, when it was manifestly but one congregation, Acts i, and that congregation was very far from comprehending all the disciples of Christ then on the earth. For it is clear from 1 Cor. xv. 6. that the Lord, after his resurrection, was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remained when Paul wrote that epistle. Buy
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the number of the names together was only about one hundred and twenty, when Peter stood up among them, and called them to proceed to the ordination of an apostle, in the room of Judas, who was also, together with the eleven, to be chosen unto the oversight of that church, Acts i. 14. 15. 20. 26. For though the apostles had an immediate commission to be witnesses of the Lord's resurrection, as had also Matthias by lot, yet it behoved them to be the overseers or bishops of that church, by the suffrages of the church. And whatever power they had to preach the gospel through the world, yet, in order thereto, they first assembled themselves with the church, that the gospel might proceed out of a church; even as we see Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, assembled himself with the church in Antioch, and from thence went forth into the Gentile world to fulfill his commission. The separation of Paul and Barnabas unto that great work to which the Holy Ghost called them, and the sending of them to it, was by the presbytery of the church in Antioch, Acts xiii. 1. 2. 3. : and it is manifest from Acts xi. 23. 26. and xiv. 25. 26. and xv. 30. that this church was but one congregation. The ordination of Timothy was by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, (1 Tim. iv. 14.) of some one or other of those churches of which we read, Acts xiv. 23. compare Acts xvi. 1. 2. 3. and these are acknowledged to be congregational; yea, the constant signification of the word *presbytery* in the writings of the ancients, is, for what I can learn, the eldership of one worshipping congregation. And if these great ordinations were transacted in the congregations of the saints, we need not go elsewhere to find the power of ordaining bishops or elders, Acts xiv. 23. and deacons, Acts vi.

3dly, That great decision in doctrine, even the *δύματα*, the decrees about the keeping of Moses's law by the Gentiles, Acts xv. was ordained by the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem, in the
presence

presence and with the consent of that whole church, Acts xvi. 4. and xv. 26. and by none other. For,

(1.) These decrees were ordained by the apostles, and these elders with the brethren that were in Jerusalem, before the question and dispute was raised at Antioch; even that company that says, *We have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words;* ver. 23. 24.

(2.) As there is no evidence that there were elders or messengers there from any other church but Antioch; so the company that made the decision is evidently distinguished from the messengers of Antioch, Paul and Barnabas. So that it is manifest they were not members of that court that made the decision, ver. 22.—25. *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, &c.;* and it does not appear, that Paul and Barnabas acted otherwise in that meeting, but as messengers asking a question in the name of the church that sent them, and giving information, ver. 2. 4. 12.

(3.) We are plainly told, the decision was made by the apostles and elders of Jerusalem, and that they decided this question in the presence and with the consent of the whole church in Jerusalem, to which they were elders, Acts xvi. 4. and xv. 22. For by *the whole church*, I can understand nothing else but the body of the people, the flock over which these elders were overseers; not a church-representative, as it is called, for that is elders. But this church is distinguished from the elders, and is no other but that multitude of which James, in the presence of all the elders, spake to Paul, when he came upon another errand afterwards to Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 18. 19. 22. 25. This is the same thing that goes under the designation of *brethren*, Acts xv. 23. where all the members of the churches of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, are the same way designed and distinguished from the brethren in Jerusalem, that con-

presented to the decision, by their being of the Gentiles. This designation appears to have been from the beginning common to all church-members, Acts i. 14. 15. 16. 1 Thess. v. 12. for the churches consisted then of none other but such as were fit to be thus designed; and the apostles reckoned all church-members their brethren in Christ.

There were very good reasons for the making of this decision in this church, and for the sending of this question by the church in Antioch to be determined here. As,

(1.) The false teachers used the authority of the apostles and elders of this church, from whence they came out, against Paul and Barnabas, ver. 1. 2. 24. 25. 26. and it was the use of such teachers after this to call the apostleship of Paul in question, and represent him unto the churches where they came, as differing from the apostles.

(2.) The word of God came out (1 Cor. xiv. 36.) from this church to Antioch, and to all the world; and from hence they had their church-order, and all the ordinances of Christ, Acts xi.; for this was peculiar to Jerusalem, that there the gospel should have its beginning. And it could not but trouble and burden the church at Antioch and all the Gentiles exceedingly, to think that this church should be so far offended with them, as not to account them in a state of salvation, ver. 1. 24. 28.

(3.) The apostles were in this church, and with the elders of this church, where they began their ministry, and settled all matters of importance. And this was an important point to be fixed in this church, while they were in it. Therefore we see the church at Antioch had a special eye to the apostles their being in the presbytery of Jerusalem, when they sent up this question to be determined there, ver. 2.

Thus there is nothing like a pattern for a synod of any kind in the 15th chapter of the Acts, but a plain pattern in the churches at Jerusalem and Antioch, the
first

first of the Jews, and the first of the Gentiles, for congregational churches, with their presbyteries, and for the sort of persons of which those churches ought to be made up, and for a presbytery's doing things, not by numbered votes, but by agreement, and for the consent of the whole church where they rule, unto their decisions, and for such churches their mutually helping one another, and all the disciples of Christ through the world, as they have occasion; all which is freely acknowledged by me.

4. It is not agreeable to the nature of such Christian churches as were from the beginning, that they should be subject to any jurisdiction but that of the Lord Christ their head, or that they should not depend immediately upon himself. For, *1st*, It is necessary unto that pure communion in brotherly love, especially in the Lord's supper, which ought to be in them, that they have it wholly in their power, under Christ, to bind and loose; and their communion in this love cannot stand with their being over-ruled in this matter by a superior court, loosing whom they judge Christ commands them to bind, and binding such as they judge he commands them to loose, and receive in his name. *2^{dly}*, Neither is it consistent with their free choice of their overseers and teachers, and their maintaining of them at their own charges, as the word of God directs, that the making up and dissolving of the relation betwixt them and any of these overseers, should not be in their power under Christ. *3^{dly}*, Every one of these churches is a complete church, representing and shewing forth the catholic invisible body of Christ, 1 Cor. x. 16. 17. And it is not agreeable unto this, that they should be subjected to one another, or to any jurisdiction but that of Christ, who is the head of the catholic body, whose power is manifested in their discipline, and who is the alone head of every one of them, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holding the stars in his right hand, and in whom every church of the saints

is visibly builded together, as the catholic church is invisibly, *for an habitation of God through the Spirit,* Eph. ii. 21. 22.

Lastly, Synods took their rise from that first step of defection from the primitive institution, *viz.* the setting of one bishop in a church above the rest of the presbytery, and making them dependent on him; so that they were no more his peers, and could not be his judges. This corruption was very early, and came to pass through negligence of that direction which the Apostle gave against antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 15. *Wherefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.* And this direction he gave, after he had said before, that the mystery of iniquity was already working. Yet this step of defection was not taken when Clemens Rom. wrote his epistle to the church at Corinth; though, indeed, he insinuates something of a contention about the name of the episcopal office, in the foreknowledge of which, he says, the apostles of Christ constituted bishops and deacons; and he speaks of no more distinction betwixt bishops and presbyters than the scripture docs, p. 54. 55. 57. However, by this setting up of a new kind of bishops, and, in consequence of that, synods, the way was paved for that notable change that happened, when he who at first letted was taken out of the way, and when the Emperor became Christian, and for that uniformity which was the throne of the beast, the seat of tyranny over the consciences of men, and the fountain of persecution, and of shedding the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, that kept the commandments of God, and the testimony of Christ, under the notion of heretics and schismatics.

II. As touching the magistrate's power in the kingdom of Christ, I have declared in what sense I refuse to subscribe the Confession on that head; and I have not yet been told, if that sense wherein I understand it, and refused to subscribe it, be now the sense of this national church.

I have been very far from denying the magistrate's power in any civil society, yea, or in any national church; nor do I in the least question his right of judging in all matters of wrong and wicked lewdness, and even in all things pertaining to national churches, as by law established. For where-ever he grants civil rights, or inflicts penalties, there he must judge, and there is the exercise of his power.

I have not denied the defence of the natural and civil rights of men in the kingdoms of this world, while I declare that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and therefore admits not of a worldly defence. And when I affirm, that the natural and civil rights of mankind are to be defended in the kingdoms of this world, I reckon that the liberty of mens consciences is one of those rights; and cannot see ground for the magistrate's punishing heretics and schismatics as such.

But because this head is not so much insisted on, and the commission does not seem to make so much of it as of the foregoing, I shall not now take up time with it.

III. So I proceed to the third head, the contumacy. And here I have been surpris'd at some signifying, that the other grounds are not of such moment as to bear the weight of the censure, but this is; and though they would not depose men for congregational principles, yet they would for the contumacy. Yet,

1. There is nothing in that which is called *contumacy* but what is influenced by these principles; and it must be owned, that if congregational principles do not deserve such a censure, he that holds them, and walks up to them, is less censurable, than he that believes them, and does not practise them.

2. If the grounds of forbidding me to preach were not sufficient, how is it possible, that a sentence upon these grounds could loose me from the obligation laid upon me to preach by the law of Christ?

And

And can it be a ground for my deposition, that I shewed a greater regard to his command, than to an ill-founded sentence of suspension?

3. If it be the mind of the commission, that the sentence of a synod, though ill-founded, looses the obligation upon a minister to exercise his ministry, and that he is to give obedience to it without asking questions, and if he do not, must lose his ministry; then this must be told me, and supported with some reason from the word of God, and the Confession of Faith; but if not, then, of necessity, the grounds of the suspension were good, else there is no evil in the contumacy: for it cannot be called evil to disobey a command obliging me to sin against the laws of Christ.

Thus I have laid before my judges a plain account of my principles, and of the state of my case as it now stands; and so I leave it with their consciences, as I commit it to him who is head over all things to his church, and knows well how to order it for his own glory, and the salvation of his church, and is able to keep all that is committed to him against that day.

JOHN GLAS.

Some

Some Observations upon the Original Constitution of the Christian Church.

In a letter to the author of the book bearing that title.

[First published in the year 1730.]

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: but they said, We will not walk therein, Jer. vi. 16.

Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the high-way, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. Jer. xxxi. 21.

S I R,

I Have seen your performance, wherein I find you take some notice of the explication of my proposition. And it being now more than a year since the principles maintained in that explication were some way impunged in the defence of national churches, and further defended in my answer, which stands to this day without any return, I expected that some notice would have been taken by you of what I offer in that answer; as also of my speech before the commission; published some months before your book; especially considering your objections are mostly obviated in these papers of mine: but seeing you have not meddled with them, perhaps because you have not seen them, I desire you will do me the justice to consider them; and when you have offered something in the confutation of them, I shall either receive light, or know how to defend my principles, without being
put

put to the trouble of answering objections that stand sufficiently answered already, and must be held as answered, till such time as you, or some other, shew the insufficiency of the answers.

In the mean time I presume to offer you some observations of mine upon your performance. As,

O B S E R V A T I O N I.

I find you still upon the old tract of the contenders for classical presbytery against the Independents: and as I always thought, they discovered another spirit in this dispute, than in some other controversies wherein they have been engaged; so they have cast you a copy in several things, wherein I humbly judge it was not your duty to follow them. As,

1. It was always their way, to fly to human authority when they came to the pinch, in a question which is only to be decided by the word of God, and to boast exceedingly in that authority, and almost anathematise those who take upon them to differ from so many, so learned, so godly men, for pretending to be straitened where they were not straitened, and to see what they could not see. You follow them exactly in this; and so do you likewise in having recourse to commentators, when you cannot otherwise instruct your sense of a text; as if the sense of scripture were to be found out by plurality of voices among those commentators. Yea, I find you sometimes fain to use the authority of Dr Owen. But if his authority be a good argument in some cases, why not in others also? and if his authority be not a sufficient argument to convince yourself, why do you bring it to convince me?

2. It has been the way of these writers, to tell stories of the divisions among the Independents, and of the things that befel apostates from the congregational way, and of the sectaries, and charge them all upon congregational principles as the cause; and herein
they

they also copied after the Papists. But though this way of doing might pass near an hundred years ago, yet the stories of these vile writers, Edwards and Bastwick, come up again now with vast disadvantage, after they have been confuted, for so long a tract of time, by the congregational churches in England, standing monuments of the falsehood of their charges, and of the vanity of their lying prophecies. Their vile stories and calumnies put me in mind of the methods wherein Christianity was opposed, when it came abroad, in the world: and your innuendo about silly women, when you would apply the apostle's prophecy, that was evidently fulfilled in the Popish church, unto Independents, is very like what the heathens said sometimes against Christians, who, they alledged, *gathered a company of the very dregs and refuse of the people, and silly credulous women, who, by the weakness of their sex, are easily imposed upon, and combined into a wicked confederacy.*

3. There was never a greater application of metaphysics unto scripture texts, to darken and perplex them, than that which has been made by the writers for classical presbytery against the Independents; and you would ape them in this also. I must say, you do it in a very diverting manner on 1 Cor. xiv. 23. 24. *If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, &c.* when you tell, this must be understood in a distributive sense; and that their prophesying, and one coming in that believed not, is to be taken for their doing this in their distinct congregational meetings. Men of a very metaphysical genius have been engaged in this controversy; and, as I see by your book, that you learned some school-terms; so your reasonings upon the words *if* and *all*, in that text, upon which you make this exquisite distinction, do convince me, that, if you had but a little more access to converse in a certain learned place, you might be inrolled among the writers for classical presbytery against Independents. I must also say this for you,

that you know where to use your distinctions; for where you imagine any shadow of scripture for you, there must be no distinction.

4. You likewise follow the example of these writers, in the intolerable confidence which they express in an argument, they sometimes use, when scripture fails them, *viz.* That it would be an imputation too injurious on Christ and his apostles, to suppose, that they ordered otherwise than according to the Presbyterian scheme. These writers, and you after them, put on an air of infallibility, and thereupon freely use all manner of reflections on the Independents, while, at the same time, you take the least insinuation of a reflection from an Independent, as a thing altogether intolerable. You injure not an Independent, when you tell him, as confidently as the Pope can tell Protestants, that he is in a dangerous error and a delusion; that he is void of sense and candor; that he is a child, or a Jesuit, a fool, or a rogue: But if an Independent should be so bold as to desire more sense, or more candor in your arguings, or affirm with confidence, that he is in the right, and you in the wrong; then, as if you were the only men that had right to judge, not only for yourselves, but for all others, you pronounce the Independent too arrogant, too uncharitable, and what not. You may say what you please, without proof, make conjectures, lay down suppositions, and explain scriptures by them, and make what inferences you will from scriptures, and the Independent must receive all for undoubted truth; but he must not open his lips without the strictest demonstration.

I know that no dispute of this kind can be carried on by fallible men, and subject to passions, without manifold discoveries of human frailty, which each of the parties in their turn will not fail to spy out very narrowly, and aggravate to the utmost, while they overlook what is amiss about themselves, or put the best construction upon it; but seeing we are liable to mistakes,

mistakes, and wrong biasses, an air of infallibility and contempt of the understandings of them that differ from us, as to the strength of our inferences, upon such a question as this, very ill becomes us, at least it ill becomes Protestants. And if it were given to you and me *to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and all hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings? and as new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word, not following a multitude to do evil, nor leaning to our own understanding, but trusting in the Lord with all our heart,* and giving up ourselves as weaned children to the conduct of his word, I am persuaded we would either soon come to be of one mind in this matter, or *forbear one another in love.*

OBSERVATION II.

Your book has confirmed me in an opinion that I have for some time entertained. I was of opinion, that it is not meet to manage the cause of classical and national presbytery against the Episcopalians and Independents both in one and the same book. And when I say I am confirmed in this by reading your books, I intend no reflection on your ability for dispute; for, I am persuaded, the ablest defender of presbytery on earth would find himself hard put to it in a conflict with both these adversaries at once; even as a Prelatist would be in a wretched condition in an engagement with Papists and Anti-prelatists at the same time. It is far the wiser course to have one of these parties for a second, when you would fight with the other. And I am not surpris'd at your apology for your emper, which is owing to your situation betwixt two such miserable comforters. The Episcopalian was able to give you some comfort against the Independent, by his unity and order and catholic uniformity; for which he is obliged to his friend the Papist; and the Independent could afford you some comfort against the Episcopalian, by that very thing

which you reckon his grand mistake; and when the Episcopalian vexed you with the antiquity of that saying, *One bishop and one church*, the Independent could have comforted you against him exceedingly, with that ancient word of his, *One church and one altar*. But then it might be enquired, what becomes of classical presbytery? and I confess that is indeed the question. But I am sure the greatest Presbyterian writers against Episcopacy have comforted themselves much with this independent cordial: and what Presbyterian writer is it, that has not taken some comfort this way against the Episcopalians, especially on the state of things in the three first centuries? You yourself, that complain of both these comforters, are yet obliged to take some comfort from them; and while you are warmly engaged with one of them, you are glad to have some respite from the other. If I be mistaken in this, you will correct me; but I will give you some instances. As,

1. When you write against the Episcopalians, you shew a warm zeal for the word of God, and the pattern expressly laid down there, in opposition to what crept in afterward, with the fairest shew of wisdom. But when you write against the Independents; you are for some things that your wisdom judges most necessary unto decency and order, that do not appear in the first formation of churches by the apostles; and these are such things as ecclesiastic courts meeting in the name and authority of Jesus Christ. And it is your judgment, that the rulers of the churches are authorised to determine the number of judicatures in any kingdom where Christianity is universally professed, when they are to be divided or sub-divided, according to the different circumstances of churches and places; and this by virtue of the apostolical direction, *That all things should be done decently and in order*, or according as they find the exigencies and edification of the whole body may be best advanced. Thus, while you will not suffer the Episcopalians, for
 decency

decency and order, to set one church-officer over a presbytery and diocese, for the edification of the whole, you yourself, for decency and order, establish three church courts, for which you have as little scripture-warrant as he has for his officer, even kirk sessions, provincial and national synods, p. 213. 258. 259. 260. And the thing that you drive at in this, even the adapting the government of the church to the constitution of the kingdoms of this world, and making it a part of their constitution, and the kingdom of Christ in this world of the very same dimensions with them, is a thing at least as inconsistent with plain clear scripture, and the nature of Christ's kingdom, as ever you will prove a bishop in a presbytery to be; and a thing you have as little commission for from Jesus Christ as for making a Pope, which was also done by man's wisdom, for decency, and order and edification. And whereas you say of your courts, there is no substantial or specific difference between a presbytery and a provincial synod, &c. the nature of their power being materially the same; only the latter is more extensive and numerous than the former, the first being made up of the rulers of several congregations, and the latter of these of several particular churches; on which account their authority must be proportionally the greater and more extensive; and thus a national or œcumenical assembly are no more specifically distinct from one another, or from a synod, than a provincial synod is from a presbytery: May not the same apology be made for the subordination of their officers till it come to the universal bishop, the servant of the servants of God; seeing the higher courts rule the inferior, and the Christians under their charge, as effectually as the higher officers rule them that are inferior, and their authority is proportionally the greater and more extensive, till it come to the highest officer, even as the authority of the courts, you say, is greater and more extensive till it come to the highest court?

2. When

2. When you write against the Independents, you are confident there is no instance or example of a congregational preibytery in the New Testament: but against the Episcopalians you doubt not to say, that most of the churches through the Christian world were only congregational during the second and third centuries; and even with respect to the greater churches, you would have them to be served with one altar, as it is called, p. 534. 535. 536.; which, I acknowledge, answers best unto the proper scriptural notion of a church, both under the Old Testament and the New.

3. In stating the question with the Independents about a congregation, you always make it an assembly hearing and capable to be edified by one pastor preaching at a time: but against the Episcopalians, you would set it on another footing, and have recourse to the Lord's supper, and the whole body partaking of one altar, as it is called, distinct from the Catechumens, p. 534. 535. So, against the Independents, you make Perth and Dundee, and the like, to be two congregations; and against the Episcopalians you make them but one.

4. Against the Independents you gather together all these converted by the ministry of the apostles in Jerufalem, and all these converted by Paul's ministry in Ephesus, where he continued by the space of two years, so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus; and this to make the number of Christians both in Jerufalem and Ephesus to be so great, that there behoved to be many congregations in each of them: but against the Episcopalians you expressly say, "The church in the singular number, so far as I can observe, is no where in the New Testament made use of in exprefs terms to denote any more than the Christians in some city, except when the catholic church is meant. This I have formerly observed, and so there is no solid foundation in scripture of any difference between a church
and

and the Christians of such a city; which is a clear evidence, that the elders sent for to Miletus were only these of Ephesus; for there is not the smallest ground for taking it in a distributive sense, p. 425." And yet all that were converted by Paul's ministry while at Ephesus must be brought in to dwell in the city, to establish a distributive sense of these words to the elders, *Feed the flock*.

5. You are very angry with the Independents for the difference they make between the key of doctrine and discipline upon the 15th chapter of the Acts; and think it implies a contradiction to suppose, that that meeting, which you call a synod, had power to give forth laws, and yet not to censure the contraveners, p. 327. And yet, against the Episcopalians, you make such a difference between the exercise of the key of doctrine and that of discipline, as supposes a power of giving forth the laws of Jesus Christ, and yet not of censuring the contraveners. For you allow that one pastor may give forth the laws of Christ doctrinally; but you will not allow him by himself to exercise the power of jurisdiction and government, or to exercise the key of discipline, p. 603. You will not hinder a single pastor, or a single church, to give forth the laws of Christ to all Christians and all churches in the world, in a way of doctrine, and to command obedience in the name of Christ; but you will not allow one pastor, or one church either, to exercise discipline, or to censure all other pastors and churches for contravening all these laws of Christ, that they publish and declare in his name and authority.

6. Against the Independents you make much use of the Jewish church, which you would fain have to be the same thing essentially with the Christian; and you contend strongly upon the subordination of the synagogues unto superior courts: but against the Episcopalians you affirm, the Christian church was not erected till the resurrection of Christ; and you are
glad

glad to have it granted by any of them, that the Christian churches were formed according to the synagogues, and that the Christian church had its model from them, and by no means from the temple. And yet you will deny, that the church in Jerusalem was like a synagogue, or formed after the model of it. But possibly you may tell me next of a synagogue classical.

I might here call upon you to adjust your own principles, and reconcile yourself handsomely, as a contender against Independency, to yourself as a contender against Episcopacy, before you make such bold and impudent charges against such as desire to make the laws of Christ the rule and measure of their faith and practice, as you complain of in the Episcopalians against your faction; but if you still persist, then know what you yourself say to the Episcopalians, *Append. p. 37. at the close.*

O B S E R V A T I O N III.

Your critical observations on the scripture, and on the explication of my proposition, give me some ground to suspect, there is no great reason for the complaint insinuated in your preface in these words: “I am but an obscure country minister.” I own, an obscure country minister has little use for nice criticism; and, if his parish be very large, he may be more suitably employed than in that art, which is most proper for doctors of divinity. But though you had time, as you have not in your present situation, I must acknowledge the sample you have given of your talent this way does not evidently declare that you deserve the doctor’s chair. No man needs suspect me of a design to shew my talent in criticism, in order to preferment in the national church; neither can I pretend to be a critic: but you will not, I hope, reckon it presumption in me, to put you in mind of some things that look very odd to me, and that I
cannot

cannot easily understand, till either you, having more time, or some friend of yours of greater genius and leisure; clear them up to me; and if, after all, I remain in the dark, there is no help for that.

1. The first thing I take notice of, is what you say, p. 90. "I desire," say you, "our author may assign us, what place of the New Testament it is, that calls any single church, the church at Antioch, at Corinth, at Ephesus, &c. He that pretends to a superlative regard to scripture-style, ought strictly to regard it himself. We have frequent mention of the church of Ephesus, &c. but no where at Ephesus, &c.; but this was not without design." Here you, that sometimes condemn me for thinking evil, appear to me as he that trampled on Plato's pride. But I confess I am to this hour at a loss to know what could be my design in saying *at*, where you would have me to say *of*; and I could be satisfied to see a little more of your critical skill upon *at* and *of*. I see in my English Bible, the church at Jerusalem, Acts viii. 1. the church at Antioch, Acts xiii. 1. the church at Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 2. 2 Cor. i. 1. which, no doubt, has led me into that way of speaking at which you take umbrage. Your good liking to *of* instead of *at*, has put me to look for it; and so I find the church of the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1. the church of the Laodiceans, Col. iv. 16. I dare not say of Thessalonica, or of Laodicea, lest I be checked by you for altering the expression of design. But I may say of Ephesus: for I once read it, and, if I remember right, but once, Rev. ii. 1. And if a way of speaking be to be established in the method of plurality, *at* must carry it, for it has many against one, and but one. If we go to the first language with this nice observation of your's, there, I fear, we shall neither find *of Ephesus*, nor *at Ephesus*; but we must speak after this manner, *the Ephesian church*. And if we speak about Ephesus, as other churches are spoke of, we must say, "the church of the Ephesians; the church

in Ephesus;" and this last is the common way of speaking in the New Testament: for, if I may presume to translate, I find, "the church in Jerusalem, in Antioch, in Corinth," &c.

2. Next, I find you would puzzle me with a hard question upon that famous phrase *ἑνὶ τό αὐτῷ*, which you find, after the Presbyterian writers have pointed it out to you, Acts iv. 25. 26. and I, it seems, did not set it down when I noted down other texts: but I assure you, if it had been in my eye, I had set it down, as making for the sense of that phrase which I contend for. Your question is, Is it to be learned from any part of the sacred oracles, that Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the kings of the earth, with the rulers, assembled together in one place, against the Lord and his Christ? This question had been more exact, though perhaps not so pungent, if you had kept close by the words of the text; and I shall not say it was of design, that you did not keep by them. If you had seen my answer to the "Defence of national churches," a part of the sacred oracles had cast up to you, where you would have found the kings of the earth, even Herod and Pontius Pilate, standing up, and the rulers, even the rulers of the Jews, gathered *ἑνὶ τό αὐτῷ*, *in one place*, against the Lord and against his Christ; and that is Luke xxiii. from the 1st to the 15th verse. You must take notice, that ver. 26. of Acts iv. says only, "The rulers were gathered" *ἑνὶ τό αὐτῷ*; and this is the sense of the Hebrew adverb *VAHAD*, which signifies *in one*, as the Greek words properly signify, *in the same*. And if the constant sense of the Greek phrase in the New Testament be, *in one* or *the same* place, and be found in that signification here, then this is the sense of the Hebrew word, as it stands in Psalm ii. 2. And whatever other uses it may be otherwise put to, yet there it must signify *one place*. And in that text, as well as in Acts iv. 26. it is only ascribed to the rulers, as standing up is unto the kings. I need not tell you, that ver. 27.

chap.

chap. iv. of the Acts, is an explication of ver. 25. and 26. of that chapter. I would have you also to notice, that in ver. 27. there is a different reading, which is to be found in the Syriac, vulgate Latin, and Beza's Latin versions, according to several Greek manuscripts; and I have it in Bleau's Greek Testament, where, after *αθηνας*. you may read *ἐν τῇ πόλει ταυτη.* I am far from insisting on this different reading; only, if it has crept into some copies as a gloss, it may be from thence inferred, that, when that gloss obtained, *ἐπι το αυτο* was understood to signify *in one place*. But whatever be in this, that we may have a distinct view of ver 27. we may consider the words in the order wherein they stand in the original. "For they were gathered together, of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles, and (with) the people of Israel." Allow me now to ask you, Does the foresaid part of the sacred oracles (Luke xxiii. 1.—15.) teach you, that Herod, with his men of war, was together in one place with the people of Israel? and does it not also teach you, that Pontius Pilate (and if there were any Gentiles with him) was also assembled together in one place with the people of Israel? Do you not find the rulers of the Jews assembled in one place both before Pilate and before Herod? And then tell me what more says the text on this subject? And further tell me, if it lie in your power, what place of the New Testament it is, from which you or I may learn that *ἐπι το αυτο* does not carry one place always in its meaning? and I'll be obliged to you.

You do not offer to bring any text of the New Testament, to shew the least mistake in what I have said of *ὁμοθυμαδον*; but you deny it, and desire the authority of a disinterested person, skilled in the Greek language, to confirm what I say. Truly a disinterested person will not be easily found; and for skill in the Greek language, if you mean the knowledge of

the sense of that word in Greek authors, it cannot determine the question, which is about the constant signification of that word in the New Testament. I had said, this word seems not to be used in the New Testament, but in the case of more or fewer concurring personally in the same action; and I cited all the texts that occurred to me where the word is used: if, therefore, you can bring me no text of the New Testament where this word has not this import, far better yield it, than talk beside the purpose. If you please to look and compare Acts ii. 1. 3. 4. 38. Acts x. 44.—47. you will find ground for another assertion of mine, for which you want proof.

3. I confess I am surpris'd with your criticism upon *they all*, Acts v. 12. You say, it is contrary to the natural and grammatical construction of the words, to make *οἱ παντες* to be constructed with *ὅλην τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*. I acknowledge I never made grammatical construction much my study; but I have been put to look in what order words lie in the New Testament, and I think I find the like construction there, Acts vi. 5. Acts viii. 1. 1 Thess. i. 12. 2 Thess. i. 1. 2. 3. Neither can I see any thing unnatural in a discourse, where a society, a multitude is spoken of, when I hear it said, *They all* did such a thing, or, *They are all* in such a place; at least I think this is very common. I cannot but wonder to see this observation of yours, the foundation and strength of your arguing, to prove, that by *them all* that were with one accord in Solomon's porch, we must not understand the whole church, but only the apostles. And to help on your arguings upon this head, you would have it believed, that the text says, the people magnified the apostles on account of the miracles wrought; whereas, whatever be said in the context, the text says only, *the people magnified them*. And the question is, What *them*? It is manifest, that it is *them* that were all with one accord in Solomon's porch, and to whom no man of the rest durst join himself. But the question still remains,

mains, What are *they all* that are said to be with one accord in Solomon's porch? and what we are to understand by *the rest*? You say *they all* are the apostles, and *the rest* are the whole church: And so you teach us, that the providence about Ananias made a separation between the whole church and the apostles; which, I think, could be no advantage to the church, especially when in great fear; and the apostles, by this means, lost a precious opportunity of doing good to the church.

But the sacred writer seems to be declaring, that the church was so far from being at any loss by that dreadful providence, that it was rather the better for it; and, if I mistake not, we are not so much acquainted of the fear of the presence of the twelve, as of the fear of God, shewing himself awful in the church, that fell upon all the church, and upon others that heard these things. Neither is there any insinuation, that either the church, or the rest of the people upon whom this fear came, fled from the apostles, but rather the contrary. At least, if the whole church fled from their presence, the context tells us, the multitudes of other people came the nearer them. In a word, it is impossible to instruct from this passage, or even make it appear feasible, that either the church, or the rest of the people, fled from the presence of the apostles on this occasion; but it is most easy to conceive, that the rest of the people, that were moved with the fear of God on this occasion, durst not lightly join the church as members, and yet magnified the church.

4. You look carefully into the book of the Acts, to find out every thing that may be any way wrested to your purpose; but are not, it seems, so quick-sighted as to pretty clear things there against you; and therefore, with no small assurance, you reflect on me, for insinuating, that there was a feast at Jerusalem when Paul went up, Acts xxi.; and you say, it is but a begging of the question, till I prove it, p.

241. But, seeing you make the question to turn upon this hinge, I have some hopes to satisfy you, that I did not beg it, as you love to speak, in this insinuation, if the word of God be of any use to decide the question: and therefore I desire you may look chap. xx. where you find Paul on his way up to Jerusalem at this time, and consider ver. 16. and likewise chap. xxi. ver. 27. and see if the same thing be not as fully insinuated in the word of God, as it was by me. Yet I cannot attribute your way of treating the scriptures, to make the myriads of which James speaks to Paul, members of the church in Jerusalem, so much to want of sight and nice inspection, as to some other thing. For, when you say, p. 188. "We find there were great additions made to the church of Jerusalem; for it is said, they had rest, and were multiplied, Acts ix 31." I cannot think that you never looked at Acts ix. 31. where you see the churches throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, had rest, and were multiplied; but you set down *they*, instead of *these* churches, and construct *they* with the church of Jerusalem, to your unwary reader; though yet, in another case you could say, that *the church* and *they* would not construct together.

Next, you find additions made to the church in Jerusalem, by the growth and multiplication of the word of God, Acts xii. 24. as if there had been no church to receive additions by that, but the church in Jerusalem. And then you tell us, to shut up all, James and the elders informed Paul, Acts xxi. 20. *Thou seest, brother, how many thousands [or myriads] of Jews there are which believe.* And, p. 240. & 241. you would have your reader imagine, that the myriads of believing Jews that James speaks of to Paul, ver. 20. are the same thing with the multitude that he said would be informed of his coming to the city, and therefore would needs come together, ver. 22.; as if there had been no believing Jews, but such a multitude as could easily hear of Paul's coming into
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the city, and come together upon that. I have a better conceit of your understanding, than to allow myself to think, that these methods serve to persuade yourself of what you are saying; and the only apology I can make for you is, That you see honest Presbyterians have used these scriptures in the same manner before you, and this gives you confidence.

5. Upon *πληθος* and *παν το πληθος*, you cite Luke viii. 37. and inquire, If I will say, that every individual person in that whole country of the Gadarenes came forth? And you likewise cite, Luke i. 10. and say, you believe it will be hard to make it appear, that all the people in Jerusalem were without, praying, at the time Zacharias was offering incense. And I say, I cannot take upon me to affirm, that every individual member of a congregational church, man and woman, comes together at any time, when it may be said the whole church comes together in one place to do any thing. Even as, when you say, the whole synod, or the whole multitude of the general assembly, comes together, or agrees to do a thing, I would injure you, if I said you spoke false, because I found that every individual in the roll of the synod or assembly was not present. I referred you to Lauder upon this, and pointed you to the title of the book; and I refer you to him again. But I do not expect that my reference to him upon this will be taken to import, that I differ in no point from him. I cannot deny, that one bishop came to have the pre-eminency over his brethren in the presbytery very early, and that this was a deviation from the apostolical pattern; but this presbytery and church where that bishop was, must be owned to be one congregation, having one altar, as it came to be called; and this, as it is agreeable to the apostolical pattern, effectually destroys both diocesan Episcopacy and classical Presbytery, as far as antiquity is concerned: for, if the *παν το πληθος* under the inspection of the presbytery, or the one bishop that came to be set over them, partook of one
bread

bread and one cup, and had but one communion-table; then the churches were neither diocesan nor classical, but only congregational; and if such were the churches where this innovation of one bishop over a presbytery took place, such were the apostolic churches.

You have a very rare observation upon το πληθος μαθητων, its being in the masculine gender; for you say it seems to point forth it was an assembly of men, and not of women; and then you reckon, that women have no concern in the choice of officers in the church where they are: and such are the observations that satisfy you, it seems, that the presbyterian model of government, and form of a church, is divine, in opposition to the congregational.

6. I want to know how you observed, p. 418. That Paul planted a church at Ephesus before he met with the twelve disciples; and what ground have you to affirm, that it was not his practice, in other cities, to go from places where there were disciples, and leave them without pastors, when the contrary is so evident from the book of the Acts, chap. xiv. and Tit. i. 5.

7. Your observation upon the word *brethren*, is according to a fancy of mine, when I first read the Bible, and understood by that word only the Presbyterian ministers, whom I heard calling one another *brethren*; but it is altogether unworthy of any man of tolerable sense. You say, "That *brother, or brethren*, is usually applied as the characteristic of church officers, as distinguished from the saints or private believers of any church." And when you have noted down many texts, you go on to say, "And indeed our Lord appropriates this name to his apostles, and thereby expresses that equality of authority and power that was among them, or that one of them was not raised above another in office, Matth. xxiii. 8." And this is what you alledge to justify your assertion, That, by *the brethren*, Acts xv. we are to understand

derstand persons in office. But you must both alledge and prove more, before you justify that assertion: for, to make that good, you must prove, that the word *brethren* is the characteristic of church-officers, as distinguished from other Christians, and that where it is used in a distinction between elders and those that are designed by it, as it is Acts xv. And nothing that you alledge on this head will prove your point, except it shall appear, that *brother* or *brethren*, occurs not any where, in the New Testament, but where it denotes persons in office. And this cannot be evident till you manifest, that the command of brotherly love respects only persons in office. But I will not be surpris'd, though you confine that command to persons in office, and understand nothing else but them by the words *brother* and *brethren*, in the first epistle of John, when I consider the account you make of the saints, or private believers of the churches, by whom I reckon you understand the members of the churches not in office. For these, according to you, were such persons of whom no visible positive evidence of their being saints or believers, was or ought to be required, in order to their being church-members; and as to whom no man was to look after any positive evidence for a foundation of any charitable judgement concerning them, that they were believers.

Probably it may also be your mind, that the brethren, upon whom the brethren of your synod laid the burden, Acts xv. were persons in office, as distinguished from the private believers of the churches. But this would burden the brethren, the office-bearers only, with the yoke in synodical authority, and leave the church-members free; which will by no means consist with your sense of Matth. xxiii. 8. Though I cannot deny, but that text is perverted by you, while, without attending to the context, you would make us believe, that our Lord is only forbidding the officers to lord over one another, and

not forbidding them to lord over the people, as the scribes and Pharisees did; nor the people to subject their consciences to their authority. Further, I am not sure but you would have us to understand only a church-officer, as distinguished from a private believer in a church, by the word *brother*; Matth. xviii. 15. *If thy brother trespass*; and, 1 Cor. v. 11. *If any that is called a brother*: and if this be so, then let the clergy only exercise discipline upon one another, they must not, it seems, bind or loose the private believers of any church; for who gives them a power to judge *them that are without, i. e.* them that are not called *brethren*?

It is most easy to manifest, that the saints, or private believers of a church, even all the members, as distinguished from their elders, are called *brethren*; and no man that but glances these two texts, will easily doubt of it, 1 Thess. v. 12. 13. Heb. xiii. 22. You note down a great many places, which shew, that the apostles called them that were in office *brethren*; and you might also have noted down texts to shew, that the apostles themselves were called *disciples*, while they were sent to preach. And, whatever take place now, who doubts, but those that were in office were saints, and faithful, in the judgement of charity; and so brethren, as well as they that were not in office in the churches? But I am still at a loss to find the place where those in office are distinguished from private members of churches, and that by the word *brethren*. Surely I cannot find them distinguished by a word common to them with others. And if you had well considered the texts you note down, you had found other designations added to distinguish officers from other brethren out of office; and which I would have you to notice. These designations import service, 2 Cor. viii. 23. Eph. vi. 21. Phil. ii. 25.

8. I confess I am astonished at an assertion of yours, concerning Judas and Silas, p. 313. that they were not members of the church of Jerusalem, but prophets

phets at Antioch, and sometime members of that church, and your inquiry thereupon. What power, say you, had the elders of Jerusalem to missionate Judas and Silas, when they were not members of that church, but prophets at Antioch, unless they had been a part of that synodical meeting? For this you cite Acts xiii. 1. 2. 3. which proves prophets at Antioch; but there is not a word there of Judas and Silas. Next you have Acts xv. 32. 35. and if you had considered the context and intervening verses, you might have seen, that they belonged to Jerusalem, and not to Antioch; unless you would infer, from Silas's being sent to Antioch, and then let go, and then chusing to abide at Antioch, that he was a member of that church before he came there. But this is of a piece with the rest of the mighty inferences upon which synodical authority is established. You infer from Judas and Silas their being prophets, that they were certainly church-officers; and, by the same rule, you no doubt believe, that the disciples, Acts xxi. 4. and Philip's four daughters, ver. 9. were church-officers; and you infer, from their being chief men or captains, as you call them, among the brethren, that the brethren among whom they were captains were church-officers. You have also a rare criticism upon Acts xvi. 4. and an inference upon it, which might well have been spared if you had looked back to the second verse; and that would also have saved you the trouble of looking through the New Testament, as far down as the Revelation, for the support of that fancy. But it would be endless to trace you in all your wild extravagancies upon Acts xv.

I shall conclude this observation with taking some notice of your account of the nature and import of the word *ἐκκλησία*, or *church*.

You affirm, it is used to express the visible and catholic body of Christ, which consists of all those
throughout

throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children and offspring, p. 51.

When I was declaring the import of this word in the explication of the proposition, I proposed a question; which, instead of answering directly, you are pleased to overlook, while you are very liberal in your uncharitable rebukes to me, for passing over this import of the word. The question is this, *Expl. above*, p. 194. It may be a question, If all the disciples of Christ throughout the world be called *the church* any therwise than as they appear, and in the judgement of charity are reckoned to be of *this general assembly, and church of the first-born?* And now, Sir, I am ready to maintain the negative in the answer of this question, for any thing I have yet seen in your book, or in any Presbyterian writer, to the contrary. Thus you have a fair thesis before you; try your metaphysical and critical skill upon it; and when you say enough to convince me of my mistake in this position, I shall retract it: but I will not be moved away from it by quibbles, nor will I be bullied out of it by authorities and blustering words.

I shall now consider the texts you bring for this import of the word. And the first of them is, 1 Cor. i. 2. which you connect with chap. xii. 28. *To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. — And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.* I do not find all that in every place call on the name of the Lord, called *the church*, 1 Cor. i. 2.; but I find the society in Corinth called *the church in Corinth*, and the members of it said to be sanctified, and called to be saints, together with all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place. And am I from thence to infer, that all that in every other place called on Christ's name are meant by the word *church* there? But perhaps the stress leans upon the connection betwixt this text and chap. xii. 28. And will you say, that the
import

Import of the word *church* there, is the same with the import of it here? or though all that in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus be not here called *the church*, yet there they go under that designation by virtue of the connection betwixt this text and that? This is what I reckon you intend; but may you not as well connect this verse with the following part of the same chapter, and with the third chapter, and with the eleventh chapter, and say, that the Apostle is ascribing those unchristian schisms, and those disorders about the Lord's supper, to all that call on the name of the Lord in every place? In the same manner you affirm strongly, that all *the strangers scattered abroad*, &c. to whom Peter directs, are called *one flock*, and all the twelve tribes to whom James directs, are called *one church*, and *one assembly*. And thus any man may make the scriptures say any thing he thinks fit.

Look throughout 1 Cor. xii. and see if you can find any church there but the body mystical, which is called *Christ*, and the church at Corinth, to which the Apostle accommodates what he says of the body mystical, because it was visible, or outwardly represented in the church at Corinth. The body that the Apostle speaks of there is all animated by the Spirit of the Lord Christ, from whom it has its denomination, by reason of the unspeakable union which is by his Spirit: and will you say, that all those whom you make members of your visible body are made to drink into that one Spirit? and this after you have declared that their religion lies only in the breath of their lips, and that they may be altogether void of the Spirit? This is that body into which the Apostle says they all, both Jews and Gentiles, were baptized. And, after he has spoken of God's setting the members in this body, and tempering it together so as there maybe no schism in it, he applies what he had said home to the church at Corinth, appointed, as all particular churches are, to shew forth this body mystical, as
they

they are also instituted on all accounts for the sake of it. It is also manifest, the Apostle speaks of the gifts of the Spirit for the edification of the body mystical, and for the establishing of a due profession of the Lord Christ in the churches of the faints, and this for the sake of the mystical body. Now, let me know, Were not all these gifts in the church at Corinth, and the apostolic gift first; for thereby the foundation of it was laid? And then, answer me, Did not God set apostles, prophets, &c. in the body mystical? However you may quibble on this question, yet, if you answer it affirmatively, you speak good found scripture-language; and, if you please, I will direct you to a place or two that will support you, Rev. xxi. 14, Eph. ii. 19. 20. 21.

Your next text is Eph. iii. 10. which I read thus; *To the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.* I cannot understand how it came in your head to take the import of the word *church* here to be your visible body, distinct from the invisible, and from a particular church. And till I understand how you make it out, I must remain honestly persuaded, as before, that it is the general assembly and church of the first-born that is intended.

Then you have 1 Cor. x. 32. *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.* I cannot tell how your argument should proceed upon this place, unless it be by denying this proposition, That when a man gives offence to one visible member of the church, or one that appears to be a member of that mystical body, he offends the whole; even as Saul persecuted the invisible Head in heaven, in persecuting the visible members. But this cannot be easily denied. Further, I reckon, that as you imagine the Apostle is not in this text intending the body mystical, so neither do you think he intends the church at Corinth, or any such church whereof Christians happen to be members. And up-
on

on such suppositions stands your visible body as the import of the word *church* here.

You next cite Heb. ii. 12. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.* I always took this to signify the general assembly and church of the first-born, consisting of Christ's brethren, in whose name he glorifies the Father, and unto whom he declares his Father's name, as John xvii. 26. But so fond are you of that visible catholic body which you imagine to yourself, that you take no leisure to think well of the body mystical, which is indeed the church, nor to consider what is proper to it.

In the last place, you have 1 Tim. iii. 15. *That thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.* It seems you are persuaded, that neither the whole building of God, built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom it is all fitly framed together, and growing unto an holy temple, nor the little habitation of God at Ephesus, shewing forth that building, Eph. ii. 19. 20. 21. 22. can be understood by *the church of the living God* in this text. But your own explication of Acts xx. 28. however cross it be to the scope of the text, might have served to make you understand, that the elders of the church in Ephesus were bound to feed the church; which is by no means, say you, to be understood to be the church as visible, and can only be meant of those who are truly redeemed, and is evidently the invisible body of Christ p. 158. 159. If you understand this well, I reckon you will not help thinking, that not only apostles, prophets, and evangelists, but even pastors and teachers were given to feed, *i. e.* govern the invisible body of Christ.

But when men lay down a scheme of principles inconsistent with the scriptures, they must also, it seems, take

take inconsistent methods of explaining the scripture, to make it answer to all the parts of their scheme.

When you have cited these scriptures, you tell us, “Nay, the children of professing and Christian parents are to be reputed members of the visible church.” But I would ask you, why are they not to be reputed members of the mystical body, if one of the parents be to be so reputed? But, according to you, the profession of Christianity is not such a thing as gives ground to repute any man that makes it a member of the body of Christ. And then you conclude, “From all which it is manifest, that there is a catholic visible church in the world, to which Christ, by a deed of gift, gave apostles, prophets, and teachers, with an external polity or government.” And then, in another place, p. 104. 105. you bring this as a standing witness against the Independent notions, and a warrant for national and provincial churches; and you bring two other texts to prove it, Eph. iv. 4. 11. 12. and Rom. xii. 4. 10; from which I could be content to see your inference, shewing your catholic body visible and organised, as it stands distinguished by you from the body mystical, which you say is not organised, and from the congregations of the saints. But I will have occasion to touch at these texts afterwards; only I cannot but admire your confidence, in bringing such texts for your catholic body visible, considering the account you elsewhere give of its constituent members.

You will allow me, in the conclusion of what I have been saying upon this import of the word *church*, to say, it is manifest, there is no ground for all your mighty confidence in the persuasion you have about a catholic visible organic body, with an external government. And though you may have a general notion of all the professors of the name of Christ on the earth, and express this your notion by the word *church* as you please; yet I desire you may shew me where, but in your own head, all these professors are united
visibly

visibly together in the unity of one ecclesiastic government. Produce your standing witnesses against the Independent notions; shew us if this witness shall see where in the habitable world, and then we be any how it warrants your national and provincial churches.

In the mean time, you go about to warrant national and provincial churches; from the New Testament: which I own is the same thing to us that the apostles, prophets, and evangelists were to the first churches; for though they were with us, we would, in that case, have no more but what we have in the New Testament: and if you can bring me a warrant from thence for these churches, I will own there is a standing warrant for them.

You say the churches of Galatia appear to have been under one ecclesiastical government. And how does that appear? It appears thus: "They are all written to as if one single church, under the strictest ties of unity, and oneness of judgment and affections." I see the epistle directed to the churches of Galatia; and it appears that these churches were under the prevailing influence of false doctrine; this was common to them: so that one epistle serves them all on this subject. Here I find no oneness, but an oneness in error, and one epistle directed against it, to convince and persuade the disciples in the churches of Galatia. And as for that oneness of judgment and affections that the word of God calls Christians, in all the churches of the saints, to endeavour after; as it is a quite other thing than your one ecclesiastic government, so the disciples in the churches of Galatia seem not to be commended by the Apostle for it: neither is he there in the least insinuating, that one church in Galatia, as such, was divided from another, but that the disciples in the churches were biting and devouring one another. You say, all the churches, in one body, are required to beware of false teachers, guard against corrupt doctrines and divisions. And to prove that they were

called to do this in one body, in your sense of it, you tell, the several churches of Galatia were but one lump. And this you would make out from the Apostle's telling the several churches of Galatia, as he said to the church of Corinth, *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*: As if that could not be as true, in respect of every one of these churches as in respect of the church in Corinth; and as if that proverb, might not be used toward all the churches of the saints in the like case, without understanding them all to be united in one visible ecclesiastic government.

You say further, the Apostle says, *He would they were even cut off that trouble them*; and then you inquire, What was said to any particular church, for the maintaining of order, unity, and carrying on of joint edification, and preservation of that sacred body from being leavened with false doctrines and disorders, which is not said jointly to the several churches of Galatia? I make no question but what is said in the New Testament to any one church for these ends, is said to every church in the world, to the end of time: and every church in Galatia had as much power unto these purposes as any other particular church; and the Apostle writes to these churches, as having every one of them this power. But he writes not to a church of rulers, representing and ruling over all these churches; which is the remedy man's wisdom has devised in such cases: nor does he write to these churches to proceed so with one another, as the Lord commands one brother in a church to do with another, Matth. xviii. though I see you would fain make that out to your reader, by your way of citing Gal. vi. 1. 2. which I read thus; *Brethren, if a man (not a church) be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*" And I would fain know of you, what is said to the churches of Galatia, that might not be done by every one of these

these churches, and the disciples in them, without their being united in one ecclesiastic government, as you say? And seeing your one ecclesiastic body, you think, is for the very purposes for which the Apostle wrote to these churches, tell me why the Apostle's letter has no direction unto it, but unto the churches; and no reference unto it, but a requiring of such things as might be done by every one of these churches, and the disciples in them, without that body you speak of? Tell me further, If any one of these churches could reform itself according to the Apostle's letter, without waiting for the bringing about of that reformation, by the agreement of the plurality of the elders of all these churches met in a body? And if any one of them was bound by the Apostle's letter to reform upon sight thereof, and might do it, what was to hinder every one of the rest to do the like?

But perhaps you mean no more by their being under one ecclesiastic government, but that the one letter sent from the Apostle and them that were with him, bound and obliged them all to obedience. And in this sense I will own to you, that all the churches of the saints are united; for they have one New Testament, and the scripture of the apostles and prophets, binding them all to obedience. And I must say, if you see a provincial or national church in the epistle to the churches of Galatia, or if it present a Presbyterian face to you, as you speak, you may look for it next in the first chapter of Genesis.

To confirm the same thing that you was endeavouring to let us see in the epistle to the churches of Galatia, you say, the churches scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, are expressly called *the flock of God*; and the elders are conjunctly required to *feed*, or, as the original word signifies, *rule and govern this one flock which was among them*; not by constraint, but willingly. But it would have been fair to have told out the rest, and said, that the elders are required to feed the flock of God

which is among them; and that not as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock; and then, p. 420. 421. you enquire, Are not all the dispersed Jews throughout the different provinces of Pontus, &c. expressly called *one flock*, 1 Pet. i. 1. compared with chap. v. ver. 2.? To which question I answer negatively; and say, The flock there can be no other than such a society of Christians as every company of elders had among them, and they could feed as being ensamples to it; even such a flock as the elders in Ephesus had among them, and fed as ensamples, taking heed to themselves, and to all the flock over the which they were overseers, to feed the church, watching and warning every one. When elders are required to feed the flock, there is no question but it imports rule and government; but the constant dispensation of the ordinances, and particularly the Lord's supper, is imported in it also: and as these are both comprehended in the Apostle's exhortation, what ground is there to imagine the Apostle is pointing to any other flock than that which the elders might feed, in the entire sense of the word?

No company of elders is required to feed any flock here, but the flock which is among them, and to which they are ensamples; and every company of elders is required as ensamples to feed the flock which is among them, and what kind of a flock that is, no man can be in any strait to conceive. I cannot imagine that the Apostle is hereby requiring the elders in Ephesus, in the Proconsular Asia, to feed the disciples in Pontus; or elders in Alyth, to feed the Christian people in the north or south of Scotland, or at London, that perhaps never so much as heard of them or their conversation. It is possible that all that go under the Christian name in Scotland, (who yet cannot be called God's heritage without such a charity as may call all the world so), may have heard of some orders issued out from the general assembly, whereof an elder in Alyth happened to be a member; but is it

it possible, with sobriety of mind, to be persuaded, that such a thing as this is intended in this exhortation to the elders, *Feed the flock of God which is among you*, taking the oversight *επισκοπυτες*, not as lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock? I have frequently thought, that the outcry against the diocesan bishop's taking the oversight of a flock, which yet he could not oversee, came very ill from the ministers of single parishes, every one of them claiming share in the common oversight of a whole nation, as one church.

You next insist upon the direction of James's epistle to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, which, you say, were the same to whom Peter indited his first epistle. And, chap. v. 14. they are denominated *the church*: *Is any man sick among you, i. e. the twelve tribes, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him.* And then you desire me to chuse, whether this church was a single congregation or not. But if I should affirm, that the text plainly points to any one single congregation, whereof any one of those to whom he directs happened to be a member, and sick; and if I should deny, that the Apostle any where calls all those to whom he directs *the church*, or *one church*, you will chuse what you shall say next. You alledge further, That the same scattered tribes are designed *an assembly*, in the singular number, James ii. 2. And then you give me another choice; either it is an assembly for public worship, or an ecclesiastic judicature. But here is no choice to me, who acknowledge no ecclesiastic judicature, but that which is in a worshipping congregation: and to this agrees what you say in referring to the synagogue upon this text; for the rulers of the synagogue ruled in a worshipping congregation.

But you say, if *assembly* mean a Christian assembly for public worship, your point is gained; namely, that many particular churches or congregations of Christians are denominated *assembly*, in the singular number,

number, seeing your assembly must undeniably have a reference to the twelve tribes, to whom the epistle was indited. And why did not you, by the same reasoning, shew, from chap. ii. 11. 18. 20. that all the twelve tribes were one man made up of many single men; seeing *Thou* and *O vain man*, &c. must undeniably have a reference to the twelve tribes, to whom the epistle was indited? These, Sir, are the methods you take with the holy scriptures, to make them look to yourself and your reader with a Presbyterian face, and a national aspect; and while I admire the wisdom of God in guarding so strictly against you in the scripture-language on this subject, I consider with myself, how exceeding big you would look, if the language of the New Testament made but half so much for you, as it does for them that are against you in this question.

You also affirm, p. 52. 53. &c. “That the word *church* is made use of in the sacred oracles to express the pastors and rulers of the visible body of Christ, who are peculiarly called forth to rule and govern the Redeemer’s flock, or professors of the true religion, by assembling themselves together in an ecclesiastical judicature, and their jointly exercising acts of jurisdiction over them.”

For this you cite Matth. xviii. 17. *Tell the church*, and fly to the import of Hebrew words, and to Jewish traditions, when the question is only about the import of the word *church*, as it is applied in the New Testament. And because you cannot instruct your sense of this text, from the text or context, or from the writings of the apostles, that declare to us more fully the things that began to be spoken by the Lord himself, you betake yourself to authorities, and rail at the Independents: so you do not beg the question of them; but, if I may alter your sense of the school-phrase a little, you plainly rob it. It is the writings of the apostles, the writings of the New Testament, and not the cloud of commentators, and Jewish traditions,

ditions, that must determine whose right this text is, the Independents or yours: and if it be thus his, and the text itself speak for him, though you come with an army, and take it from him, you hold it in unlawful possession.

The *church* here must signify a society, whereof the trespassing brother, and the brother that tells him his fault, are members, and out of which the trespasses must be cast; and this cannot be a society or congregation of rulers, unless we say, that discipline is to be exercised upon none but rulers. Now, though you should manifest, that, by the two, ver. 19. or three, ver. 20. we must understand the elders of the church; yet, while you are not able to prove, that they are here, or any where else in the New Testament, impowered to bind or loose any otherwise but in the presence, and with the consent of the flock, whereof they are the immediate overseers, and which they feed, not as lords, but as ensamples, you will never be able to manifest, that the word *church* here can bear your sense of it. And seeing our Lord is speaking of the kingdom of heaven, and of what was to take place in that kingdom, which you affirm was not set up till his resurrection; you must find out the meaning of the word *church* here, by the writings of the New Testament after the Lord's resurrection, and no otherwise. But I think I have some ground to say, that I find not the word *church*, in this sense of yours, in all the writings of the New Testament; while yet I find it very frequently in a sense which agrees excellently with the scope of this place. You cite Acts xv. 22. where the church is distinguished from the elders, to prove, that it signifies the elders: and Acts xviii. 22. where it is said, Paul went up and saluted the church, which you say must be the elders, because it was impossible for Paul to salute the multitude of the members. But this requires much proof, as we shall see afterwards.

wards. And these are all your texts for a church representative.

You find fault with me for affirming, That the word *church* always denotes a congregation; and would make the reader believe, that this saying of mine was an inference merely from this, that the nation of Israel is called a *church*, and had one place of worship, p. 83. 84. But if you had not been willing to misunderstand my scope, *above*, p. 193. of the *Explication*, you might have perceived, that I was there laying a foundation for reasoning in this manner. The word *church*, in all the unquestioned applications of it in the New Testament, denotes always one congregation; and when it is applied to a sacred use, it signifies one worshipping congregation, having one place of worship. The nation of Israel in the wilderness is called *the church*, Acts vii. 38. and it was one worshipping congregation, having one altar. The antitype of that church, even the general assembly and church of the first-born, is undoubtedly called *the church*; and it is one worshipping congregation assembling in that where Jesus the High Priest is entered, and having only one altar, whereof all the members are partakers. The congregations of the saints, assembling in one place, and partaking of the one bread and cup, and therein shewing forth the invisible communion of the body mystical, cannot be denied the title of *churches* in the New Testament; unless you that call the Jewish synagogues *churches*, go about to deny it, while yet you acknowledge, that the Christian church was formed after the fashion of the synagogues, and alledge, that the largest of the primitive churches might be served with one altar, as it came to be called.

But you yourself affirm, that single congregations are called *churches* in the New Testament; for, when you are commenting upon 1 Cor. xiv. 34. p. 341. you say, "What can be more express, to fix a plurality of congregations here, than when the inspired penman,

penman says, *Let your women keep silence, not in the church, but the churches?* So, according to the express letter of sacred writ, we find there churches in the church of Corinth; and what is the amount of this, but that there was there a plurality of single congregations in one presbyterial church? And though, in the preceding verse, there is mention of the churches of the saints; yet this plurality of congregations is specified to the Corinthians, in that it is said, *your women*, which restricts it immediately to the persons to whom the epistle was indited."

Though the falsehood of this gloss of yours may appear abundantly from the text and context, and from what I have said, *above, Expl. p. 193.* (which it was your business to confute before you had asserted your own gloss with such confidence; yet it is beyond question with you, that single congregations are called *churches* in the New Testament. Now, Sir, when the question is about the import of the *church*, in a disputed case, the first course we are to take in the decision of the question, is, to know what is constantly imported in this word, in all cases wherein the application of it is undoubted; and if such an import be wanting in an application of the word which is questionable, it is a great prejudice against that application of it. Further, if the disputed application of the word *church* be supported only by such texts as may easily be understood in some one or other of the unquestioned senses of it; then, till it be proven, that such texts cannot bear the ordinary sense of the word, they must be understood in that sense.

You discover a peculiar genius upon the application of the word *church* unto the national congregation of the Old Testament: For you affirm, That the congregational shape of it is abolished, and also such a national shape as the Episcopalians contend for; though I do not know but they also may affirm, that their way, as to what respects government, abstracting from the worship, is moral, and liker the nation-

al frame of the Old-Testament church than yours is. But you say, that so much of the national frame of the Jewish church, as is suited to the Presbyterian national scheme, "is moral, or *perpetui juris*, and was instituted by God under the Old Testament for the exercise of discipline and jurisdiction." Here I want proof for two things.

1. Let the divine institution in the Old Testament be produced for "a national church in which are many particular churches, united together in the unity of one visible church-government, wherein all the pastors and rulers of these several churches are equally concerned, without any paramount power of any one church, or the rulers thereof, over another." This you say was instituted in the Old Testament; and in the proof of this you alledge, that the synagogues, where the moral worship and discipline was performed, were churches. But I very much want the proof of this odd assertion; and I also want to see the institution of these churches in the Old Testament; and to know of you, if the church of Israel was a complete church, according to divine institution, without these synagogues, where the instituted worship was not performed, and which do not appear in the first erection of that church, and which remain after that church is utterly abolished? Next, you affirm, That all these synagogues, which you call *churches*, were united, and under one national and visible ecclesiastical government. Here again I want the institution for that union, and for the subordination of the synagogues, as such, to the one visible ecclesiastical government. And you need not tell me stories out of Jewish writers, or what was the practice of the Jews after the Old-Testament scripture was finished, unless you first shew, that all their manner of worship and government then was of divine institution. I likewise want institution in the Old Testament for an equality of rulers in the one visible church-government; and when

When you go about to instruct this, you may have in your eye 2 Chron. xix. 11.

2. The next thing you have to prove is, That this form of government, which you say was instituted, was also *perpetui juris*, or moral; and because this would require more metaphysics than you are master of, you satisfy yourself with saying, That no Independent can prove it typical. It will be no hard task for an Independent to prove the government of the Jewish church typical, as well as the worship, to them that believe Christ's kingdom in the true Israel as well as his priesthood. But you must shew a clear institution for a government under the Old Testament, before an Independent find himself concerned to make an inquiry, whether it was typical or not.

I have been tedious, beyond my first design, upon the instances that support this observation upon the criticism of your performance; but especially touching the import of the word *church*; yet I hope to be the less tedious to you in the following observations.

O B S E R V A T I O N IV.

You mistake the question betwixt you and those you call *Independents*, about church-members. I wish you had taken the *thesis* laid down for you in the explication of the proposition: but it was easier for you to state the question in such a manner, and lay down such a proposition to be proven, as might best answer to the old Presbyterian arguments that were brought to prove, that real and invisible grace is not the ground of admitting members of the visible church. So you go about to prove, by ten arguments, as you say in the title of the section, p. 108. "That a credible profession, and a blameless conversation, are the grounds of admitting members of the visible church." But who ever said, that none but real converts in the sight of God, can be members of a visible church? I know no Independent that ever said so; and whom are you
 S f 2 then

then contending against? A credible profession, and blameless conversation, is what you require; and what more is required by any to a visible church membership?

But the true difference is about the meaning of these words of yours, *a credible profession, and blameless conversation*. Give these words an explication consistent with themselves, and according to the law of Christ, and I am not the man that shall differ from you. But I find, a profession of the faith upon which I ought not to credit that the professor is a believer, is your credible profession. Your credible profession of Christianity, and blameless conversation, is such as gives no man ground to believe charitably, that the person that has it hath any thing of the spirit of Christ, or of the true Christian faith, hope and charity. Your credible professor is one whose religion is no more but the breath of his mouth, wholly a stranger to the inward workings of the Holy Ghost; without whose common operations, I think, “no man can call Jesus Lord,” or make the scriptural profession of his name, 1 Cor. xii. 3. Again, you say, there is nothing more needful as to such who are baptized in any true church (you mean the church of Scotland for one, where the whole nation is baptized in infancy) but freedom from obstinacy in scandal, and a serious profession of subjection to the ordinances of Christ. And you know what you mean by freedom from obstinacy in scandal, in a nation going under the Christian name, and where the clergy have more means than the word of God and spiritual motives to bring scandalous persons to a submission. You also understand what you mean by a serious profession of subjection to the ordinances, in a nation where these ordinances are the customs of the country. And thus you make such an account of your credible profession, and blameless conversation, as agrees best to the church-members that we see in your national church, and that make up the far greater part of it.

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But would you have me to say, that Jesus Christ is “the Apostle and High-Priest of such a profession?” and shall I believe, that there is no other profession of his name required to make a man a fit member of a church of his, but such a kind of a profession as they that live in Mahometan countries make of Mahomet and his religion, and such a profession as is brought about in the same manner?

The credible profession of which the scripture speaks is brought about only by the influence of the word of God, the only instrument that the Lord put in the hand of his ministers to make disciples with; and it prevailed against all the wisdom and power of man, and the customs of all countries, to raise a profession of the name of Christ in the world, and to make visible subjects of his kingdom. The word is not powerful even unto this end without the Spirit concurring in some way or other. But you contend for a profession of Christianity that does no way appear to flow from the power of the word of God; and it makes no odds, as to your profession, though the man that makes it be wholly a stranger to the inward workings of the Holy Ghost; the profession of which the scripture speaks intitled the professors unto the charitable designations of *saints*, and *faithful in Christ Jesus*; and while they continued in the confession of the faith, love, and hope that is in Christ Jesus, they were so designed by the apostles themselves, and the churches were *churches of the saints*.

But the profession you contend for is such as does no way warrant us to ascribe these titles to the professors, and your most specious profession has no claim to these. So keen are you on this point to gain it, that, for the sake of it, you part with another, which, on other occasions, seems very dear to you: for, p. 111. your words are, “And it is to be observed, that that which our Lord had in design in giving officers unto his church, was not for the perfecting and building up of a mere visible church,
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but that which was invisible; namely, the perfecting of the saints, and edifying the body of Christ, till they should all come to the unity of the faith, and the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," Eph. iv. 11. 12. I hope you will remember this when you shall again bring that text, to prove your catholic visible body, for the perfecting and edification of which Christ hath given the gospel-ministry. When you alledge, that, where the visible church is called *the kingdom of heaven*, and by the name of *saints* and *faithful*, it can only be understood of the more valuable and better part; I want to know, how that more valuable and better part can be known by any man, so as he may call the church whereof these are members by designations proper to it. And, seeing faith and holiness are no way shewed forth to man's eye in your right profession of Christianity, what ground has any man to say, that there are *saints* and *faithful* in any particular church whereof he happens to speak? And, suppose a particular church made up of members upon such a profession as no way shews forth faith and holiness, and one person in that church that is a believer, and holy in the sight of God only, which is a supposeable case, will you say, that such a church may be denominated *faithful* and *holy* because of that person? And may you not as well say, that the family, or the city, or kingdom, where such a person lives may be called *holy* and *faithful* on his account, seeing faith and holiness are as little visible in the church and its profession unto the eye of man, as in any other society of this world, according to your doctrine?

Faith and holiness may appear to the eye of man, who can look no further than the outward appearance, where they are not really in the eye of the searcher of the hearts: and hence is the difference betwixt the *invisible church* and the *visible*; which is the outward appearance or representation of that which is not visible but in that representation; but if
faith

faith and holiness do not appear to man's eye in the profession of Christianity, then God has no visible church, no visible kingdom in the world. And if these be visible to man's eye in the true profession of Christianity, then must not those who shew them forth in their profession, be called by us the *saints* and *faithful*, unless we think evil, and judge their hearts? You make the members of the visible church, and their profession, such as have no title from God to partake of the seals of the new covenant, but in so far as he is their God, and they his justified and sanctified ones: and for this, and also to prove, that the visible church as such is not within the new covenant, you cite Jer. xxxi. 33. 34. p. 111.

Here you establish a difference very considerable betwixt that church where Moses, and the prophets, and John Baptist, and the Lord, in the days of his flesh, exercised their ministry, even the Old-Testament church, and the church of the New Testament. For, 1. All that church was within the covenant the Lord made with them when he brought them out of Egypt, whether they were justified and sanctified truly or not; but none but they who are truly justified and sanctified, and inviolably secured against apostacy, are within the new covenant. 2. That visible church had from God, by his express law, a right to the seals of that covenant within which they were; and they that neglected these seals in that church were appointed to be cut off from among the people: but, according to you, the members of the visible church under the New Testament have not any right from God to the seals of the new covenant. Are not here, now, two covenants, two churches, the old and the new, extremely different?

Is not here a vast difference by you made between the *old visible church*, and the *visible church of the New Testament*? And yet you reason from the old visible church as the same thing with the new, p. 119. 120. But has not God required a profession of the
new

new covenant (of which we read Jer. xxxi. and Heb. viii.) to be made in the world, that it may be some way visible among men? Has he not called us to a charitable judgement of them that make the profession of it, which he requires, that they are within that covenant, and his people, his justified and sanctified ones, referring the judgement of their hearts unto him, and forbidden us to think evil? Has he not, by his law in the New Testament, annexed the outward seals of that covenant, which he hath committed to men to dispense, unto that outward profession of the covenant, which he hath subjected to man's judgement of charity? Who are they then that have a right from God to these seals; they that are known only to him to be his justified and sanctified ones, and within the new covenant, or they that are so, according to the rules of a profession laid down in his word, in the sight of men?

We find he has commanded his ministers to baptize all them that are made disciples by the influence of the word of the New Testament; all and every one of them that believe, with all their heart, that Jesus, who was crucified, and raised again, is the Son of God, and that gladly receive the word of the gospel testimony and exhortation, or the new covenant: and he hath warranted them to baptize the infant seed of such, whom he calls holy, and of whom he says the kingdom of heaven is, and to whom the promise of the new covenant, whereof baptism is the seal, is, as it is to their parent; and he has not commanded them to baptize any other. Now, if this command respect such only as appearing in his eye, his ministers can never obey it; but if it respect them whom he warrants his ministers to account such by his word, then the seal of baptism belongs, by his law, to every one of them, and none else but them, that, unto man's eye looking charitably on them according to the word of God, are within the bond of the new covenant, and God's justified and sanctified ones,

ones, whatever they be in the eye of God; who hath never appointed this seal to be dispensed according to the rule of his omniscience, but according to the rules he has laid down in his word, for a profession of the new covenant, and judgement of charity thereupon; touching them that profess it, and their infant seed; who are to be judged of according to the parents profession while infants, but according to their own profession when come to years.

Every person that has a right to baptism, then, is visibly, whatever he be really, within the new covenant, and one of God's justified and sanctified people; and every one that is thus visibly within the new covenant, and visibly a member of the true New-Testament church, the body mystical, has a right, by the law of Christ, to the seal of baptism, and none else; and we have no manner of concern with what men are invisibly and in the sight of God.

Again, we find the outward seal of the Lord's supper delivered to the disciples in the churches of the saints, where the ordinance of discipline is placed, 1 Cor. xi. 20. 22. 23. in every one of which churches, partaking together in this ordinance, the union and communion of the catholic church, the mystical body is visible, 1 Cor. x. 15. 16. 17. 18. The first of these churches was that which the Lord himself assembled after his resurrection, and from which he was taken up into heaven, and upon which he poured down the Holy Ghost, Luke xxiv. 33. 36. 49.—53. compare Acts i. 3. 8.—15. Acts ii. 1. 2. 3. 4. 41. 42. 46. 47. These churches are made up of visible members of the New-Testament church, the body mystical, that are visibly within the new covenant, and are visibly God's justified and sanctified people; that is, them that appear to the eye of man, according to the rule of the word, to be such, by their own profession of the new covenant.

The first church was made up of them that, being pricked in their hearts by the word, and by the word

influenced to receive the gospel testimony and exhortation gladly and being thereupon baptized, did join themselves to, and were received by the hundred and twenty, to continue stedfastly with them, with one accord, and as one soul, in the doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers; and this in obedience to that call, *Save yourselves from this untoward generation*. If these persons were such in the eye of God as they are described, then they were really within the new covenant, and members of the invisible church. But seeing this cannot be affirmed, if they were visibly in the eye of men such as they are described, then they were visibly members of the New-Testament church of the first-born, and visibly within the covenant; and that church, as a church, was visible in their visible union together as a church. This visible church, and every member of it, had a title from God to that visible seal of the new covenant, the Lord's supper; and so has every such visible church to the end of the world. The church at Antioch was the first of the Gentiles; and it consisted of them that, by the hand of the Lord going along with his gospel, were influenced to believe, and turn to the Lord, and in whom Barnabas saw the grace of God; and they were added to the Lord in becoming a church, by the influence of his exhortation, "That, with purpose of heart, they would cleave to the Lord," Acts xi. 20. 26. Now, did not these, whatever they were in the eye of God, appear to be within the new covenant, and to be God's justified and sanctified ones? And did not the Lord's supper belong to them by right, when joined together visibly, to partake of it as one body? Or, unto whom did it belong?

The invisible church, as such, cannot partake of the supper, nor can all they that appear to be members of it, partake of it either. Infants of believing parents, cannot, nor can visible members of it, who, by their own profession, have right to baptism, partake of it by any scripture-warrant, with-

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out being joined to a visible church: so that it is only the members of a visible church, as such, that have a scripture-title to that seal of the new covenant, the Lord's supper. Thus you see how, under your correction, I take upon me to differ from your confident assertion, that the members of the visible church, as such, have not any title from God to partake of the seals of the new covenant: and when you correct me in this point, I hope you will shew me how the members of the invisible church, as such, and as distinguished from the visible, can partake of, and be admitted to these seals.

As the profession you contend for is a thing altogether foreign to the new covenant, and gives no man any title to the seals of it, and altogether foreign to faith and holiness; so it is such a thing as makes no man that has it an object of that peculiar love which Christ requires us to have to his brethren, his redeemed, the members of his body. Your profession, that you plead for, can never exhibit such a person to you. For while, on the one hand, a person known to be rebellious against the Lord, ought, according to your argument, p. 120. to be admitted a member of the visible church, without any positive signs of grace; on the other hand, when Christ requires his disciples to love one another, as he has loved them, and calls you to love the brethren whom you have seen, you are ready to answer as those, Matth. xxv. *When saw we thee, &c.* How should one of those whom Christ has loved unto the death be seen? How shall I know my brother for whom Christ died? For it can only be said of the invisible church, that it is redeemed with Christ's blood; and that church is no way visible to me, in the members of the visible church that make the right profession necessary unto church-membership. And as for the profession that the Independents look after, it manifestly tends to open a door for hypocrites, and shut it against many of those who may be the elect of God.

And when I am forbidden to judge my brother, or set at nought my weak brother, it is unlawful for me to discern betwixt one whom the law of Christ bids me love as a brother “for whom Christ died,” though weak, and one who is not, according to that law, to be looked upon by me as a brother, or to form a judgement of charity about any man, that he is a brother “for whom Christ died.”

Thus, Sir, you are for joining with them as church-members that are known to be rebellious against God, and for thinking evil of them that make the fairest and most credible profession of Christianity, and for judging them; and pervert the word of God, to harden yourself, in making void the Lord’s command of brotherly love, and rendering it of none effect to you, and to as many as your book can influence to think as you do. But though you alledge that the words, in the judgement of charity, are of no consideration, Acts xx. 28. and say the text affords no foundation for them; will you also banish the judgement of charity from that text and context, from whence you go about to prove, that we ought not to form a judgement upon that head, whether a man be to us a brother or not? And how will you explain the 15th verse of that xiv. chapter of the Romans, “Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died,” without the judgement of charity, unless you be for universal redemption? And if this designation was not due to church-members, credibly professing the faith, by the law of brotherly love, while they continued in that profession; what will you make of them that “deny the Lord that bought them?” 2 Pet. ii. 1. And if these words, *the judgement of charity*, can be of no consideration, Acts xx. 28. then you may let me understand the force of the Apostle’s argument there, to move the elders of the Ephesian church *to take heed to, and feed all that flock of which they were overseers.* He says, *Take heed to all the flock; to feed the church of God which he hath purchas-*
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ed with his own blood. And might not the elders, according to you, have answered him, 'The flock of which we are overseers is not *the church of God purchased with his blood*: For that is only the invisible church, which cannot appear to us in the flock which we oversee. If we could see that redeemed flock, we should take heed to it, and do it all the service we can; but that is not the object of sense, and so we cannot oversee it, nor take care of it?

I conceive, Sir, it was your business to answer my argument upon this text, in the explication of the proposition, which proved, that the judgement of charity must be of some consideration in it; and not to talk beside the purpose, about universal redemption, and the controversy with the Arminians, when it could not but be evident to any considering man, that the sense of that text which I go upon, serves to overthrow any argument that can be brought from these words for universal redemption. And when I consider as impartially as I can the 29th and 30th verses, I have still ground to believe, that it might be said, agreeably to scripture-style, that all the flock at Ephesus was *God's flock purchased with his blood*. For that way of speaking is the very same with what you have Rom. xiv. 15. 1 Cor. viii. 11. 2 Pet. ii. 1.; and is every way agreeable to the style of our Lord's new commandment of brotherly love, a particular branch of which the Apostle is recommending to the elders of the Ephesian church. Compare John xxi. 15. 16. 17.

The profession of Christianity you contend for, under the specious name of *a credible profession*, and *blameless conversation*, seems to me to be a thing altogether of another kind, than that confession of the faith, and of the name of Jesus, so much insisted on in the scriptures; even that which makes the confessors or professors hated of all nations, and a man's foes those of his own house; and which declares the professors to one another, as brethren,
and

and members one of another, and which has so many grievous threatenings directed against apostacy from it. As I take it, the profession you are contending for, is so far from being of the same kind with this, that it is set up unto the banishing of it out of the world; and is no other but that form of godliness that was shifted in by Antichrist into the room of the ancient profession, that was expressive of the power of godliness, and had a near relation to it. And that is a form of godliness not owing to the power of the gospel, but to the power of man; not shewing forth faith and holiness, nor making these any way visible in them upon whom it is: but it is upon them that are known to be rebellious against God; not manifesting redeeming love, nor the grace of the Holy Ghost, rendering these utterly invisible, and banishing brotherly love, and the judgment of charity, from the profession of the name of Jesus; not exposing men to persecution from the world of the ungodly, but making the church and the world one, and extinguishing the old open strife for the faith once delivered to the saints. There were ungodly men that crept in unawares into the first churches, under the profession of the name of Jesus; but this form of godliness served unto the open entrance of the ungodly world, known to be rebellious against God, into the outer court of the temple, to defile it; and thus it was trodden under foot of the Gentiles, the clergy ruling among them as the lords of the Gentiles.

Against this form of godliness, that has no relation to the power of it, and taken on by the world openly rebellious against God, and denying the power of godliness, and doing their best to make it invisible in the world, the Apostle bends his discourse, 2 Tim. iii. chapter throughout; while he is foretelling the antichristian state of things, and foreshewing the antichristian clergy, the true offspring of the old Judaising teachers, who were Pharisaical in their doctrine of justification, pressed after a conformity to the Jewish church,

church, and fought after a worldly kingdom, and set themselves against such a profession of the truth of the gospel as exposed men to persecution; and also the offspring of them that turned the grace of God into lasciviousness. Whereas you would have the Apostle there speaking only of turning away from such men as the Apostles and the first Christian teachers were themselves accounted to be, by the rulers of the Jewish synagogues; and as those must ever be accounted in the world, who adhere to the word of God as their only rule, and will not turn aside to fables, and that turn away from them that have *the form of godliness, denying the power of it*, who must be the prevailing party for number, when the nations of the world pass under the Christian name. For upon that of turning away, you say, he had “a special eye to schismatical and false teachers, who, by a specious form of godliness, endeavour to seduce persons from their lawful pastors, (by the law of the nation, as I take it), and carry them off from the communion of the church (I understand, by law established, or the parish church) unto private assemblies and house-meetings. This is manifest from the 6th and 7th verses. And it is remarkable, that the greatest part of their conquests were to be silly women, who, by the form and appearance of their godliness, and the fair shew they made of more than ordinary sanctity, they imposed upon them, as being the weaker sex, and generally of less judgment, reason, and understanding.”

While you thus maliciously pervert the holy word of God, to shew that men ought to turn away from the objects of your hatred, I think I hear a ruler of a Jewish synagogue, or a Jewish priest, in his zeal for the temple, speaking against the Apostles and their followers; or a Popish priest speaking against Protestant teachers and their followers, before they came to have a national establishment, or before they had drawn their form over a nation instead of the Popish form; of an Episcopal clergyman speaking against the
conventicles

conventicles in Scotland in the last age. And they that pretend to be the true offspring of those that were in former times thus spoken against, can abundantly discover the spirit that thus persecuted, against those called *Independents* now.

Though you are for their being church-members, whom we are to believe to be disciples; yet you are still for some distinction between the members of the visible church and the rest of the world. And you make the enjoying of the word preached, the privilege of that visible church, even as the partaking of the holy sacrament. And thus you deprive the rest of the world of the enjoyment of the word preached; so condemning yourself in the taking up of that poor old cant against the Independents, That a minister, according to their scheme, cannot preach, as a minister of the gospel, to any but the flock to which he is pastor.

If you had considered the explication of the proposition, which you pretend to confute, you might have found, it is the judgment of such as contend for what you call *Independency*, That every pastor of a church is set there for spreading the gospel in the world, as a light on a golden candlestick, and bears Christ's commission to preach the gospel, as his minister, to every creature; neither can you show any one position in that treatise, wherewith this is not consistent. But your argument on this head goes upon the supposition, that a pastor has not a commission from Christ to preach to any as his minister, but them to whom he is a pastor: and because you do not pretend to be pastors to more than that catholic visible body of which you speak, by the same rule, you preach only as private persons to the rest of the world, that are not of that visible church; and so you make the preaching of the word to be the privilege of that church to which men are admitted upon the grounds whereon your difference your visible catholic body from the world. But I thought you would have been ashamed

ed to bring this old ridiculous charge against them you have now to do with, till you had cleared yourself, as a pastor of the catholic church visible, of the same charge against yourself, as to preaching to them that are not members of that church; yet, to do you justice, you have done something toward that, in making the enjoying of the preached word to be the privilege of the members of that church; and so the controversy betwixt you and me will come to this, Whether pastors be Christ's ministers to the visible church only, by Christ's commission, Matth. xxviii. or to the world? I own it is very agreeable to your scheme, that men should first, by means foreign to the gospel, be turned in to the visible church, and so be made objects of the gospel message and call; and I shall not call this altogether disagreeable to the constitution of the church that had its beginnings in Constantine's days; but nothing is more disagreeable to the original constitution of the Christian church.

As to the infant-seed of believing parents, who are visible members of the body of Christ with their parents, and by their credible profession, and so have a right to baptism; they pass out of the state of the infant-seed of believers, wherein they were to be judged of according to their parents profession, when they become the objects of the gospel-call; and cannot be the members of a visible church, but by their own credible profession brought about by the gospel. You yourself require of them a serious profession of subjection to the ordinances of Christ; though yet, in another place, you affirm, "That he who is baptized, according to the command of Christ, has thereby a sealed right to all the external privileges belonging to that covenant of which baptism is the seal; and this continues till it be forfeited by some deed or action of the person," p. 153. which, if you please, you may prove, and then reconcile with what you say, p. 111. and p. 118.

There is another supposition of yours, by which

you endeavour to fix another absurdity upon the Independent principles; and that supposition seems to me to be this: That the heart-searching word of God, in the mouth of a pastor, cannot convince and convert a hypocrite that is a church-member, and charitably judged a brother in Christ by the pastor; and that he cannot, in preaching, call them in the name of God to be reconciled to God, or deal in a doctrinal way with the consciences of his church, to convince and convert them, whom yet, in the business of church-order, and in dispensing church-privileges, he looks upon as converted already. As this supposition of yours wants much proof, and is not altogether consistent with a distinction of your own, p. 147.; so I am sure it is inconsistent with the strain of the doctrine of the pastors of such churches, in whose printed sermons I have seen as much said, and to as good purpose, for the conviction and conversion of the most refined hypocrites, as ever I saw or heard in any other sermons; and though in all those church-duties wherein they must act according to the judgement of charity, the Independents reckon themselves obliged not to think evil; yet, in the dispensation of the gospel doctrine in the name of God toward the consciences of men when they preach, they are not the preachers in the world that are most liable to the charge of sewing pillows under the arms of church-members or others.

You seem to have a great prejudice at what you call *positive evidences*, and judging upon them in the admission of church-members; and I am at some loss to understand what you mean by them, though I have heard the expression frequently, among people of your opinion, used to express some very ill thing. If you mean by positive evidences, infallible evidences of a thing that none but God infallibly knows, and can assure a man's own conscience of with respect to a man himself, I think it would be a very great evil for a man to require such evidence to found his judgement

ment of charity concerning another man's faith and holiness, or concerning his being an object of brotherly love: and I think he is bound by the law of Christ to form his judgement, in this matter, upon less evidence. But if you mean positive evidence, in opposition to negative, which is no evidence; I must own, I know not how to form a judgement of charity, without some positive evidence. And is not a credible profession something positive? Are not those things you bring from the fathers upon this subject positive evidences? Is not a credible profession an evidence which I ought to credit for something? And what is that but what is professed? Is not then a credible profession of the faith, love, and hope that is in Christ, or of Christianity, a positive evidence of a man's being an object of brotherly love, which evidence ought to be the ground of my judgement of charity concerning him that he is a Christian, a believer in Christ, a brother for whom Christ died? If it be otherwise, and if there be no evidence upon which I can charitably judge that any man is a brother for whom Christ died, then tell me, how I can evidence my love to Jesus Christ in the labour of love toward my brother whom I have seen, and my love to God in my love to them that are begotten of him?

You own that pastors are to make inquiry into the state of the flock. But what are they to enquire after? Are they to seek to distinguish faith as it lies in the heart, from hidden hypocrisy there? That is an inquiry that I am sure no pastor is called to, or capable of; for no man has ought to do with any more but what is visible to man's eye. Thus, while you most unjustly charge others with the crime of searching mens hearts, you yourself would search it, or else constitute two kinds of visible Christianity, and you condemn the Independent, because he rejects one of them as unscriptural, and not to be found in the

original constitution of the Christian church, the scriptural confession of faith being but one.

I shall trouble you no further on this head, but refer you to the explication of the proposition; only I want scripture-proof for a proposition of yours, *viz.* That a person, being overtaken in some fault, must be debarred from sealing ordinances, till the scandal be removed according to Christ's rule; and yet he is still a member of the visible church, unless his obstinacy occasion his rejection by the sentence of excommunication. Bring me clear scripture-proof for this debarring or suspension from sealing ordinances; and do not tell me of all orthodox divines, that is, all divines that think as you do, and that is yourself.

O B S E R V A T I O N V.

It seems to me that you do not attend to the process of the argument about the nature of the church in Jerufalem, the church in Antioch, and in Ephesus, &c. For when it is alledged by us, that the scripture language, in the description of the church at Jerufalem, makes for one congregation, you affirm it is impossible it could be so, because of several things you alledge from other texts: so that the whole of your cause depends upon the proof of this impossibility: and till you prove it, whatever noise you make, you do indeed say nothing to the purpose. But, instead of demonstrating this, you go about to put the Independent to prove; whereas he has nothing to be proven, till you instruct your impossibility; and then he will tell you how far he agrees with your glosses upon the texts that now speak most plainly to him of one congregation. I humbly conceive you have failed in the proof of the impossibility of the church in Jerufalem its being one congregation, unless you think the proof is finished when you seek that I should tell you how that church could meet in one place, from time to time, to observe the instituted worship; and when,
upon

upon my telling you something feasible or possible, you call for proof that it was actually so as I say. But seeing your whole scheme hangs upon the supposition of the impossibility of the church at Jerusalem especially its being one congregation, you must either demonstrate this supposition, or, to use your own beloved phrase, *beg the thing in question*.

This supposition, from which your scheme is inferred, is itself an inference which you, and all Presbyterian writers against Independency, draw from the number of converts in Jerusalem, and of believing Jews, the diversity of languages there, and the number of teachers. To make your supposition stand upon these foundations, you have these things to prove.

1. That all those converted by the gospel in Jerusalem were members of that church. You know where you affirm, that the church in the singular number, so far as you can observe, is no where in the New Testament made use of in express terms to denote any more than the Christians in some city, except when the catholic church is meant. And I want that you should inform me, how all the numbers that were from time to time converted by the gospel in Jerusalem, where the Jews throughout Judea and Galilee were still resorting, and where the Jews throughout the world were several times in the year coming to worship, can be said to be only of the Jews that inhabited Jerusalem? Were they the only Jews about the temple? or was converting grace confined to them? And do we not expressly read of a multitude that came from the cities round about, bringing sick folks to be healed by the apostles? Though churches be not mentioned throughout Judea and Galilee, till after the dispersion; yet, when we come to speak of impossibilities, it will be hard to prove it impossible that there were not churches throughout Judea and Galilee before. Probable conjectures will not do, where an impossibility is to be proven.

2. It

2. It is also to be made manifest, That there was no place, before the dispersion, where all the members of the church could possibly assemble as one congregation. The scripture speaks expressly of their meeting in the temple, and in Solomon's porch. Against this it is used to be said, that Solomon's porch could not hold them all, taking it for the porch of the temple, 2 Chron. iii. 4. But you have taken pains to tell us, that the true Solomon's porch could not only hold one vast congregation, but very many; so that you have turned this branch of the proof of your impossibility out of doors; only you would have your readers imagine, that there were such partitions in Solomon's porch for distinct congregations, as there are for the several parishes in Glasgow.

3. The next thing to be proven is, That there was no common language among the dwellers in Jerusalem. That they understood different languages, several of them that inhabited that city, there is no question; but it will not be easy to demonstrate, that there was no common language among the inhabitants. And for what is said of the people mentioned Acts ii. if words can signify any thing of that kind, they all understood the language of Peter's sermon, even all that were converted by it.

4. You must also prove, That the twelve apostles, the then pastors and teachers of that church, could not find room for their gifts of teaching and exhorting, and of preaching, in a church that assembled every day in the temple; and that they had not work enough, who, beside their constant *labour in the word and doctrine*, in the daily assemblies of the church, and among the church-members, were bearing witness of the Lord's resurrection, and preaching to multitudes, both about the temple and in private houses, as occasion offered.

5. It is next to be made evident, That, when the dispersion was, and while the persecution that arose about Stephen lasted, any more of the church remained

mained in Jerufalem than as many as could afsemble in fome private place, or even that the church did at all afsemble in the very heat of the perfecution. In the proof of this it is ufually affirmed, that only teachers were fcattered abroad; and, when you fay this, you muft mean office-bearers, elders; for you will not allow, that any of the members of that church not in office, whatever extraordinary gifts they were endowed with, preached the gofpel, however they might be called to it at that time. But though it be manifef, that they that were fcattered abroad went every where preaching the word; yet it is moft evident, that all they that were perfecuted and fcattered did not preach; unlefs we fhould fay, that women preached; and then, I think, you will be in no ftrait to fay, that all the members of the church that were men preached, Acts i. 3. 4. I have no reafon to queftion, that the fame thing is meant by the church in ver. 1. and 3.; and it is plain in ver. 3. that the church was both men and women.

6. It muft alfo be demonftrated, That all the myriads of believing Jews, long after the difperfon, were members of the church that was then in Jerufalem, and was under the immediate infpection of the prefbytery there. And you may likewise try your critical skill a little, for your diverfion, upon the word *myriads*, to fhew, that it always, in the New Teftament, is to be taken to fignify *ten thoufands*; and that it muft be fo taken Luke xii. 1. where you find myriads in one congregation.

Unlefs thefe things be demonftrated, your fuppoftion falls to the ground, and your conftitution of the Chriftian church that is founded upon it comes to nought. And when we fhall fee them proven, then we fhall confider what was the plan of the church laid down in Jerufalem to be followed in after-ages, and whether there were in that place diftinct fixed congregations and felfions, united in a claffical prefbytery, and fubject to it: and, till you be able to produce

duce a pattern for such sessions in the New Testament; I will easily deny, that there is any pattern there for your classical presbyteries. For whatever kind the presbytery in Jerusalem was of, if it had not kirk-sessions under it, if it was not compounded of them, it was no pattern for your classical presbytery: and as I reckon you and I will agree, that the other scripture-presbyteries were of the same kind with that at Jerusalem; so, when we come down to primitive churches in the second and third centuries, we will find no presbytery there but the eldership of one church, that was served with one altar. But till you demonstrate your foresaid supposition, which I do not expect to see of a sudden, I must remain secure in the possession of as plain a truth as scripture-words have made it, that the church in Jerusalem did all assemble with one accord in one place: and if there was no presbytery there but a congregational one, we need not go to Ephesus, or any where else, to seek a classis; I am sure, not to Lystra, where, you say, was the presbytery that laid hands on Timothy. I would be content to see how you make up the proof of a classical presbytery in that place, against the author of the *Defence of national churches*, who affirms it to be a session; for he brings Acts xiv. 23. to prove kirk-sessions: and he also is of the mind, that the churches throughout Judea and Galilee were certainly congregational.

There are now three of you that have written for classical presbytery, the author of the *Defence of national churches*, the author of the *Naked truth*, and yourself, the author of the *Original constitution of the church*; and I humbly advise you to enter into a concert among yourselves, that you may fully understand your own scheme, and come to understand one another, and be reconciled among yourselves before you write again, with the intolerable confidence you have hither to shewed, against the congregational way. But how should I expect that you will write consistently

ently with one another, while I think it is most easy to manifest, that there is not any of you that writes consistently with himself?

OBSERVATION VI.

The grounds you lay down for your arguings to prove the subordination of judicatures, are such as do indeed serve to overthrow it, and to establish the congregational plan as the only scripture plan.

I. Your first foundation, which you call a noble one, is the nature of the unity or oneness of the visible body of Christ; and upon this I offer the following things to your serious consideration.

1. As you have not yet manifested any visible body of Christ, but a congregation of the visible members of his mystical body coming together to the Lord's supper; so the oneness of such a visible body of Christ will never make out a subordination of judicatures; but, if it be well considered, does not appear to consist with it. We may have a metaphysical view of the universality of the visible members of the mystical body of Christ; but that this universality of visible members is, or ever was at any time, one visible church in a political sense, or one visibly organised body, is so far from being a truth, that it is evidently false in fact. And if all these visible members of the body of Christ should at any time happen to be members of a visible body of his, all partaking of that one bread and cup; this is a thing altogether accidental unto Christ's institution of such a church or visible body of his: yea, there are some visible members of that mystical body into which we are baptized, that are not capable of being one bread and one body in such a visible church, nor objects of its discipline, nor of acting any part as members of it; and these are the infant-seed of believing parents, of whom the kingdom of heaven is,

as well as of their believing parents, and who are, by the express word of God, to be accounted holy.

Now, a visible church or body of Christ is united while it continues stedfastly assembling in his name, with one accord, in the doctrine, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers, praising God with one mind, and one mouth, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and forbearing one another in love, walking in an orderly subjection in the Lord, unto an eldership or presbytery of their own choosing, and maintained by themselves, and observing the Lord's command, Matth. xviii. 15.—20. The unity of such a body of Christ is remarkable in the Lord's supper, wherein all the members are one bread and one body, being all partakers of that one bread; and this shews forth the union and communion of Christ's mystical body, even as that bread and that cup shews forth his body and blood, wherein the mystical body has communion, 1 Cor. x. 15. 16. 17. This unity of a visible body of Christ is likewise manifest in its order and discipline; while the bishops or elders do all agree, in the presence of the flock, to bind or loose in Christ's name, and therein unanimously profess their subjection to their one and only Lord Christ, and his mind and will manifested in his word, which is the sceptre of his kingdom, thus ruling and leading the flock as examples, and not as lords over God's heritage; and while the flock unanimously professes subjection to the authority of their Lord Christ in his word, in consenting to the agreement of his elders, and, as one soul, concurring with them in calling on his name for binding or for loosing.

When you shall manifest, that the subordination of judicatures is consistent with all this unity of a visible body of Christ, I shall attend to you: but if, when it came in, under pretence of curing and preventing divisions,

divisions, it made more; and when it pretended only to conduce to the well-being of churches, it served to destroy their being, you must excuse me, if I say, that the unity and oneness of a visible body of Christ, establishes not the subordination of judicatures, but makes it void.

2. Supposing it were true, as it is false, that you say, p. 88. 89. "That gospel-ordinances and church-privileges were given primarily to the universality of professors; and that particular assemblies of Christians have their rise merely from the impossibility of their joining all together, for the convenient administration of gospel-ordinances, and enjoying other ordinary church-privileges:" I say, supposing this, unto whom does this gift of ordinances and privileges belong in the next place, when the universality of professors cannot assemble in one place, but unto them that can conveniently assemble for the administration and enjoyment of them all? And what society is it upon which the grant of all gospel-ordinances and church-privileges falls, if it be not a congregation of the saints? There are the institutions of worship, there must the Lord's supper be, and no where else; there are all the ordinary officers of Christ's appointment. Upon this society, therefore, and none other, does the institution of ordinances, and grant of church-privileges fall, when the universality of professors cannot assemble. And if you enquire, Why may not this grant belong to a society made up of these churches, and representing them? I answer, It cannot; because such a society, give it what name you will, cannot observe all these ordinances, and enjoy all these privileges.

Your argument for extending the government as far as it can be extended, will conclude as well for managing the Lord's supper as extensively, and placing it in as large a society as that wherein the passover was placed. For the more extensively the ordinances are administered, the more agreeable it is still

to the primary grant; which was, say you, to the catholic church visible; and so one communion-table, from off which the whole members of the catholic church in the nation should receive the Lord's supper, and to which they should, from time to time, resort, as the Jews to the altar, is more agreeable, by your argument, to the primary grant, than a congregational one; even as a national assembly of rulers for government is more agreeable than a congregational one. But it is still more agreeable to such a catholic grant of ordinances and privileges, that it should fall next upon a congregation, than upon a nation or province. For thus it can be more uniformly observed and enjoyed, without any consideration of the sizes, and shapes, and distinctions of nations, and in an exact agreeableness unto the observance and enjoyment of it in an assembly of the whole professors of the name of the Christian faith: so that, in seeing any one of these congregations, we may see the same things that we should see if the universality of professors were assembled for the observance of all ordinances, and the enjoyment of all church-privileges; and the same things that we should see, if we should go through all the churches upon the face of the earth, an assembly of the same kind, the same sort of members, the same ordinances of worship, the same church-officers, the same order and discipline, and the mystical body of Christ shewed forth in the same manner. I own this is the most beautiful view I can have of the catholic church, according to your notion, and according to what you say, of the grant of all ordinances and church-privileges being made primarily to that catholic body. And I see not that your argument can indeed prove any thing, if it be not this, that there can be no church but a congregation, unless the universality of professors could assemble together for observing all gospel-ordinances, and enjoying all church-privileges; and that would still be no more but a congregation.

3. The scriptural unity or oneness of these churches, and of the catholic church, no way favours provincial and national synods, and the subordination of judicatures, and can be no foundation for them. Your catholic visible body united, and under one visible catholic government, I believe not; seeing it is not a proper object of faith, as not being revealed, and as being an object of sense, yet never seen by any. I acknowledge freely to you, I have not understanding enough for the visible union of this body that you contend for, except you could make one visible pastor and bishop, or unanimous college of bishops, over all the pastors and congregations in the world, and one visible place of worship for the whole body to resort unto.

The scripture gives me some notion of the unity of the catholic church, the church of the first-born, which is described Heb. xii. 22. 23. 24. Rom. xii. 4. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 12. 13. Eph. i. 10. 22. 23. Eph. ii. 5. 6. 16.—21. Eph. iv. 4. 5. 6. 15. 16. I also see the Apostle accommodating his doctrine of the unity of that holy catholic church, the mystical body of Christ, unto a visible church, a congregation of saints, wherein that catholic body is shewed forth, and exhorting the members, in their several stations, to walk according to it, and shew it forth, Eph. ii. 22. Rom. xii. 6.—10. Eph. iv. 1. 2. 3. 1 Cor. xii. 27.; and so I likewise understand the visible unity of a visible church or congregation of the saints, shewing the holy catholic unity in the assembling of themselves together stedfastly, and with one accord, for the observation of all the ordinances of Christ, according to his word, and particularly the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. x. 15.—18.

I also perceive, that in every congregation of the saints observing the word of Christ, the unity of the catholic body is visible; so every one of these churches, in the open observation of the word of Christ, wherein his authority is visible, and which is one for
them

them all, is as like another, as one copy of your book is like another, or like the whole impression: so that, when I have the copy now before me, I have your book, and have no occasion for gathering together the whole impression. Thus the church in Thessalonica was one with the churches in Judea, in the observation of that word, *which wrought effectually in them, when they received it, not as the word of man, but as the word of God,* 1 Thess. ii. 13. 14. That word which was then delivered to them by the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, and which we have now in the scripture of the New Testament, was as the seal, and a church in Judea, and another in the city of Thessalonica, as two impressions of the same seal. And as this word, when duly received and observed, will make the churches one and uniform every where, so there is an oneness and uniformity in the opposition to it every where; as our Lord has abundantly foretold, and as it is manifest from 1 Thess. ii. 14.

As any church, then, is more or less visibly conformed to that word of Jesus Christ, the only uniting head and lawgiver of the church, it has more or less of the true visible oneness and uniformity of churches. And though there should be but one church in the world visibly observing that word, that church has the true catholic visible unity and uniformity. As it is the duty of the disciples of Christ every where, to conform themselves to that word, wherein his authority is visible, and that as they shall be answerable to him their Judge, Lawgiver, and King, to whom every one of them must give an account of himself; so it is the duty of every church to bring up itself visibly to that word in all things wherein it comes short of it, and to purge itself from every thing disagreeable to that word, and so to come to the catholic unity and uniformity: otherwise no particular church could be condemned or approved

ven by him the Lawgiver and Judge, for observing or not observing that unity.

And, what more can be said of the catholic visible unity of churches, I know not, unless I turn myself to the catholic unity and uniformity that took place in the Roman empire, after the congregations of the saints were first corrupted by the mystery of iniquity working in them, or to something near a-kin to that, and much of the same kind. And what should make you point to the Roman empire, in the beginning of your argument upon this head, p. 263. I know not, except it be to turn our eyes there, that we may behold your oneness of the catholic church visible in perfection. But against all that unity and uniformity, and every thing that pertains to it, and comes of it, the Lord Christ will set himself, to consume it *by the spirit of his mouth*, till he destroy it utterly *by the brightness of his second coming*.

Yet men will be saying something in favour of what remains of it, after something of it is consumed away, and proposing wise schemes of their own, for yet keeping all the churches in visible unity. As when one or more churches depart from the gospel unity and uniformity, what should remedy that evil? Is not a catholic assembly of rulers appointed, or ought it not to be appointed, as most meet and necessary for this? And if it ought to be ordained, certainly it was, unless we would reflect on the wisdom of Jesus Christ.

To this I answer, The wisdom of man is foolishness with him; and if one church or more churches depart from the gospel-unity, he charges this evil upon the church that so departs, and not upon any other, nor upon the rulers of other churches, whom he commends, if they do right, let another church do never so wrong; and he calls the erring church to reform and return; which if it do not, he will chastise it, or cast it off, according as it deserves, and that visibly. There was a care of the churches in
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the first formation of them, and in the laying of the plan of them, by the apostles, prophets, and evangelists; in whose place, as to all that is beyond the business of pastors and teachers, the churches now have the scriptures of the New Testament, unto which no apostle or prophet, though now on the earth, could add any thing, not so much as an infallible explication, which would be a new revelation, under the pain of the adding to him of the plagues written in that book; so that there is no more use for these apostles, prophets, and evangelists; and we cannot desire them now, without setting at nought the work already done by them, and contemning the New Testament revelation, now completed, as being insufficient.

But if it be yet inquired, May there not be a common overseer, or company of overseers, taking care, according to the best of their knowledge in the scriptures, that the word be so observed in all the churches, as they may be one, and uniform according to it, in subjection to their common oversight and jurisdiction? To this the head of the church answers, "I walk in the midst of the golden candlesticks, I hold the stars in my right hand." And if any man be not satisfied in this answer, let him seek another in the place of it; and I could direct him where to find it in perfection, if he be content to take up anticrist instead of Jesus Christ.

But while men are seeking to establish the visible unity that you are contending for, unto the remedying of evils in some churches, or in any one church, they do not consider, that they are engaged in the support of that thing that served unto the corruption of all the churches, and their falling away from the true unity and uniformity. And after this universal falling has taken place, and the churches are not fully recovered from it, no church can possibly be recovered, and bring itself up to the true scriptural visible unity, while it cleaves to that unity you contend
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for, and while it departs not from it. Thus, I am of opinion, the nature of the scriptural catholic unity is so far from being a noble foundation for the subordination of judicatures, that it cannot stand with it.

4. The gift of officers for perfecting and edifying the body of Christ, in the scriptural account of it, gives no support to the subordination of judicatures, but unto congregations. Your argument, p. 88. to prove that this gift was not made to congregations, will, with equal evidence, manifest, that it was not made to your catholic visible body: for you say, "Christ gave unto her apostles, who cannot be said to be a deed of gift to particular congregations, their commission extending to the whole world." And the whole world is of greater extent than even your visible body itself. But that we may have a view of this gift or grant of officers, and the body to which it is made, let us consider that ivth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, and that may well serve for a key to Rom. xii. and 1 Cor. xii. You sometimes acknowledge, that the body, for the perfecting and edifying of which Christ gave apostles, &c. is the invisible church; and, whether you acknowledge it or not, it is very manifest, that the Apostle speaks of the mystical body of Christ, with application unto the flock at Ephesus, wherein that body was shewed forth, and of no such body as that you contend for. He speaks of that body which is animated by one spirit, the Holy Ghost; has one Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, in union with whom, as the head, it is all growing unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and one Father of all; who is above all, and through all, and in all; and so it is the church of the first-born. This is that church that is called in one hope, even the hope of the heavenly inheritance, and hath one faith and knowledge of the Son of God, wherein it is growing unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and so it is that church

church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. This then is that body into which we are baptized with one baptism, in the name of God, the Father of it, and in the name of the Son, its head, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit that animates it. For the perfecting and edifying this body, the Lord and Head of it gave gifts unto men, ver. 10. 11. 12. 13. *He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.* The end for which he gave these is twofold.

1st. *For the perfecting of the saints,* πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων. for the joining together of the saints; or as you, I think, very well express it, *For bringing in to joint the saints.* This is the same thing that had been declared by the Apostle, chap. i. 10. ii. 6. 15. 19. and iii. 5. 6. 7. The first work about that body, whereof the first-born from the dead, Jesus Christ, is the head, and which is made up of saints, is the joining of it together. For this end, he that was raised from the dead, and set on the right hand, and given to be head over all things to the church, gave apostles and prophets; and the evangelists ministered unto them in that great work of gathering both Jews and Gentiles together, with the saints in heaven, in one in Christ Jesus; and of the first formation of the visible churches of the saints, which are for the sake of that mystical body, and serve to shew it forth till it appear; and therefore the Apostle, both here and Rom. xii. and 1 Cor. xii. accommodates what he says of that glorious body unto such churches. So the Lord Christ gave apostles, prophets, and evangelists, for the joining together of the body of Christ, and the work of the ministry; for it is certain the evangelists are called the apostles ministers, Acts xiii. 5. 2 Tim. iv. 5.

2^{dly}, The other end for which Christ gave these gifts, is the edifying of this body, thus formed, till it be perfected; *for the edifying of the body of Christ,*
till

till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. This supposes the formation of the body of Christ, which was by the apostles, prophets, and evangelists; for it behoved the body first to be, before it be edified; wherefore the Apostle now calls it the body of Christ, when he speaks of this edifying. This body is edified by the adding of the elect unto it, till they all be brought in, and by their growing up in it unto perfection, till they all be perfected in one; which edifying is some way shewed forth in the adding of believers to the churches of the saints, which is called adding to the Lord, and in their visible growth together in faith and love, and in the professed expectation of the coming of Christ, 2 Thess. i. For this work of edifying the body of Christ, he gave pastors and teachers, who must continue to the end, because their work continues; and they were by the apostles, and their ministers, planted in every church of the saints, and there set as a light in a golden candlestick, to shine, and so to edify the body of Christ.

The Apostle, on this subject of the gift of officers, for joining together, and edifying Christ's body, cites the lxxviii. psalm, where there is a glorious description of the Lord's ascension, and his receiving gifts for men, and of the erection and advancement of his kingdom by the gifts: and, among other things there spoke of, I find special notice taken of the congregations: for, when the Psalmist describes the glorious marches of the King of the church, in the sending of the rod of his strength out of Zion, the true sanctuary, for making a willing people to himself among all the kingdoms of the world, that he might reign in the midst of his enemies; and when he sets forth the variety of gifts and offices accompanying these goings or marches of his, under the figure of the Old-Testament music, ver. 25. he then says, *Bless ye the Lord in the congregations*, ver. 26. And I remember you once spoke to me with pleasure of the applica-

tion of the 27th verse, by a certain author, unto the apostles. And it is remarkable, that those very tribes are mentioned of which they were: Paul was of Benjamin; and the brethren of the Lord, James, the Lord's brother, Gal. i. 19. and others of his brethren, 1 Cor. ix. 5, were of Judah; and the Galileans were of Zebulun and Nephthali, Matth. iv. 12. to 16. 18. Now, both the things pointed at in the 24th and 25th verses, and the thing pointed at in the 27th verse, seems plainly to have a reference to the congregations; and I know not but they may be the holy places mentioned ver. 35. And, truly, when I consider the use that was made of the congregations of the saints in the setting up and advancing of Christ's kingdom by the gifts he received for men, I have some ground to think, that the New Testament makes us understand what is said in this psalm of the congregations. For, as the word of the Lord, his mighty voice, the rod of his strength, ver. 36. and Psal. cx. 2. was sent out by him from Jerusalem on earth, the figure of the true, and from the glorious true heavenly sanctuary above, the true temple; so it was sent forth from the congregations of the saints, in every one of which, the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the first-born written in heaven, is shewed forth, and made some way visible.

When our Lord gave commission to his apostles, and ascended up from them, he left them in the first congregation of his own gathering; and when they had continued for some time with that congregation in prayer with one accord, and Matthias was put in the place of Judas, and, together with the eleven, chosen unto the oversight of that congregation, he poured down the Holy Ghost upon them in that congregation; and from thence went forth the word of the Lord with power in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. There was a congregation gathered at Antioch of the Gentiles; Paul and Barnabas, and others
with

with them; prophets and teachers, are in that congregation, and there they are sent forth unto the great work of the conversion of the idolatrous Gentile world, and of bringing presents to Christ from the kings of the earth, and of making the Gentiles of all lands stretch out the hand to God, and the kingdoms of the earth sing unto the Lord. In order to this, there was first a congregation or church of the saints raised at Antioch, by the word that came out of the first congregation; and from this at Antioch the rod of Christ's strength went forth gloriously, for the joining together of the saints, and making the Gentiles fellow-heirs, and of the same body with the Jews. And it is remarkable, that the apostles, as they were recommended by the brethren in the churches unto the grace of God in their work, and fought their earnest wrestlings together for them in that work, so they gave them an account of their progress in it from time to time, Acts xiv. 26. 27. and God was glorified in the congregations, because of his goings, Acts xi. 18.; and where-ever the gospel had success, there they took care to raise a congregation, and there was a new place of quartering, and from thence again sounded out the word of God, 1 Thess. i. 8.; and by them the apostles, and other preachers of the gospel through the world were sustained, 1 Cor. ix. Phil. iv. 15. 16. 3 John &c. When the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, had finished their work, they left the world, and these congregations in it, with pastors and teachers for edifying the body of Christ now joined together, and left that work in the hands of the pastors and teachers of these congregations, who have a commission to *preach the gospel to every creature, and to teach all nations.* But the visible church, of which they were left overseers, is no other but the flock among them, and unto which they are examples, that is, their congregation.

With these congregations the scriptures of the New Testament were left, and were preserved in them till the

the new Babylonish captivity; which came about by reason of their departing from that blessed rule laid down to them in these scriptures by the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, and seeking unto themselves another method of union than that word; and when the wisdom of man came in the room of that word, and the power of the kingdoms of this world in the room of the glorious rod of Christ's strength, and the heavenly power of his kingdom, then the Lord's enemies *roared in the midst of his congregations, and set up their ensigns for signs, and brake down the carved work.*

But, after the Lord has, by his marvellous providence, preserved his word during the Babylonish captivity, and, by bringing it to the open view of the nations in their own languages, and by the gifts bestowed upon men for the preaching of it, begun to consume *the man of sin* now of a long time, you are yet highly offended that any in the place of the world where you live, should come out of Babylon, and return to the congregations of the saints, there to cleave to the truly uniting word of the apostles and prophets, in opposition to that dividing and desolating mean of union that was set up in the place of it: and you make a great clamour about a deed of gift of officers given to a catholic church or body of Christ, for which there is no foundation in the word of God, by which the only body of Christ yet visible that has a claim to that gift is a congregation of the saints. And however small and despised these congregations may be any where in the eyes of them that say, "What do these feeble Jews? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall:" yet their Redeemer is strong, and able thoroughly to plead their cause: "He will not forget the congregation of his poor for ever, nor will he forget the voice of his enemies, the tumult of those that rise up against them."

II. You

II. You next argue for the subordination of judicatures, from Matth. xviii. which is as clear against it as any of the words that began to be spoken by the Lord himself while on earth.

Here, because our Lord says, that our carriage towards a trespassing brother not hearing the church should be as that of the Jews towards Heathens, you take occasion to cant over a deal of stuff about the Jewish church, of which I have said something to you before; but as your inferences from these words, which do no way refer to the order of the Jewish church, nor to the manner of their excommunication, are the widest that can be thought of, so I rest satisfied in the apostolic explication of them, 1 Cor. v. 11. compared with Acts x. 28. and xi. 3.; and pity you, putting yourself to the trouble of searching after, and taking heed to all the Jewish traditions or fables about excommunication, having no foundation in the scriptures of the Old Testament, and from them establishing a rule to yourself. And when you alledge, that your scheme of government was in the Jewish church, and that every thing else but it in the order of that church is abolished, and that it is moral; you might as well make no pretence about the Jewish church, and establish your subordination of judicatures upon right reason and nature's light, as does the defender of national churches: for it is your right reason that tells you what is moral in this case, and what not, and nothing else that I know of. I must say, you discover a strength of imagination, when you find every step of the Lord's law about offences, Matth. xviii. in the order of the Jewish church.

That the Jews were bound to reprove one another for sin, there is no question; but how you find the second degree of admonition before witnesses in these texts, that ordained facts to be proved in judgement by them that were witnesses unto these facts, and that one witness could not bring any man to death, two or three being necessary, I cannot easily imagine,
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there being nothing like admonition in the case, nor desisting upon the trespasser's hearing. And for the admonishing of offenders, that goes before the sentence; you might as well have brought any texts to prove it to have been the same thing with what was enjoined under the Old Testament: and as to what was enjoined under the Old Testament, if a trespass was committed for which the law appointed a man to be cut off, there was no sparing of him upon his hearkening to any admonition; and when the priests, Levites, and judges, that sat in the place which the Lord chused, passed sentence in a matter too hard for judges in the cities, (not the rulers of the synagogue), *in a matter between blood and blood, plea and plea, stroke and stroke*; and if any man rebelled against that sentence, it behoved him to die, or to be cut off. Is this any thing like a church's admonition to a brother, manifested to be a trespasser by witnesses? which admonition, if he hear it, gains him so as no censure can be inflicted upon him, any more than if he had never trespassed.

You find next an allusion unto the first degree of excommunication among the Jews, in the binding of an obstinate trespasser, and counting him as an Heathen; but because this first degree of excommunication is not to be found in Moses's law, you go to your Jewish traditions for this. And shall I believe, that the New-Testament Lawgiver brought his law from these? No question he is present with every one of his churches, and confirms what they do in his name, no less than in the Old-Testament church and sanhedrim; but will this make it appear, that this law of his was transcribed from Moses's law, and that hereby he designed to give us the constitution of that church over again? While you attend so much to the Jews, and cite them even as you do the Old Testament itself, I think you will be altogether inexcusable, when you hear them complaining of the neglect of the rule, Matth. xviii. as one of the grounds
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of the Lord's destroying their city; if you, that own the authority of our Law-giver, live in the neglect of it, or continue in such circumstances as wherein you cannot practise it, and the more that you draw arguments from it for the support of the society wherein it cannot be observed.

There is a ground laid for your arguings from Matth. xviii. *viz.* That Christ has here granted power to the overseers or elders of a congregation, two or more, to bind and loose in his name. Here, then, before we go further, this is evident in the text; or else your reasonings upon it, both as to the rule of proportion and the Jewish synagogue, fall to the ground; and you also prove it, chap. 5. § 2. from this text. And this being agreed upon betwixt us, I presume to offer you a few questions upon it; as,

1. Seeing I hear not of two kinds of presbyteries in the New Testament, and the word *presbytery* is but once used with respect to the Christian constitution, and when used with respect to the Jewish, signifies their supreme court, Luke xxii. 66. and Acts xxii. 6. tell me, if this be the scripture-presbytery or not? Certainly the binding and loosing presbytery, according to you, must answer unto the Jewish presbytery; and the presbytery in this text, of the two or three or more elders, you alledge, has the triple testimony and promise brought over from the supreme court among the Jews to confirm the censures. Is this court, then, the eldership of a congregation, the court that is called *a presbytery* in the New Testament? and is the triple testimony and promise that was made to the supreme Jewish court, called *the presbytery*, given unto this court, or not?

2. Have these two or more pointed at in the text any power here given them to bind or loose by plurality of votes, or only by agreement? I think you have some way answered this already, when you are declaring the import of meeting and acting in Christ's name, p. 608. place 5.; and so you destroy the bind-

ing and loosing which is by the plurality of voices, seeing the grant of power, and promise of concurrence, is only to them agreeing, and no otherwise: thus no deed can be done by them without coming to agreement.

3. Have the two or more, as many more as you please, any power here granted to them to bind or loose in Christ's name any where but in the church, and with the consent of the church, even the flock which they oversee, *not as lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock?* Shew me from this text that they have; shew me an instance of it in the New Testament; and, till you be able to do this, you may spare your pains in proving, that the rule and government of the church is in the hands of the elders, which I never denied. But the question betwixt you and me being about the nature of that power of binding and loosing, and the manner of its exercise, and whether it must be exercised in a church consisting of brethren, (which is the place that the Lord hath chosen, and where he is present), and with the consent of that church, your business is to let me see, that it can be otherwise exercised, by any precept or example in the New Testament.

You need not here tune up the old song about women and children, except you have a mind to divert me. You must first prove, that the infant seed of believing parents are, by baptism, members of any visible church, and that they belong unto any such church, whereof their parent is a member, any otherwise than as they are accounted the same thing with their parent. And as to women, you must be determined by your sense of 1 Cor. xiv. whatever it be: and if you find them there debarred from all speaking in the church, and also, seeing there are other ways of signifying consent or dissent than speech, from any other way of signifying it; then you will say, that the whole church, as far as it is capable, according to the word, *consents*. And I shall not condemn
you

you for cleaving as close as you can to the scripture. You may also thus debar them from singing of psalms, that being one manner of speaking words; saying *Amen*; professing repentance in case of public scandal; and voting in the call of their overseers; and so none of your heretrixes and liferentresses will have power of voting. But if you understand it of praying and preaching, or exercising any such gift for edification only, as the Apostle speaks of in the context; then you must let the two or three judge, with the consent of the women also: for I do not think you will easily exclude them in these words, *If thy brother trespass.*

You measure a congregation of the saints, both men and women, by one of your parishes, and the generality of people in them; and the exercise of Christ's discipline in one of his churches, by the exercise of that discipline which takes place in your ecclesiastic courts; for which no man is sufficient, without that wisdom of this world which is plainly excluded the churches of Christ by his law: and you speak accordingly about the ability of the brethren in a church, to consent to, or dissent from the judgement of their elders, in their presence and hearing, as to the mind of Christ in his word, touching a case that happens among them, wherein their practice, in obedience to the Lord's commandment of love, in subjection to which they are walking, is most nearly concerned. And so you do indeed declare them incapable to know, how to give obedience to the Lord's law of brotherly love, and with whom they are to walk in the duties of that love, and with whom not. And this is one instance of the Antichristian arrogancy of the clergy. But if you reckon the people church-members, whose fault is it that they are ignorant of the manifest laws of Christ, upon which alone, and not upon doubtful disputations, binding and loosing must proceed? And by what warrant have you members of a church that are obstinately

ignorant of the law of brotherly love, and of what pertains to it in a church?

As to your argument from the rule of proportion, I am not satisfied by it, unless you could let me see,

1. That the case is the same betwixt two or more churches, as it is betwixt brethren in the same church, or brethren Christians; and that the Lord Christ commands a church, or many churches, and their overseers, to do the same thing toward another church, as such, that he commandeth them to do toward their own members. I find churches charged every one with what is wrong within themselves; but I do not find them condemned for what is amiss in other churches, if they themselves be free.

2. That there is an institution for the court, that is to bind churches when they transgress, and will not hear other churches. You have not manifested to me any such thing in this text; for, when you say our Lord here refers to the synagogue, which was but a congregation, and to its rulers; and when you alledge, that the same grant and promise is made to the court here spoke of that was before made to the supreme court among the Jews, a congregational presbytery is hereby made the supreme court. You may as well plead for the binding of kingdoms and commonwealths, as for the binding of churches from these words, *Whatsoever ye shall bind*; and if you extend it further than unto all matters wherein a church is warranted by Christ to bind or loose its members, you may as well make it to signify every thing in the world. And though two or more elders, as many more as you will, be here authorised, by agreement, to bind or loose in a church, even the church whereof they are overseers, not as lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock; yet it will take a depth of metaphysics that I never fathomed, to infer from this, that Christ hath authorised any number of elders any otherwise assembled, or judging in
any

any other manner, to bind or loose in his name. It cannot be manifested, that these words, as they stand in connection with what goes before, *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, do warrant elders, more or fewer, to meet together as they please, in as many different kinds of courts as they will, and bind and loose: for it will not be easily proven, that meeting in a court not of his institution, is meeting in his name: and if these words be to be taken more largely than with a reference to what was said before of the eldership of a congregation, then it is agreeable to the context, when we are taking them more largely, first to think of two or three brethren or church-members meeting together to do his will, and call on his name for any thing wherein his glory is concerned, and which he has allowed them to ask; and there is no reason to confine it unto elders, as you do, when yet you plead for the text being understood in a latitude whereof it will not admit.

I am satisfied the law of Christ binds every professor of his name to assemble in a church to his power, for the observation of his institutions: and so every such person is by him subjected to his discipline in that church whereof he is a member, and the elders of such a church are commanded to take heed to themselves, as well as to all the flock, and that with respect unto all trespasses, the most public and heinous not excepted; and there is the same rule of discipline for a trespassing elder and any other church-member. And when any the least church warrantably binds or looses its members, one or more, it is good in heaven, without being ratified by any other church or judicature on earth whatsoever; and when a church binds or looses without warrant in Christ's law for so doing, it is of itself null as if it never had been, and cannot be made good by the ratification of a judicature consisting of all the elders on earth.

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But if a church trespass against Christ's law, then he judges and chastens that church, and calls it by his word to reform; and if it do not reform, where is the court, having jurisdiction, that he hath instituted for the reformation of such a church, as the church in Corinth for instance? If a church persist obstinately in sin, so as not to answer unto the end of Christ's institution of a church, what court is it that then casts off that church from being a church of Christ? inform me, if you find it in the New Testament. I see the eldership of a church, with the church's consent, may cast off their members; but for what I can see, Jesus Christ has taken both the chastening and casting off of churches into his own hand; and this is manifest in the case of the seven churches of Asia. If you will not be content with this, but still think visible church-power acting over many churches necessary for remedying some evils that you are much afraid of, so that you cannot trust them in the hands of Christ, who has taken the churches under his immediate care, I would then have you seriously to consider the evils that not only may follow, but have actually followed upon the exercise of a visible power over the churches, to keep them from hainous trespasses, and in unity and peace.

III. Your other ground for the subordination of judicatures, *viz.* the apostolical example, Acts xv. is as clear a pattern for the congregational way, and so against the subordination of judicatures, as is to be found in any one passage in the whole book of the Acts: and the more I consider that passage, I wonder the more how it comes to be so much insisted on as a pattern for a synod of any kind, either Roman, Scottish, or New English.

When you consider and answer what I say on this passage in my remarks on *The Defence of national churches*, and in my speech before the commission, I will know better how to deal with you upon it, and where your main pinch lies. But, as I can now take
you

you, in the difference betwixt you and me about the nature of this court, you seem to depend much in your belief of its being a synodical meeting, upon your sense of the word *church*, as it stands in this chapter, and upon this, that Paul and Barnabas, and those that came with them from the church in Antioch, were members of that company by which the decrees were ordained. When the question is, Whether this was a congregational or a synodical meeting? it is manifest, very much depends upon the sense of the word *church*, or what we are to understand by it here: and if this remain doubtful, after all that can be said upon it, the case is doubtful; but if it can be clearly manifested what is the meaning of the church here, it will do much to determine the question. It is very plain the church is distinguished from the elders, as the elders are from the apostles; so that by the *church* you and I will agree to understand something else than the elders in Jerusalem, or the presbytery of the church in Jerusalem, who say to Paul, Acts xxi. 18. 25. *We have written and concluded*: for, as I can take your meaning, you would have us by the *church* to understand *the commissioners from Antioch, and from Syria, and Cilicia*, church-officers that met with the presbytery of Jerusalem.

Now let us consider all the evidence that can enter our minds from this passage, and see if it can possibly bear this meaning. It is plain, the only commissioners we read of here are Paul and Barnabas, and those with them from Antioch; and whether these, or any commissioners you may dream of from other places, be or can be intended in this designation, we may see by considering the whole passage. We find the church, and the apostles and elders, receiving the commissioners from the church in Antioch, Acts xv. 4. and if this be the same church that concurred with apostles and elders in deciding the question, and sending the epistle and messengers to Antioch, then it will be evident beyond contradiction, that Paul
and

and Barnabas, and the commissioners from Antioch; were not of that church. If it be not the same church that sent the epistle to Antioch, then let me see what occurs in this chapter to afford me any shadow of a ground to think that it is not; mean time it must be acknowledged, that the church in ver. 4. is the church in Jerusalem under the oversight of the presbytery there. We find the whole church, with the apostles and elders, ver. 22.; and it is manifest this church, whatever it was, concurred with the apostles in their decision of the question, and ordaining the decrees written in the letter to Antioch. I make no doubt to agree with you in saying, that *the whole church* there is the same thing with *the brethren* in whose name the epistle was written, ver. 23. Neither do I question; that this *whole church* is there where *the whole multitude* is spoke of, ver. 12.

Now this whole church, this company of brethren, was a company to which the account of the miracles and wonders God had done among the Gentiles by Paul and Barnabas was news, and to which the disturbance made at Antioch by the false teachers and their doctrine was known only by hearsay, and that from Paul and Barnabas, and the commissioners from Antioch, ver. 12. 23. 24. *All the multitude gave audience to Paul and Barnabas, declaring what miracles, &c. The apostles, and elders, and brethren send greeting.—Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain—have troubled you with words, &c. The whole church, or the brethren, with the apostles and elders, are a company from which the false teachers went out, that troubled the brethren in Antioch and other places, and raised the question which occasioned the coming up of the commissioners, and caused this meeting, ver. 23. 24. The apostles, and elders, and brethren send—unto the brethren—in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. Forasmuch as—certain which went out from us have troubled you with words,—to whom we gave no such commandment. The whole church, or the brethren,*

thren, with the apostles and elders, are Jews, plainly distinguishing themselves from the brethren which are of the Gentiles, even those in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, ver. 23. *The apostles, and elders, brethren, send unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, Cilicia.* The whole church, or the brethren with the apostles and elders, is a company expressly distinguished from Paul and Barnabas, commissioners from Antioch, and sending men of themselves messengers to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, and with the letter, for greater security to tell them the same things by mouth, ver. 22. *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, &c.*

Now, Sir, draw the conclusion yourself, and say, whether the whole church here distinguished from the presbytery of Jerusalem by the commissioners from Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia, or the church under the oversight of the elders in Jerusalem? and then I will know whether you have the regard you pretend to scripture-consequences, when I try you upon a consequence the nearest and shortest you can easily desire; yea, I will know your regard to plain scripture words.

You make no question but Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of the church in Antioch that came with them, were members of that company by which the decrees were ordained, and gave their suffrage in what was determined, as a part of that ecclesiastic body. And it is worth notice how you make up this ecclesiastic body: "There is a clear discovery," say you, "of the members constitutive of this synod, in order to consider the question referred to them — namely, from the presbyterial church of Jerusalem, the apostles and presbyters, ver. 6.; from the church of Antioch Paul and Barnabas, and others sent with them by the public authority of that church, ver. 2. 12." Thus to make it look as like one of your synods

nods as may be, you speak as if you imagined, that the apostles and elders sat there as delegates from the presbytery in Jerusalem, and so were on the same footing with those from Antioch; or at least, you would have your reader imagine so. But it seems very plain, that the presbytery of Jerusalem sat full there, and the apostles were with them; and that Paul and Barnabas being sent up to them with a question, after hearing of it, and some discourse in the church of Jerusalem about it, they held a meeting for the purpose of deciding it.

Now that Paul and Barnabas were not members of the court that came together to decide this question, and that they were not of that company which ordained the decrees, is to me very clear from these words: ver. 22. *Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren, and wrote letters by them.* And the whole strain of the epistle distinguishes Paul and Barnabas evidently from the company by which the dogmas were judged. And though it behoved Paul and Barnabas, and those with them, to be present, and propose their question, and give information, which they did; yet I can find no mention of their giving any judgement or suffrage. I see Peter giving his judgement, and James his, and the apostles and the elders agreeing, and the whole church concurring with them; but as Paul and Barnabas are not of that company, so I find them doing nothing there but informing and narrating matters of fact, without giving any judgement. The use they were for in that meeting is intimated in the epistle, wherein they at Jerusalem signify to them at Antioch, that they had been duly informed by their messengers, and that they had depended on and gone upon their information; and whereas their authority had been attacked by the false teachers, they testify their regard to them,
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and approbation of them; and, to remove all ground of suspicion, they send men of their own company along with them to Antioch.

From all which there is not the least ground to imagine, that Paul and Barnabas sat members of that court, and judges in that question there, but the clearest ground to think that they did not. And till you prove they gave their suffrage in what was determined, as a part of that ecclesiastic body, may I not enquire, where is the synod in Acts xv. that has been so much talked of both by Papists and national Protestants?

Well, speak of a synod who will, I resolve to speak only of the presbytery in Jerusalem, where were the apostles, in whose stead we have now the New Testament, till once you prove, that Paul and Barnabas were members of that court, and joined with the elders in Jerusalem in exercising jurisdiction over the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch.

The presbytery of Jerusalem then came together, the apostles and they, for to consider of this matter; and how did they come together? or where? the particular place is not mentioned; but Acts iv. makes it evident, they assembled in the church, which is the true place that the Lord hath chosen for a New-Testament presbytery, to gather together in his name, to make decisions, and pass sentences in whatever place of the earth it happen to be; and here they have the promise of his presence, *who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holds the stars in his right hand.* There needs no consequence be drawn to prove, that the whole church was present with their presbytery at the making of this decision; and what is the plainest nearest consequence from this, but that the whole church in Jerusalem was but one congregation, and that the presbytery in Jerusalem was but the presbytery of a congregation? Further, How did this presbytery make this great decision? by plurality of voices, or by agreement? with the consent of the church, or without it? Let the text answer,

swer, ver. 22. *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church.*

This was the way the apostles proceeded from the beginning, in all their actings in the church at Jerusalem; they determined all things with the consent of the people, and did not disdain to satisfy them as to all their conduct, Acts i. Acts vi. Acts xi. 1.—4. So that what was done by them is said to be done by the church, according to Matth. xviii. Acts xi. 22. This was so laid in the original constitution of the Christian church, that, however the mystery of iniquity wrought in the churches before the days of Cyprian, it was not then wrought out of their constitution: for he says, Epist. 6. *Ad celerum de cura pauperum et confessorum,—Ad id vero quod scripserunt mihi com-presbyteri nostri, Donatus et Fortunatus, Novatus et Gordius, solus rescribere nihil potui; quando a primordio episcopatus mei statuerim, nihil sine consilio vestro, et sine consensu plebeis nœ, privata sententia gerere. Sed cum ad vos per Dei gratiam venero, tunc de iis quæ vel gesta sunt, vel gerenda, sicut honor mutus perit, in commune tractabimus.* He had a very plain pattern for his laid before him by the apostles in the church at Jerusalem; and while men have been diligently inquiring into Acts xv. to find a pattern for a thing for which there is no pattern there, I wonder much, that, from Acts xv. 22. compared with Acts xvi. 4. they have not perceived, that the judgment, or determination, or sentence of a Christian presbytery is, “What pleases them, with the whole church of which they are overseers.”

This was the greatest decision we read of in the New Testament, the greatest sentence or determination that was in any Christian assembly where the apostles were; and this was the first part of the New Testament that was committed unto writing, and delivered unto the churches to keep; and in this writing the churches had a copy cast unto them, in the first church, for their method of procedure in all their

their affairs and manner of judging. Now, if the greatest decision we read of in the New Testament; and wherein all the churches were concerned, was made by a congregational presbytery, or by a congregational church; what is the consequence of this, but that there is no ecclesiastic court on earth above such a church, and such a presbytery? As to the reasons why this question was sent to this church, and determined there, you may see my speech before the commission; which, if you consider, you will see, that no consequence can be drawn from Acts xv. for the jurisdiction of one church over another. Upon the whole, may I not appeal to the conscience of any unprejudiced person, (though indeed there are few such in this matter), whether the pattern Acts xv. establishes synods and the subordination of judicatures, or overthrows them, and establishes the congregational way of doing?

I shall trouble you no further at this time with observations upon your performance; only that your prejudice against congregational principles seems to me to be this, that, according to them, the Christian religion cannot be national, and laid in the constitution of the kingdoms of this world, and a Christian national uniformity cannot be established unto the cutting off of heresy and schism with heretics and schismatics, by the power of those kingdoms. But, on this very account, these principles appear to me to be true Christian principles; and, as to this, I desire you may take the trouble to read and consider what I have written on John xviii. 36. 37.

And now, Sir, when you have impartially considered what is above said, together with what you find in my former papers, if you still find me mistaken, pity me, pray for me, and inform me better from the word of God, and I will be obliged to you; and if you conceive, that you have received any personal injury from me, convince me of it, and I shall endeavour to correct my fault, and ask your forgiveness,

ness, as I desire to forgive all you have done or said at any time, or in your book, against me. But if you receive any conviction from what I have said, do not stifle your convictions, do not resist the truth, nor detain it in unrighteousness. Your honour, and the honour of your book, which you may conceive to be by me attacked, and which I am sure cannot be much hurt by one in my circumstances, is but a poor thing in comparison with that honour that cometh from God only. If I have been doing nothing else but making such an attack as I am capable to make upon your credit as an author, I own I have been very idle, and very ill employed; but if I have been obliged to undertake this task, and give you this trouble, only for the sake of the truth, and as a debt I owe to the truth, opposed by you, then I desire it may overcome you, as it has done me, that we may be fellow-helpers to the truth; and I am confident your yielding to it will be your honour in the day of the Lord. *That your eye may be single, and your whole body full of light, and that you may not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind, to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; and that his word may be a light to your feet, and a lamp to your paths, making you wiser than your teachers, and affording you liberty in keeping his precepts, is the prayer of,*

S I R,

Your sincere well-wisher, and

Dundee, Sept. 9.

1 7 3 0.

Friend to serve you in the Lord,

J O H N G L A S.

A Second Letter to Mr AYTONÉ. Containing,
Remarks upon his *Review of the Observations on
the Original Constitution of the Church.*

[First published in the year 1731.]

*Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what
wisdom is in them? Jer. viii. 9.*

S I R,

I Have seen your letter to me since it has been printed; and though I am not of the mind that it deserves an answer, which it also seems to forbid, and though I have little hope that any thing coming from my pen can have influence upon your understanding; yet, not knowing but some good end may be reached, even upon you, by the reply I am now making, I have therefore undertaken this task; and, in the performance of it, though I cannot promise upon myself, yet I wish I may be preserved from every thing that may unjustly provoke you, and so mar the end I have in view.

My principles touching Christ's institution of a visible church, and the plan laid down to us in the New Testament, were fairly stated, and their foundation in the New Testament from which they were taken, was plainly pointed out in *The explication of the proposition*. The scheme of principles there laid down, though it contains the main substance, and the best of that for which those called *Independents* contended of old, against them that are called *Presbyterians*; yet is not liable to all the objections that were framed by the Presbyterians against the Independents; nor is it capable of all the consequences that were drawn formerly from the manner of maintaining

taining the congregational scheme, or from the concessions made by the Independent writers. Yet the author of *The defence of national churches*, and you after him, have taken that Independent scheme as it was the thesis formerly impugned by your writers, as answering best unto the common arguments. But I, not finding myself concerned to maintain any other scheme of principles but my own, nor to answer for consequences drawn from any other positions or concessions but my own, gave my thoughts as briefly and clearly as I could upon those common objections, only as they seemed to me to lie against what had been by me advanced. And this I did in my remarks on *The defence of national churches*; wherein, though I treated with ridicule some things that are truly ridiculous in that defence, and in the paper intitled, *The naked truth*; yet I laid down sufficient grounds for answers unto all the objections against my principles that I have yet seen: so that I am convinced, if you had seriously considered what is there offered, a great part of your book might have been spared. But your book gave me occasion to speak more particularly and fully, what I had said with more brevity before, and to show where the proof fails in arguings, that seemed to have any foundation in scripture, and likewise how cross these arguings are to the scriptures, and even to some principles maintained by yourselves.

When I published my *Remarks on the defence of national churches*, I, at the same time, put to the press, *An explication of our Lord's testimony concerning his kingdom before Pilate*; wherein I endeavoured, as shortly and plainly as I could, to give an account of the spiritual and heavenly nature of the kingdom of Christ, distinct from the kingdoms of this world, and from the ancient kingdom of God in Israel, the earthly figure of this heavenly thing; and likewise of the difference betwixt the New Testament and the Old, and of the reference of the one to the o-

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ther, with respect to the kingdom of Christ. It was the view I had of the nature of Christ's kingdom, that set me free from the prejudices I laboured under, with respect to his institution of gospel-churches, and disposed me to attend to the scripture-evidence for the principles I now profess and practise, as only agreeable to the Old-Testament revelation, infallibly explained in the New, and to the nature of the kingdom of Jesus Christ: I therefore published that book, well knowing, that what I said of a visible church could not be attended unto without prejudice; or indeed well understood, without a discerning of the nature of the kingdom of Christ; but a true discerning of that would make the other plain and easy.

None of you have yet attempted to give any answer to that book, though it cannot but appear to you; and I gave you a hint of it in the close of the Observations, that if I be in a mistake, the foundation of it is laid forth in that book, as I clearly see the foundation of all your opposition unto the principles professed by me, touching the visible state of Christ's kingdom in this world, is laid in ignorance of, and inadvertency to the nature of his kingdom, as manifested in that book by the scriptures of the Old and New Testament: till we be, therefore, at one about this matter, we can never come together upon the questions now in debate betwixt you and me; and so I once more recommend to your serious study the scheme of principles declared in that book, which, if you overthrow, you will prepare me to receive conviction from what you alledge against the congregational way, and in behalf of national churches.

When I stood before the commission, ready to receive a sentence of deposition from the ministry of the gospel, for professing and practising congregational principles, after I had professed and practised the national ones, I laid before my judges a short state of my difference from them in that matter, and a

sum of the reasons of that difference, which if you, or any other, had but fairly impugned, the controversy might have been brought to a clear and short issue; but it seems you had not occasion to peruse that speech before your book was gone to the press; and now, when you have perused it, you pass a general censure upon it, which is no doubt, your judgement; but you have not brought forth the grounds of your judgement, that the appearance of reason and revelation, which you must own had weight with me, might seem as little in my eye as in yours; yet this had been a greater service done to your fellow creature, though more laborious than your censure. You have indeed excerpted a few things out of that speech, and treated them as you saw good, as I shall notice in the close: but it has not been your design to attempt so much as a short answer to the appearance of revelation and reason, that is still to be found there.

Your review is upon the Observations, and follows the order of them, and so directs my course in observing upon it: I shall therefore follow upon them, taking notice chiefly where your eye fixes on any part of the scripture, which, I am still of the mind, must only decide this controversy, and it is reasonable we should hear its decision. I am obliged to say in the entry, that my Observations, at which you seem not a little offended, are very much strengthened and confirmed to me by your Review; and whether they will be so to the attentive reader, if any such there be, the event will declare.

O B S E R V A T I O N I.

My first observation touched the manner of writers for classical presbytery against the Independents, and your conformity to them, which I blamed; and I gave several instances.

The first, *viz.* Flying to human authority in the pinch where scripture-evidence is desired, you have verified abundantly in your Review, where you tell of Pilcator, Parcus, Calvin; great names, I own, but very ill used, where they serve only to fill up a vacancy of proof. You make some apology for using the authority of Dr Owen, when you say, "That in so doing you take an argument from the mouth of an adversary;" though yet you would have it believed, his judgement was stronger in favour of Presbytery than Independency. As to which I shall only say, I know his judgement best by his writings; and I wish I had such Presbyterians to do with as the Doctor was, and such congregations as was his church, to which you may see his letter in his sickness, printed in the folio edition of his sermons 1721. But if I were to study conformity to you in this business about authors, and take what you call *an argument from the mouth of adversaries*, I might tell you of the Scots Confession of faith, that owns no other church but the mystical body, and a single congregation. I might direct you to Calvin on Acts ii. 46. and v. 12. 13. and xv. 4. 22. and xxi. 22. and 1 Cor. v. 4. I might point out to you, as to the defender of national churches, Boyd on the Ephesians, chap. iv. 11. p. 503. and 504. And Gillespie's Eng. Pop. Cerem. part 3. dig. 1. and 4. And I might also desire you to read and consider *Altare Damascenum, de episcopi potestate extensiva*, p. 206. 207. latest edition, &c. And thus I would not be behind with you, in taking the advantage of the concessions of those you pretend to follow, as you do throughout your Review, with the concessions of the Independents. But it is a poor shift to take shelter under the authority of a friend or adversary, where scriptural defence fails, or to fill up the place of scripture-proof by any human authority.

When I was reading the Presbyterian writers, thirsting for proof of classical presbytery; where I
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was expecting to find my doubts cleared by scripture-evidence, there I was remitted to authors and commentators, which, when consulted, said no more than had been already said; but it was their authority that was urged to satisfy me; and therefore that was magnified. After such disappointments, I have securely heard the many mighty boastings that are to this day among your people, of the abundant confutation of the congregational principles by Presbyterian writers, and by those of the assembly at Westminster; as I now hear you boasting of the weight and solidity of their answers to their Independent brethren. But if there be any scriptural defence in these answers, serving to manifest the insufficiency of what is advanced by me, that I have not seen or heard of, you will oblige me extremely, by shewing it to me. Yet, as neither all the objections nor answers of the classical Presbyterians will be found calculated for the state of the controversy wherein you have been very briskly engaging yourself, so you have insinuated a suspicion, that I am not, even from these divines, to expect an answer to all that is by me advanced, when you except my distinguishing singularities. The divines of Westminster did their best to answer unto what was advanced against them. And it lies upon you to answer to the distinguishing and singular advances, which you say have been made by me. Though I would put you hard to it, if I required you to shew me the advance I have made, wherein I have not some renowned author or commentator with me; yet their authority can avail me nothing without scripture: And while I have the word of God, and the footsteps of the first flocks that followed Christ set before me there, I need not take ill with the old reproach of *singularity*. If you take that company from me, I shall own myself singular, though I had a million of your authors about me; but till you do this, which I am satisfied you have not, please forbear the old Jewish and Popish cant about singularity,

larity, and preferring my own notions of things before all men, both of piety and learning.

The second instance has also some confirmation in what you say of the consequences of the want of the due exercise of discipline among the Dissenters at this day; to verify, as I take it, what was alledged by these vile writers, Edwards and Bastwick, against the Independents. But as this new charge of yours against the present Dissenters, falls no less on the Presbyterian Dissenters than on those of other denominations, so I reckon your national church has no great ground to glory over the English Presbyterians in that matter. I cannot well understand you in what you say on this head; but, as I take it, it favours to me of the old cant of the popish party, and of the high-church faction in England, and seems to import a better liking to the tenth age, as of all other the most free of sects and infidelity, and shining in a peaceful uniformity among the rest of the ages, as the moon among the stars. You are dissatisfied with the last age for want of uniformity, and because of sects; and you are no better pleased with this age on the same account; and as little could the age of the apostles yield you satisfaction in this matter: and where to find any age to your mind in this thing, I cannot tell, unless it be the tenth.

I am far from taking it for granted by you, but I am certain you have not been yet able to prove, that the principles maintained by me are any otherwise chargeable with the effects you ascribe to them, than the gospel is to be charged with all the damnable heresies that sprung up with that good seed, when it was sown in the world; or than the true reformed doctrine and separation from the church of Rome is chargeable with all the errors, heresies, and sects, and all the atheism and infidelity that appears among them called *Protestants*; or then you will say, that all the sects of the last age flowed from the Presbyterians their razing down the Episcopal uniformity to set up their
own,

own, and that all the infidelity and heresy of this age flows from the principles of the Revolution, yea from the Revolution itself. I agree with you, that premises from which absurd inferences are plainly deducible, are not truth. But I have neither such a conceit of your understanding nor of mine, as to imagine that we cannot draw inferences both plain and absurd to us from some truths of the gospel, which is wholly unto our depraved minds and hearts as the light is unto darkness. I shall tell you of an inference that is plain to me, and that I think I plainly deduce from all that I have had access to consider of the controversy betwixt uniformity and liberty of conscience in the matters of religion; and it is this, That while the world is the world, we must either suffer the horrible ignorance, spiritual slavery and superstition of the tenth century to take place in it, or the infidelity, heresy, and sects of this century, and of the last; and that in this case, the only way wherein a man can walk suitably to the rules of the gospel, and his duty therein required toward the powers of the earth, so as to keep himself unspotted from the world, and promote the eternal welfare of his own soul, and the souls of others, in a preparation for the world to come, is indeed the congregational way. And the spirit that shews itself in the various ways of opposition to that, is to me plainly the same that shewed itself from the beginning against Christianity, in the primitive profession of it in the world.

The third instance, touching metaphysics, you have abundantly confirmed in your Review, as will soon be evident to every one that reads what you say, p. 28. p. 46. at the beginning, and p. 72. at the end, p. 73. at the beginning. You desire me to compare my own beloved distinction, *the body assembling*, and *the assembly of that body*, and what you have said on 1 Cor. xiv. and see which of us have most plied that art. That distinction I own I used; but that it is peculiar to me, or that I regard it farther than it plainly takes
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its rise from the scripture, I am not satisfied. If you or any man can say, that the word *church* stands in the same sense 1 Cor. xiv. 23. as it stands 1 Cor. xi. 18. and 1 Cor. xiv. 35. then I shall own that I have plied that art in my reasoning as much as you; and that is enough. And the distinction is manifest to every person that can understand you when you say, A minister in the presbytery of Meigle went to the presbytery such a day, and made a speech in it to better purpose than he does elsewhere; but such another day he was not in the presbytery, being confined to his house by sickness. If it require a metaphysical head to understand such discourse as this is, then the most plain men in your parish must be barbarians to one another in their conversation. Does not your servant know there is but one presbytery of Meigle? and yet, if he attend his master, he sees twelve presbyteries in that place ordinarily in the year. I must say, you have been at a great loss for instances of metaphysical turns on scripture in my letter, to be compared with the Presbyterian metaphysics, when this came to be the only instance you had to give.

The fourth instance is as well supported in your Review as any of the foregoing. It is true you call it *a charge*, and because unfixed, that is, though it be in your own words, yet the page of your book is not cited; therefore it is a calumny, a false and unchristian charge: And by this I perceive it offends you not a little, that I take notice of the pride of your own wisdom, and of your uncharitable conduct toward the Independents in this controversy. If these words be not your's, let the charge be declared unfixed. "I look upon it as too injurious an imputation on a church, which was so long a time under the immediate direction of the blessed apostles, to imagine they did not embrace the times of peace, and fix themselves into such a competent number of congregations as was best suited to the edification of that sacred body, and came up as near as might then be, to that becoming order
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and regularity, which is the great ornament and beauty of Christian society?" Again: "Can it well be imagined, without an impeachment of the apostles, who, for the most part, had their residence for many years at Jerusalem, not only during the heats of persecution, but during the times of peace and quiet, that all this while they would have left this church in irregular circumstances, been at no pains to establish her constitution, and make up her orderly distinct meetings for public worship?" But if these be your words, and if such like arguments be to be found in the Presbyterian writers, by every one that reads them, I humbly judge it no calumny: or, if you judge it still a calumny, then I expect you'll clear yourself of it in time coming, by refusing that any thing is according to the mind of Christ in his word, for this reason, because to your wisdom it appears disorderly and indecent; and by forbearing to affirm, that a government is of Christ's institution, upon this ground, that to you it appears decent and orderly.

As to what I said, of your putting on an air of infallibility, and freely using all manner of reflections on the Independents, while you can bear no insinuation of a reflection from them, and carrying as if you were the only men that had a right to judge for all others, making conjectures, and laying down suppositions without proof, and explaining scriptures by them, and requiring that your inferences should be received for undoubted truth, while you suffer not others to open their lips without strict demonstrations. I see you have demonstrated this in your Review: you give me a promise in the beginning, and you tell me in the end you have kept it. The promise is, "That you are not to render railing for railing, nor treat the persons of any men with burlesque or ignominious names, as I have done." This promise contains a heavy charge on me, which I have not seen fixed. You pretend to support it in these words. Have you not the most ludicrous and unbecoming invectives a-
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gainst us in your Observations, terming the whole church *Babylon*, and particular persons *perverters*; nay, malicious perverters of the scripture, detainers of the truth in unrighteousness, and the like? The first of these has its foundation in these words of mine, “ You are yet highly offended, that any in the place of the world where you live, should come out of Babylon, and return to the congregations of the saints, there to cleave to the truly uniting word of the apostles and prophets, in opposition to that dividing and desolating mean of union that was set up in the place of it.” But this touches only a state of things, and declares, that I understand that scripture-word to comprehend in its meaning all that pertains to that falling away from the primitive church-order laid down by the apostles, and which we have now in the scriptures; of which the apostle speaks 2 Theff. ii. and so it indeed touches the state of the question betwixt you and me; *i. e.* Whether a national church, like that you contend for, be agreeable to the plan laid down by the apostles, or a thing quite of another kind, substituted in the place of it, and taking place by a deviation and falling away from it, and set up in opposition to it? You will not say, that the scripture is railing or treating the persons of men with burlesque or ignominious names, when it gives that name to any society to which you think it is applicable, and when it calls the Lord's people to come out of that society. And would not the men of that society, who declare it the most decent and orderly, and agreeable to the will of God, and where the Lord's people have been for many ages, &c. pronounce you a foul-mouth'd heretic and schismatic, and a railer, in applying that name to that society? And whatever that society be, you will find the zealous contenders for it profess as great certainty about their constitution as you do about yours, and can profess no less zeal in opposition to what they call libertinism and uncertainty as you can do.

But, after all, you are certainly in the right in separating from them, and that society is to you Babylon. Very well, follow your judgement. Yet you must own you have as little right to dictate to others the sense of the word *Babylon*, as they have to dictate to you. Next you say, I call particular persons perverters of the scripture; and this seems to me to arise from these words of mine, touching your application of 2 Tim. iii. to them that separate from your parish-communication. "While you thus maliciously pervert the holy word of God, to shew that men ought to turn away from the objects of your hatred." From that passage in the Observations, the perversion of that text will be manifest to the reader, when he considers it, and when he reads your application of it in your words by me quoted. If he can say, that it was made in the observation of that word of God, 1 Pet. ii. 1. 2.; yea, if your own conscience can say it, then let it stand for an instance of my railing. But if it be otherwise, as Calvin's name and sense of the text will not clear you of guilt, so it was meet you should have treated the admonition I gave you, and the admonisher, otherwise than to turn again and rend him. Next you say, I call particular persons detainers of the truth in unrighteousness; and, so far as I can know, the foundation of this charge is in these words of mine. "If you receive any conviction from what I have said, do not stifle your convictions, do not resist the truth, nor detain it in unrighteousness." Now, these are the particular instances you gave of my railing and unbecoming invectives, for which, you promise, you shall not render railing. But that the reader may see the confirmation of my fourth instance in the first observation, and how you have kept this promise, I shall point out some instances in your Review.

Your promise stands p. 7.; and in that same page you say, with reference to a sentence of mine, which you call "a charge, and false general charges, with-
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out condescending on particulars, in their several circumstances, are calumnious, and cross to the very spirit of the gospel." As I greatly question the truth of this, because it would lead me to quarrel several instances in the gospel, so I find you say this in deep forgetfulness of your own charge against me in your promise, and of your promise itself. At least, it satisfies me of the truth of what I have said upon the fourth instance, whereof I am still more and more satisfied by what follows.

Page 8. you say, "I make light of Solomon's judgement, and take care to prefer my own notion of things before all men both of piety and learning."

Page 9. Beside other hard words, you say, "That while I charge the Presbyterians with altering their spirit in the dispute with us, I myself outdo all the Presbyterian writers you ever read or saw on this subject."

Page 10. Your words are, "As for your ludicrous treatment, I despise it, it being the common burden of all your performances."

Page 11. "Fix the charge, lest every one who reads them call them a calumny, and so justly reckon, that, while you are recommending a Christian temper, you can at the same time make false and unchristian charges." Again, "When he has given us such examples, precepts, and rules in the word, as are evident to every one who reads it, one may justly say, that he (to wit, the Independent) who refuses the plain and immediate consequences drawn from these, (as Mr Aytone's consequences are to him), acts injuriously to Christ and his apostles." Again, "First give the heavy stroke, and then raise the loud cry."

Page 12. "Can you refuse, without a blush, that you have made positive charges in your answer to the defence of national churches, even when you have given no better argument than your own assertion? Have you brought no unchristian charges against us."

in the explication of your proposition? In a word, as we disclaim Popish infallibility, so we hold a positive certainty of our principles, in opposition to libertinism and uncertainty. Thus I have gone through your first general libel, which has all the characteristics of a calumny."

Page 14. "However you may be angry with a church's determining circumstances of time and place, have you set down the different pages whereon this inconsistency is founded? No; that would have at once spoiled all." Page 36. "Nay, in what page of my book is this fancy laid down? This was not consistent with the nature of your Observations to tell us." Page 58. "You have concealed the page where they are to be found, for ends best known to yourself." Page 59. "These, I own, are my words; but have you told in what page? No; this would have marred all; they are p. 85. Now if you had designed common justice in your observations, you would have directed your reader to page, &c." Page 89. "I leave it to others, who shall read your conduct in this missive, to judge, if the methods pursued by you have the appearance of one who wrote for the sake of truth, and as a debt he owed to it. Candour in laying an adversary's mind and words before the world, and citing the places where they may be found, is somewhat agreeable to such a pretence; but how much of this, and that of a fair answerer, is to be found in your performance, I leave every reader to judge. I remember I have heard it always as a complaint on the church of Rome," &c. Page 15. "I have got rid of this inconsistency, and I wish it may not rise again on me in another shape. Alas! you have turned it into another figure.—But have you set down the pages where this formidable inconsistency is founded?"

Page 16. "Candour with solemn pretensions is very suitable. You next fright me with a fresh inconsistency. You conceal the pages."

Page 17. "You have taken the freedom to misrepresent me; and, lest the fraud should appear to every ordinary reader, you have concealed the pages. I am no sooner free of one inconsistency than I am charged with another, with equal honesty and fairness."

Page 18. "And a greater perversion of words is not conceivable than what is here. Whether your conduct be consistent with common justice."

Page 19. "I wish I may get rid of it, for it is very formidable."

Page 20. "How consistent your conduct is with the solemnity of your pretensions in the conclusion."

Page 26. "You seem to let light of the context."

Page 34. "The context which you are pleased sometimes to let light of, as p. 17." Page 79. "But this is of a piece with your disregarding contexts, as before, p. 17."

Page 30. "Such a way of doing is mean, and unbecoming a man, to misrepresent and trifle."

Page 31. "You charge the Presbyterians with positive assertions. But justly might I recriminate in every page almost, when all I meet with is nothing else but such."

Page 32. "Have you marked down the pages of my book? No; this would have given the reader easy access to see your trifling."

Page 49. "It would have been fair in you to have related my mind fully. It would have been fair in you as an answerer."

Page 52. "Such mean shifts as these you have recourse to will never be of any good issue."

Page 54. "You have trifled instead of answering."

Page 61. "These are your words; but how conscientiously they are jumbled together as expressive of my mind."

Page 63. "But these are methods unbecoming the sobriety of a Christian."

Page 72. "By this we have a swatch of your candour, among other instances."

Page 75. "And leave your bold assertions in the conclusion, to have what weight they will with your admirers; for I am of the mind they will have little weight with such as are capable to judge for themselves. Your dexterity in this point consists in misrepresentations, concealments, and such practices. I find nothing but poor shifts and carpings."

Page 76. "In the excess of your modesty."

Page 77. "A pitiful juggle."

Page 79. "Sir, If I were at an end of this missive, I hope never to engage with one that has cast off reason, as a mean of judging concerning things sacred."

Page 80. "Your impertinent questions and wranglings instead of answers—Signs of a desperate cause; your cavils and quibbles on Matth. xviii. I am obliged to you for your fatherly concern; but shall be glad I have never greater need of compassion."

Page 81. "I am wearied with such trifling and stories, instead of answers."

Page 84. "You have a dexterity in raising imaginary inconsistencies; and I expect you will shew an equal skill in reconciling a real one."

Page 87. "I am wearied with such trifling, and am resolved to be no more with it; so you may write, and impose on the credulous as much as you have a mind; but the event of these things is dangerous."

Page 89. "Sir, I have finished my answer; and I hope, in an agreeableness to my promise in the entry; and must now tell you, that more notorious misrepresentations, base calumnies, and uncharitable censures, were never cast upon any society of men."

O B S E R V A T I O N II.

I proceed now to the second observation, wherein you find yourself charged with inconsistencies in managing a dispute against the Episcopalians and Independents

pendents in one and the same book; for, under your correction, I offered some instances that served to confirm me in my opinion, that it is not meet to engage in such a dispute.

(Of the first instance you endeavour to clear yourself by signifying, "That a court meeting in the name of Christ, and acting in his authority, is merely circumstantial, and a matter left by Christ to be managed according to his general rules of decency and order; but an officer acting in his name is a thing essential, and so different from what is purely circumstantial, as that of more or fewer courts in any church is." But what is the difference? and how comes the one to be essential, and the other purely circumstantial? And why may not the same apology be made for the Episcopal subordination of officers, not expressly instituted, that you made in your book for the Presbyterian subordination of ruling courts not expressly instituted? You tell me, "It is false; that there is neither apostolical example nor precept for the subordination of judicatures." And the Episcopalian can tell you, with no less scripture-evidence, that it is false; that there is neither apostolical example or precept for the subordination of officers; and, if you will take their suppositions, whereby they explain scriptures, and draw consequences from them, as you would have me to grant your suppositions, and admit your consequences, they will give you two scriptures for one. But I was speaking of these three courts, kirk-sessions, provincial synods, and national synods, for which you cannot pretend apostolical example or precept.

Next you tell me, "If the proportion of my parallel have any thing in it, it is this, viz. Because Solomon hath said, *In the multitude of counsellors there is safety*; therefore it is equally safe to descend from the counsel of a great multitude, and devolve all into one person." But did not Solomon himself observe his own proverb, without being on a level with his counsellors? Had not the primitive bishop his one presbytery

presbytery, with which he consulted; as Cyprian informs us? Had not the Scots bishop his presbytery? Are there not councils of bishops? And does not the Pope consult with his cardinals, and other divines, and therein pretend to regard Solomon's saying as much as your synods, where one or two, perhaps the most ignorant in the assembly, can cast the balance in a division when it comes to the vote, and decide the most intricate and important question that comes before them? I find Pope Clement XI. speaking thus in the bull *Unigenitus*, "We therefore, by the favour of God, and depending on his heavenly aid, carefully and diligently, as the greatness of the affair required, set about so salutary a work; and ordered very many propositions, faithfully extracted out of the foresaid book, according to the above-rehearsed editions respectively, and expressed both in the French and Latin languages, by several masters in sacred theology, to be accurately discussed and sifted before two of our venerable cardinal brothers of the holy Roman church, and then before us: having also taken the advice of several other cardinals in council, to be, with the greatest diligence possible, and maturity, pondered and examined in congregations held at several times.—Wherefore, after we had heard the suffrages of the foresaid cardinals, and other divines, exhibited to us, both by word of mouth, and likewise by writing; and especially having implored the assistance of divine light, not only by private, but also public prayers, solemnly appointed for that end, we do, by this our constitution, to continue in perpetual force, declare, condemn, and, with the utmost abhorrence, reject all and every one of the propositions before inserted respectively," &c. So that unless you can affirm, that this saying of Solomon, this part of sacred writ, contains an institution for Presbyterian synods, in opposition both to Episcopal church-government, and the government which is by the counsel and agreement of a company of elders or bishops in every church,

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with the consent of that church where they are elders, and where they stand in immediate subjection to and dependence on Jesus Christ, that can by no means extricate you from your difficulty. And if you do not confine that word to the New Testament, you must own, that, in Solomon's days, there was a subordination of officers as well as of courts. Now the Episcopalian will tell you, that if this saying did not destroy the subordination of officers in Solomon's time, why may not the subordination of courts and officers hold together now also, without any prejudice to Solomon's saying?

You next give me a distinction betwixt an habitual and actual society, *i. e.* as I take it, betwixt the Synod of Angus having power to meet and act in Christ's name, and that synod exercising that power, as betwixt the Bishop of Brechin having power to exercise the Episcopal office, and that Bishop actually exercising it. And then you reprove me for being angry with a church's determining circumstances as time and place; for no other reason, that I know, but because I am as little for a court-meeting, and ruling over the churches of Christ in his name, without his express institution, as I am for an officer's ruling over his officers, without his express institution. And thus you clear yourself as to the first instance.

As to the second instance; you first betake yourself to that shift which you are pleased to use throughout your letter, *viz.* "The pages are not set down." But do you show, that I misrepresented you? And when you have now explained yourself in other words, I am not sensible of the consistency of your advance against me, and against the Episcopalians. The manner wherein you now express your advance against me is, "I gave it as my opinion, that, according to what I could learn from the history of the New Testament, I was not able to determine myself of any one church, that was no more but congregational,

tional, or that continued so." And you now express what you advanced against the Episcopalians, in this manner. "But in after ages I perceived from human testimony, that the most of the churches mentioned by them were such, and in small villages." I hope you are to keep now by these words, and not give me new ones in their stead the next time, because I have not set down the page. Now, you must either deny the truth of what you have said upon human testimony, and so give up what you pleaded upon it to the Episcopalians, and own to him, that the church where the one bishop is found in the second and third centuries, consisted of several distinct congregations; or you must acknowledge, that the most of the churches, mentioned by writers in the ages after the New-Testament scripture was finished, were congregational in your judgement, and that they were such in small villages; such then, according to you, were the churches where that innovation, one bishop, took place after the apostles, and these were the apostolic churches, and of the same kind with them; or else you say nothing against the Episcopalian: for if they differed from the apostolic churches in this, that they were congregational, he has no concern about them. It is enough to him, that he finds the one bishop in the churches of the apostolic kind, consisting of many different congregations: you must therefore either reconcile yourself by saying, that the fathers, after the apostles, departed from their plan, by erecting a multitude of congregational churches; or that the churches erected by the apostles, did in after ages dwindle into single congregations; or you must say, that though you remained doubtful in reading the New Testament, whether the apostles erected congregational churches; yet, by reading the fathers that lived nearest them, you came to perceive, that they did erect churches. If this be your meaning, I am able to perceive, that you speak against the Episcopalian; but it is in a concession to me; so that you
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cannot speak strong and full in this case against us both; and this is what I was telling you. But lest I should take advantage of the concession, you inquire, "Have I any where said, that these churches were independent?" To which I answer, Neither did I any where say, that the churches in the ages after the apostles were altogether independent of councils, after the innovation of one bishop in every church, which paved the way for synods and councils, that took place as the native consequence of that innovation. But how comes the affair of councils upon the field, to clear you of an inconsistency in your way of speaking about the size of the particular churches erected by the apostles?

You next endeavour to clear yourself of an inconsistency as to what you said of the greater churches, by giving it another turn: For you had said before, "And it is not to be doubted, that though the number of professors of Christianity in any large city, and the catechumens, might be so great, as they could not assemble in one place for the ordinary participation of ordinances; yet those who were admitted to partake of the eucharist, might have place to assemble in one body, or those who could not have access at first, might have afterwards occasion, by the removal of others, to communicate in the same church or place; as is the case of many cities even at this day." And every body sees, that this served to shew, that the bishop's diocese, in the second and third centuries, was no larger, even in the greater cities, than one of our city-parishes, that comes together to receive the Lord's supper in one place, and at one table. But now you say, "Though I shewed what were the methods used to raise the Episcopal power in large cities, where there were more congregations than one, when the altar was erected in the bishop's church, and so one priest and one altar, and *one church* and *one altar* came to be current terms; yet I never so much as insinuated, that this practice, or these terms,

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were according to the New Testament." And then you say, "Thus I have got rid of this inconsistency." But let me tell you, thus a man can rid himself of any inconsistency, by saying another thing that to him appears not so inconsistent. And I am not yet sensible, that you was, in your book and words before set down, or the place where they are, shewing, that this was a method used to raise the Episcopal power, even the turning of his diocese, that at first consisted of many communicating congregations, into one communicating congregation, coming together in one place, to partake of the supper, as does one of your city-parishes. But if you alledge, as you seem to do, "That this was a method used to raise the Episcopal power;" then you say against the Episcopalian, that if the one bishop had remained diocesan, as at the beginning, and had not become congregational, as he did in the second and third centuries, his power had been less.

Thus you cannot get rid of this inconsistency, unless you own to the Episcopalian, that diocesan Episcopacy was in being in the very first ages after the apostles, or acknowledge to the Independent, that the churches in these ages were only congregations, the greatest of them coming together in one place to eat the Lord's supper; and if these were the churches where the innovation of one bishop took place, these were the apostolic churches. You hear of the one altar as soon as you hear of the one bishop, and that is from Ignatius, who was bishop of no less a church than that in Antioch; and he writes of it to the church of the Ephesians, and to the church of the Philadelphians. You do not deny, that the term *one church* and *one altar*, was borrowed from the Old Testament; but you'll find one altar in the New-Testament-church, even Jesus Christ, both altar and sacrifice, whereof the whole true Israel, the mystical body partakes, Heb. xiii. 10.—15. And though the fathers mistook, in the application of the word *altar*,
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and this mistake occasioned superstition, and at length idolatry; yet they had a foundation in the New Testament, for the use of the word *altar*, with respect to a congregation of the saints, coming together in one place to partake of the supper: for in their communion in that bread and cup there is a representation of the communion of the true Israel, in their one altar Jesus Christ; and this is the anti-type of the typical Israel, their communion in the typical altar, 1 Cor. x. 15.—18. Thus far the fathers spake according to the New Testament, as well as the Old, in speaking of one church and one altar. And whatever you say of the raising of the Episcopal power; yet if they had held by their first notion of one church and one altar, there had never been a diocesan bishop in the world; but the forsaking of that, and keeping by the notion of one bishop and one church, was the true cause of all the mischief that followed. For out of this came one catholic visible church, with one bishop or one council, with as many altars as parishes; a monster of a church, the like unto which there is nothing either in the Old Testament or in the New, or among the first fathers; though that mystery of iniquity was then working, first in the affair of one bishop in one church, and then in the business of synods and councils, that, in their very first appearance, divided the churches, (as in the decisions about Easter), but served to join together that horrible catholic visible body, *The man of sin*.

The third, you say, is the second turned into another shape, and complain that I have not set down the pages; while yet you own I have set down pages for the one branch, which is the only branch whereon you charge me with falsehood. And as for the other branch, for which the page is not set down, you yourself own it, and direct us to one of the pages where it is found. What is the ground then of the loud cry about noting down your pages here, when

when you note down the page, and give your words, to ease the reader? You should have set down the whole sentence, which is as follows. "If our author is not acting the Jesuit, he must understand by congregation such a competent number of Christians, as can assemble for ordinary in one place, for public worship, and may be edified by the preaching of one pastor at a time." And this is the first branch.

The other stands in these words in my Observations, p. 10. "But against the Episcopalians you would set it on another footing, and have recourse to the Lord's supper, and the whole body partaking of one altar, as it is called, distinct from the catechumens, p. 534. 535. So, against the Independents, you make Perth and Dundee, and the like, to be two congregations, and against the Episcopalians, you make them but one." I have a little before cited the words of pages 534. 535. where you signify, that, setting aside the catechumens, they that partook of the eucharist in larger cities, might assemble in one body, or as they do in many cities at this day.

Now, Sir, that I may not seem to be playing the Jesuit with this word *congregation*, and that there may be nothing but candour betwixt us, let us bring it to these cities at this day, Dundee and Perth, in each of which there are two assemblies ordinarily hearing sermon, and yet but one assembly for breaking of bread; and therefore there is but one parish of Dundee, and one parish of Perth; whereas in Edinburgh and Glasgow, where there are several assemblies for the Lord's supper, there are several parishes. Though there should be many other kinds of congregations in a city; yet if there be but one body of Christians there, assembling from time to time in one place to eat the Lord's supper, there is only one such congregation there as I call a *Christian church*; and in such a congregation all the ordinances of church-worship, and the Christian discipline ought

to be performed. But in your way of stating the controversy with the Independents, you would make two such congregations as are churches both in Dundee and Perth; while it is manifest, from your words before cited, p. 534. 535. of your book, that against the Episcopalians you make but one such congregation as is a church in Dundee, and one in Perth; yet now you would bring yourself off by telling me, "That in these pages you hold, that in large and populous cities there were several congregations." Yes, you said so; but in these you included the catechumens, while you did not doubt but they who were admitted to partake of the eucharist might assemble in one place. And you say further, for clearing yourself, "Though the guise of these times brought it in custom, for gaining their end, to have all of them communicate at the bishop's church; yet it never entered into my head they were all one single congregation on that account; nor have I given the least insinuation of it." You do indeed speak of a practice at Rome, that had its rise about the year 312, of sending part of the elements from the bishop's church to other congregations in the city; but before that time, you seem to contend, that the communicating church in a place was but a single congregation. Your words are: "It is true Justin Martyr says, that after the president of the assembly hath consecrate the bread and wine, the deacons stand ready to distribute it to every one present, and carry it to those who are absent; yet it doth not appear, that it was to any assembly of Christians, but rather to single persons of the same congregation, who had not access to be present: for he seems plainly to speak of the president of one single congregation, and what was the general practice in his time."

You clear yourself in the same manner of the fourth instance: for you first tell me, I conceal the pages, and charge me with fraud in so doing, and this without shewing that I have misrepresented you.

I had said, "Against the Independents you gather together all those converted by the ministry of the apostles in Jerusalem, and all those converted by Paul's ministry in Ephesus, where he continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus: and this to make the number of Christians both in Jerusalem and Ephesus to be so great, that there behoved to be many congregations in each of them." Needed I quote pages for this? Is not the number of them converted by the preaching of the gospel in Jerusalem and Ephesus, the grand branch of your argument proving a plurality of congregations in Jerusalem and in Ephesus? Where then is the fraud in concealing the pages? But lest you still complain of fraud, are not these your words touching the church of Ephesus? "We shall observe the former method, 1. To shew, that there were more congregations in her than one: 2. That all these were under the government of a college or presbytery, and not a single person or bishop. As to the first, The multiplicity of converts that were at Ephesus, and their great number, will make it evident, that there were in that church several congregations or assemblies for public worship. And for clearing this, it is observable, that the Apostle Paul continued at Ephesus more than the space of two years, &c. Besides, during the time of his continuance there, it is remarked by the inspired historian, *That all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks; and this they had the readier access unto, in that the temple of Diana being there, the city of Ephesus was the public place of their worship, which occasioned their frequent resorting thither.*"

If these be your words, I hope you will not deny, that this is among the first things you say in the proof of a church in the city of Ephesus, consisting of many congregations. After several flourishes upon the multiplicity of converts at Ephesus, including all
them

them on whom fear fell, your words are, "And it is worth notice, that infinite wisdom directed the apostles to make their longest stays in remarkable cities, and to make the offer of the gospel in those places where was the greatest resort of people, such as Jerusalem, and Samaria in the land of Judea, Antioch in Syria, Corinth in Greece, Rome in Italy, and Ephesus in the lesser Asia. But it must be most surprising, if in all of these the success of the apostles labours must still be circumscribed within the bounds of one assembly, or congregation of Christians." By this time the reader will be sensible, how little ground there is for the charge of fraud in concealing the pages, and perverting the sense, upon this branch of the inconsistency; and how little reason you had to complain of my taking the "freedom to misrepresent you, as if you had alledged, that all these converted in Judea and Asia had been members of the churches of Jerusalem and Ephesus." As to the other branch; it happened, that I had set down the page and your express words; so you had no evasion that way. You set down over again some of your words cited by me, and own them to be yours, thus: "But what is the amount of all this? Alas, he is inconsistent with himself; for I hold," say you, p. 425. "that the *church*, in the singular number, so far as I can observe, is no where in the New Testament made use of in express terms, to denote any more than the *Christians in some city*, except when the *Catholic church* is meant. These, I own, are my words, and I shall hold the same opinion." You might also have owned the rest of them, which are to be seen in the Observations, p. 11. But how you get rid of the inconsistency betwixt what is now owned, and what is said above, I see not; if it be not by the addition you now make to the word *city*: for you now say, "That city, or its vicinities, and that city, or its neighbourhood." If you include not all Judea in the vicinities of Jerusalem, and all the proconsular Asia in the

neighbourhood of Ephesus, and so give up to the Episcopalians what you was just now taking from them, you must mean something like the suburbs; and so this addition of *vicinities* and *neighbourhood*, whereby you correct your former assertion, serves to enlarge the churches of Jerusalem and Ephesus, but not to extricate you. After inquiring at me, Where is the inconsistency? you tell me on the one hand, "I hold, that the church of Ephesus imports only the *Christians* in that city or its neighbourhood; and yet it must be taken distributively for several congregations therein." But you should also have told, that this was one great reason why it should be so taken, *viz.* That the success of the gospel preached in Ephesus, extended throughout all Asia. Then, on the other hand, you tell me, "I hold against Dr Hammond, that the church of Ephesus cannot be taken distributively for all the churches of Asia. Now the whole secret is out." And I also say, now the whole secret is out. The telling of a part has brought out the whole.

On the fifth instance you make a very loud cry against me; but you as little clear yourself as on any of the foregoing. You had inferred, from what I said upon Acts xv. in the Explication of the proposition, how justly I shall not now stay to declare, "He plainly grants this synod had a dogmatical power, but not that of jurisdiction and censure." Against this you endeavour to prove, that the one could not be without the other; because "a power and authority to determine ministerially in matters of doctrine is ecclesiastical, and belongs unto a church; and as these churches had a power dogmatically to judge of false doctrines, so there was a jurisdictional power connected with it;" and you conclude your proof of the necessary connection betwixt these two powers thus: "This must be a truth in itself evident, unless we shall suppose a court vested with a power to give forth laws and regulations, and yet not impowered

to censure the contraveners thereof, which seems to imply a contradiction." p. 325. 326. 327. Against this I alledged, you allowed the power of the key of doctrine, which I took to be the same thing with your dogmatical power, to a single pastor; whom yet you would not suffer, by himself, to exercise the power of jurisdiction and censure, or to exercise the key of discipline, which I took to be the same thing with your power of jurisdiction and censure.

But now you come off by a twofold distinction, 1. Between a doctrinal power and a dogmatical power. And you say you took care to distinguish this before. I did indeed observe a distinction between a doctrinal power and a power of jurisdiction; but, till now, I saw you not distinguish these three, the doctrinal power, the dogmatical power, and the power of jurisdiction and censure, which you say is connected with the dogmatical. And I can say nothing of your distinction, till you inform me of the nature of your dogmatical power, as it is distinguished from your jurisdictional power, which you say is connected with it, and from your doctrinal power. 2. You distinguish between power as exercised in the preaching of the word to any competent number of Christians, and as exercised in a court of Christ, *i. e.* as I take it, between a person exercising power, and a court exercising power. And if this be it, then I may learn, that our doctrinal power is the power that a single minister exercises when he declares the laws of Christ; and the dogmatical power is the power that two or three of them in a session, or twenty of them in a presbytery, exercise when they declare the same thing together that they declared before separately in their pulpits; and so it is their meeting together that makes the power to change from doctrinal into dogmatical. Well; but if two or three ministers should meet in a session, and declare some laws of Jesus Christ, and send them in an epistle to all the ministers and parishes in Scotland or in Britain,

tain, inform me, would this be the dogmatical power? Because I have a suspicion it would remain still doctrinal only. And if this be so, then I am taught, that the dogmatical power is the power that cannot be without the power of jurisdiction and censure; and therefore, whatever more I may come to have to say about this dogmatical power, this one thing is to be said about it, that it is inseparably connected with the power of jurisdiction and censure. And so you stand clear of the fifth inconsistency, when the whole intrigue is come out.

The sixth instance you are pleased to set down in your own words; and you say, "I wish I may get rid of it, for it is very formidable; for, say you, I have maintained against the Independents the subordination of the synagogues unto superior courts, and made much use of the Jewish church as the same thing essentially with the Christian. Against the Episcopalians I affirm, the Christian church was not founded till the resurrection of Christ." And then you make your usual complaint about the pages, and that these are not the words in your book. But I would be content to see wherein I have mistaken or misrepresented you. Need I set down all the words of the first, second, and third pages, of the very first section of the first chapter of your book, to show, that you affirm the same thing more strongly than in the words by me used, and bring arguments to prove it? Do you not conclude your reasoning thus? "And in this I am seconded by Mr Sage, that great champion for Episcopacy, who says, 'That the Christian church was not, could not be founded till our Lord was risen, seeing it was to be founded on his resurrection.'" And when you have laid down this principle, with the consent of your adversary, do you not draw these two inferences from it against the Episcopalian? "1. That there is no argument can be drawn for Episcopal government, from the actings of the twelve apostles and seventy disciples during

during the days of our Lord's personal ministry, and while their message was only, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*.—2. That the government of the Jewish church, according to the subordination of their priests, can be no argument for the like under the New Testament." And, in the end of the section, you say these words: "And if there be any order or set of officers that were under the Jewish dispensation, to which the ministers of the gospel have a relation, or answer to, it must be to the ordinary prophets and teachers in the synagogues, who read and expounded the law and the prophets unto the people, but had no concern in the temple."

But after you have complained of my injustice, you now tell me what you really hold; for you say, "I hold," p. 1. "that properly the Christian church was founded on the resurrection of Christ, and had not a formal being, distinct from the Jewish, till that time; yet the gospel-church had its beginnings in the ministry of John the Baptist, and was gradually carried on by Christ and his apostles, till its formal establishment distinct from the Jewish polity." By this newly added clause, about its beginnings in the ministry of John the Baptist, it seems to you it had not any beginnings before; and you have afforded some beginnings of a revival to the argument, from the actings of the twelve and the seventy, while their message was, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*, which before you destroyed; for now you say, "While that kingdom was only at hand, it even then had its beginnings, and was carried on gradually by Christ and his apostles." And how it was carried on before it was founded, and how it had its beginnings before it had a formal being, you can declare when you write again, by adding another clause, or by a metaphysical distinction or two, shewing that the opposition is not *ad idem, secundum idem, eodem modo, et eodem tempore*; and so no contradiction.

You say further, "Again, I hold, that the cove-
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nant of grace under the Old Testament and that under the New were substantially the same," p. 120. But I can see nothing like that in all that page of your book, unless it be in this sentence. "None will deny the connection betwixt the manner of admission under the Old Testament to that of the New or gospel state of the church, in *the fullness of time*, that acknowledge, with all orthodox divines, that the constitution of those two churches were essentially the same, and that their only difference was in accidentals." Because it belongs to your reason to determine what was essential to the Old-Testament church, you are of opinion, that the whole temple-service and priesthood, and subordination among the priests, was accidental to the Old-Testament church of Israel; and that the peculiar regulations in the New-Testament church, agreeable to the nature of Christ's kingdom, vastly differing from that church-æconomy which hitherto had obtained by divine appointment, are but accidental to the New-Testament church: but the manner of admitting members was essential to the Old-Testament church, and so must be also in the New-Testament church, which is the same essentially. According to this, your only way with the Episcopalian was to tell him, "That the government of the Jewish church, according to the subordination that was among the priests, was not essential, but accidental to the Jewish church; and therefore can be no argument for the like under the New Testament;" and not to draw this as an inference from your grand position, "The Christian church was not founded till Christ's resurrection:" for, by this manner of overthrowing the Episcopal arguments from the Jewish church, you expose yourself to the Independent, and give him leave to tell you, that your arguments from the state of the church, before Christ's resurrection, will not prove the like under the New Testament; for the New-
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Testament church was not founded till Christ's resurrection.

You proceed, and say farther, "That there was good reason to infer a subordination of judicatures under the New Testament from the subordination of the synagogues to the ecclesiastical sanhedrim under the Old; and that this argument was founded, not on the identity of the thing, but on a parity of reason," p. 283. &c. "Now, shew me the inconsistency of these propositions?" But the Episcopalian can tell you, his argument for the subordination of officers from the Jewish subordination, is not founded on the identity of the thing, but on a parity of reason. He does not plead for a typical priesthood, but for good order among church-officers under the New Testament, as no less needful than under the Old; and he has this advantage of you, that, in these places which you cite for the subordination of synagogues to the sanhedrim, there is not one word of a synagogue, nor of the rulers of synagogues in separate or classical meetings, p. 281. 282.; but express mention of the subordination of the church-officers, Levites, priests, and chief priests. But your position against him overthrows all his arguments, "The New-Testament church was not founded till the resurrection of Christ;" and therefore the government of the Jewish church can be no argument for the like under the New Testament: and, by parity of reason, it overthrows your arguments against the Independent.

In your book you still contend, that what you bring from the Jewish church, and the government you plead for from thence, is moral; and by this you answer the objection taken from the abrogation of the Jewish polity, in one of the pages to which you now refer, by the &c. p. 285. 286. But in your Review, p. 11. you tell us, "That our blessed Lord might have revealed another plan or scheme of government in his house than what he hath done, I believe

believe no Presbyterian will deny." And thus you stand clear of the sixth inconsistency, when you are cleared as to one thing that is subjoined; as to which you say, "But alas! I find another thing subjoined," p. 12. "namely, That the Christian churches were formed according to the synagogues; and yet I would not suffer the church in Jerusalem to be like a synagogue. Yes, I will allow it to be so as to the order of its standing officers and some usages; but not as if it was a single congregation." I expected you would here tell me of a classical synagogue; to which your classical church should answer; because you had spoken in your book, p. 281. of the separate and classical meetings of the rulers of the synagogues. But now you have thought fit to drop this, and acknowledge that the synagogues were but single congregations, and deny that the church in Jerusalem was like a synagogue in this respect.

The Christian church, then, according to you, is not formed according to synagogues, as it is classical. Further, you do not pretend to point out any other court to which the synagogues were subjected, but that supreme catholic court that was erected at Jerusalem; and that court, as it behoved it to meet in the place which the Lord chused, the typical place, so it consisted of the high priest, the priests, and the Levites, distinguished by you from them that judged in the matters that you make purely civil. But you are not of the mind, that the ministers of the gospel answer to the set of officers that judged in that court, or that they have a relation to them; and you think they answer only to the ordinary prophets and teachers in the synagogues, that had no concern in the temple: seeing, therefore, you have never attempted to prove more than the subordination of synagogues, single congregations, to a catholic court under the Old Testament, and that court made up of typical officers, to whom the ministers of the gospel have no relation, and meeting in a typical place, tell me
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by what parity of reason your classical churches, and their subordination to provincial and national synods, the last acting independently of any catholic court on earth, come out of the synagogues and their subordination? or what is there in all this any way like the synagogues? Yet you say, you allow the church in Jerusalem to be like a synagogue, "as to the order of its standing officers;" but what say you of the chief ruler of the synagogue? "and some usages;" but I want to know what these usages are; and if this be one of them, That the scripture was read in the hearing of the whole synagogue; and this another, That any Jew had access to exhort publicly in the synagogue? Thus I have followed you upon the second observation; and, holding what I said in the conclusion of it as here again repeated, I go forward with you to

O B S E R V A T I O N III.

On which you review what you call my critical examinations.

And, 1. You are very short upon your *at* and *of*, and perhaps substantial; but I can say nothing about it, till I understand it. You complain of my spending a great deal of time on this very trivial point, which you now say, "Though it was yourself that brought it on the field, can neither affect the cause the one way nor the other." Yet I find you still spending time upon *at* and *of*, as thinking the cause some way affected by these; for, p. 36. 37. you have a criticism upon them, whereby I am made to understand, that the brethren that were *at* Lystra and Iconium, Acts xvi. 2. were only occasionally there at that time; but if it had been said, the brethren *of* Lystra and Iconium, they had certainly dwelt there. You give me a reason for your distinguishing between *at* and *of*, on Acts xv. 2. and xvi. 4. in these words, "I conceive, that the elders *of* the church imports the peculiar relation that is between that church and

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them; whereas the elders *at* Jerusalem carries no more in it than the bare indication of the place where they were at the time, without the least hint of any stated relation they bore unto that church."

Thus you find elders *of* a church, not *of* a place, but *at* a place; and so there is not, according to you, a relation betwixt an elder or elders, and a spot of ground, with all the people on that spot, by virtue of their living there. And thus you overthrow the intent of your first criticism on *at* and *of*. I told you before, that if you would speak according to the original, you must say *in* where you said *at*; so, Acts xvi. 4. I read *ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ*, as ver. 2. *ἐν Λυκκίῳ*. And, according to your criticism, when I read Philip. i. 1. *The saints which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons*, I am not to understand, that these resided in that city; for I am not to conclude more but the indication of the place where they were at the time; and so, for ought I know, it might be an assembly of saints, bishops, and deacons met in Philippi at that time. But then what becomes of the Presbyterian argument for many bishops in one church, taken from these words? The like may be said of Rev. ii. 24. You say further on Rev. ii. and Acts xx. 17. "The elders *of* the church expresseth the relation between the elders and the church; whereas had it been said the elders *at* the church, no more could have been concluded than the bare indication of the place where they were at the time." Here you shift in *the church* in the room of *the city* or *place*, which alters your criticism a little, but adds nothing to its strength, unless you affirm, that these words, Acts xx. 28. "The flock, *καὶ*, the Holy Ghost, hath made you overseers," express not the relation betwixt these overseers and that flock, but only signify, that they were there when they were made overseers. And perhaps you will alledge, that when Peter says, "the elders," *τοὺς ἐν ὑμῖν*, 1 epist. chap. 5. ver. 1. he does not express any relation betwixt these elders
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and the Christians among whom they were, but only that they were among them at the time. Thus I am of the mind you have succeeded no better in your second critical effort upon *at* and *of* than in the first.

2. You spend more time on *ἐπι το αυτο*, but to as little purpose: for as I can understand you, the great thing you say in defence of your criticism on Acts iv. 25. 26. 27. compared with Psal. ii. 1. 2. against what was alledged by me, is this, "That, in the judgement of all the apostles, the rulers that were gathered together, *ἐπι το αυτο*, are the kings, Herod, and Pontius Pilate." And you propose this question to me, Who hold the *rulers* there to signify the *rulers of Israel*? "But are not all kings rulers, though all rulers are not kings? And if so, they cannot be excluded here; nay, the apostles expressly include them." But let me also inquire, if, where kings and rulers are distinguished, we must not understand by rulers, these that are not kings? You give me another question, "Have they any where here made a distinction between the rulers and the kings, or insinuate, that we are only to understand the Jewish rulers?" You answer this question yourself, and say, "No, it is only the people of Israel who are charged." But I am not satisfied in this answer, nor in the reason that supports it; for it is plain to me, that the kings of the earth and the rulers are as much distinguished, ver. 26. and Psalm ii. 2. as the heathen and the people are, ver. 25. and Psalm ii. 1. And if the rulers of the Jews be neither intended by the word *rulers*, ver. 26. nor any way pointed at in that designation, *the people of Israel*, ver. 27. they are not all charged with the death of Christ here, where there is so particular mention of the parties concerned in it; which is a wonder, considering the hand they had in it. And whereas you say, "It is only the people of Israel who are charged, and the charge of his death is on the Jews, upon the whole nation, because

because done by their instigation and connivance, Acts ii. 23." If this only exclude the rulers of the people, and if when you say the Jews and the whole nation, you except the rulers, then you say something to the purpose; but at the same time you speak what cannot be supported by Acts ii. 23. and what is plainly contrary to the truth of the thing, Matth. xxvii. 1. 2. 12. 13. 17. 20. Mark xv. 1. 4. 11. Luke xxiii. 13.—24. And how the death of Christ could be charged on the whole nation of Israel, without charging especially the rulers with it, who were, when assented to by the Jews whom they ruled, as much the nation and people of Israel, as Herod and Pontius Pilate were the kings of the earth, is not easy to be imagined.

There is nothing more manifest in the book of Acts, than that the apostles charged the Jewish rulers with the death of Christ, Acts iii. 17. v. 27. 28. 29. 30. So that I cannot understand how you came to cite Acts ii. 23. to shew the contrary. And if you had considered the context, you might have seen, that the apostles Peter and John were just come from the presence of the Jewish rulers, where Peter had been saying, Acts iv. 8. 10. 11. *Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, be it known unto you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, — This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.* And you might also have perceived; that this same company, in the words following these in debate, speak with reference to the late threatenings of these rulers against the apostles, ver. 17. 18. and say ver. 29. *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings;* plainly declaring, that these rulers that had been gathered together against Christ, both with Herod and with Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, were now threatening them. How then could you imagine, that the apostles and their company were here speaking nothing of the rulers of the Jews, and making no application of the 2d Psalm

to them, but to Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the people of the Jews, in distinction from them, when it is so manifest they are especially pointed at?

Now, Sir, I say again, that in Luke xxiii. I find both Herod and his men of war gathered together against Christ, with the people of Israel, rulers and ruled, and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles with him, gathered together with the people of Israel, rulers and ruled; I find the kings of the earth, Pilate standing up, and the Jewish rulers gathered together before him, against Christ; and Herod standing up, and the Jewish rulers gathered together before him, against Christ; and I still inquire, what more says the text? And where is the text in the New Testament, from which it can be made appear, that the phrase *ἐπι το αὐτο*, cannot there signify *in one place*, or *in the same place*? You cite Acts iii. 1. But were not Peter and John together in one place, when going up into the temple, walking together? Next you have Acts iv. 26. of which we have been speaking. Then you bring 1 Cor. xiv. 23. where the evidence of the text obliged our translators, as good grammarians; and as little Independent as yourself, to render it *in one place*. And then you have Luke xvii. 35. which you may compare with Matth. xxiv. 41. and see if you can fetch any argument from thence to exclude *one place* from the meaning of *ἐπι το αὐτο*, there. Your grammar upon it, and the various translations of it by learned men, while all must own it sometimes signifies *in the same place*, signify nothing, till one text be produced in the New Testament, where it can be proven, that it must be translated otherwise. And let me tell you, after what I have said, this has never yet been done.

But I had almost forgot the new state of your question to me on Acts iv. 26. You put the question again thus, "Whether Herod and Pontius Pilate, the kings of the earth, and the rulers, were gathered together in one place against the Lord and his Christ?"

Christ?" Though this state of it be as little agreeable to the text as the former, and so as little needing any answer from me; yet because you say, that, by my own confession, Herod and Pontius Pilate did not gather together in one place against Christ, I now think it proper to tell you, that Luke xxiii. 12. hinders me from confessing, that these whom you call the kings of the earth and the rulers, even Herod and Pontius Pilate, did not meet together in one place against Christ. And I do not understand what you intend by saying, "That the people of Israel did not gather together into Pilate's judgement-hall, John xviii. 28." seeing your intention cannot be to shew, that they were not gathered in one place with Pilate, because you saw the contrary in the 29th verse. I am still of the mind, that they who understood *ἐπι το αὐτο*, here to signify *in this city*, took the meaning of it to be *in one place*; for should it be used to signify *one such place as a city*, as it would not in that case point to one house, so it would not point to distinct places and distinct assemblies; there behoved to be another word for that, while the meaning of *ἐπι το αὐτο*, is still *in one place*; and there is no one place to which it can be applied, wherein they are not in some sense many places. And when we do not read of the house in Jerusalem where Pilate and the Jews met together, John xviii. 28. 29. yet we are sure they met so as to speak together face to face in that place; and so likewise did Herod and they.

As to Acts ii. 44. you must get another argument to prove that *ἐπι το αὐτο*, there signifies different spots or houses in Jerusalem, than any that can be drawn from their eating their meat from house to house, or from their breaking bread in that common eating, plainly distinct from the sacred breaking of bread, and eating the Lord's supper in the church, when they were all *ἐπι το αὐτο*. Compare 1 Cor. xi.

ὁμοθυμαδον has not the same import with *ἐπι το αὐτο*, but imports, as where you find the two together.

Add

Acts ii. 1. the personal concurrence of severals in the same action, as they of Tyre and Sidon, with whom Herod was displeas'd, came to him, that is, the managers and actors in the chief government of Tyre and Sidon. You use too much freedom with Acts viii. 6. 10. when you attribute what is said in the 10th verse to Philip, while it is speaking of the heed given to Simon Magus: for you say, "Acts viii. 6. the Samaritans are said with one accord to give heed to Philip, even from the least to the greatest, ver. 10."

3. You drop your former reason why *the whole church*, and *they all*, could not construct; and you differ from the translators, who, by the parenthesis, plainly make for me. And I am still surpris'd with your imagination, that you speak according to the judgement of the translators, when you would have the apostles within the parenthesis, and the whole church without, dealing with it as you did with Solomon's porch; but now you grant that the whole church was in Solomon's porch; yet you will not let the text say so. You give a fresh proof of your ability for criticism upon this head; for now you bring forth two positions in place of the former, to shew, that *they all* cannot be constructed with *the whole church*. The first seems to be this, that *the whole church* is not the immediate antecedent of *they all*, and so cannot be constructed with it. But by this rule, *they all* cannot be constructed with *the apostles*, but with *the people*, its immediate antecedent. And if you be to establish this as an universal rule, That the relative must be constructed with its immediate antecedent, you will make odd work with the scripture, if you make not some exceptions; as, for instance, 2 Thess. ii. 8. 9. Next you tell me, "The relative and the antecedent must be in the same gender, and that where the antecedent is a collective noun." And you affirm, "That the relatives and the antecedents are in the same gender in the texts that I noted down to you;" perhaps imagining, that no reader that understands

derstands language would trouble himself to cast his eyes on 2 Theff. i. 1. 2. 3. And I doubt not but you will affirm, that the relative and antecedent collective noun are in the same gender, Acts xxiv. 20. 21. I am clear, from the apostle's argument and plain scope, that *they*, Acts xv. 11. constructs with *fathers*; but the difference of the gender could not hinder *they* to construct with *the nations*, or else there is wrong construction in that chapter, which I will not easily acknowledge. See, for instance, ver. 17. I must tell you, criticism requires more sedate and nice circumspection, than perhaps either you or I have leisure or ability for; and we may see that it is not safe in all cases to trust to learned critics, even where they are positive: And therefore we may leave it to others of more ability and leisure, while we are employed to better purpose.

You charge me here with setting light of the context, and you repeat this several times in your letter. The foundation of this charge, so far as I can understand, is, That when you dealt so with the text and context, as you deal with Acts viii. 6. 10. I told you what the text said, and did not dissemble as to the context. And my answer to your charge is plainly this, That I am for taking all the help unto the understanding of the text that the context will afford me; but I am not for making the context to be the text: and herein I differ from you, who charge me with making light of the context, for no other reason that I know, but because I will not say, that the context is the text.

4. You say, "I thought you was in my mercy as to a feast in Jerusalem, when Paul went up," Acts xxi.; and so you complain of my marking the page in that case. And thus, it seems, whether I mark your pages or not, you will be sure to mark my base intentions. I own I could not understand the ground of your mighty confidence, in demanding a proof for my insinuation, that there was a feast in Jerusalem

lem when Paul went up; but now I perceive it was your skill in metaphysics, and your ability thereby to deny consequences, which even an Independent would blush to deny. And I have learned, from the sample of your metaphysics on this and some other heads, that it is in vain for me to impugn you, even though you should deny the plainest fact recorded in the scriptures.

As to your partial way of quoting Acts ix: 31. to prove the multiplication of the church in Jerusalem, you do not make any defence of your partiality in citing the text, which was the thing complained of; and so I have you convicted on that point, but not silenced, as long as you can talk beside the purpose. For, as to that text and Acts xii. 24. you come off, saying, "That Jerusalem had her share," and you make the best of that you can; for that city was largest, and therefore would then have the largest share. But you recover yourself fully on this head, and come off in triumph, by means of a proof you have found here for a church in the singular number, containing under it many single churches. And this is the argument in your own words, "For it is said, Acts xii. 1. *Herod stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church,* This, I hope, was not only the church in Jerusalem, nor the church as invisible, *Quo minime credas gurgite piscis erit,*" Your hope here seems to be very firm, but what the ground of this hope is, I cannot tell, if it be not this, that "Herod stretched forth his hand to vex certain of all the churches," that could receive additions by the growth and multiplication of the word after he died; or that Herod could not persecute the invisible church, no more than Saul could persecute its invisible head; and upon such like grounds of hope, you may expect to find your fish in any pool, yea, and find it, according to that, *Crede quod habes et habes.*

You give two reasons, to shew, that all the myri-

ads of believing Jews, Acts xxi. were members of the church in Jerusalem.

The first is, "Because they were not such as could bear any witness against Paul, but by hearsay; they are informed of thee." And, to strengthen what you say on this head, it seems to me that the text distinguishes the myriads of believing Jews that were zealous of the law, from the Jews among the Gentiles whom Paul taught; and so from the believing Jews his disciples among the Gentiles, who are not declared to be zealous of the law. Yet there were by this time multitudes of believing Jews, zealous of the law, throughout Judea and Galilee, and in other parts, (beside these among the Gentiles taught by Paul), who were not members of the church in Jerusalem; but, in their zeal for the law, were resorting from time to time to the feasts in Jerusalem, and to the feast that then was. Now none of the believing Jews, but those that heard him teaching the Jews among the Gentiles, could witness against him, but by hearsay: and is it probable to you, that all other believing Jews, even all them that were zealous of the law, were members of the church in Jerusalem?

Your second reason is, "It is plain, those only of Jerusalem could receive satisfaction by Paul's conformity to the law at that time, and not others." But how is it plain that other believing Jews, zealous of the law, beside the members of the church in Jerusalem, were not in Jerusalem at that time? Have you made it plain, that there was no feast at Jerusalem at that time, and that the believing Jews in other places, zealous of the law, were not there? I thought that the utmost drift of all your stretches on that head, was to shew, that it was possible Paul did not get up to Jerusalem at the time he proposed, though he made all the haste he could to be there, or that it did not involve a contradiction to say, that, though Paul made haste on his journey to be at Jerusalem

on the day of Pentecost, and though the Jews of Asia were there at that time, yet there was no feast in Jerusalem at that time. And is it thus plain to you, that those only of Jerusalem could receive satisfaction by Paul's conformity to the law at that time? Or would you suffer an Independent to see things plain at this rate? But, though it be most plain from the sacred history, that there was a feast in Jerusalem at that time; yet though there had been none, what readier way was there to satisfy all the believing Jews, that were zealous of the law every where, than to satisfy those of Jerusalem, by conforming publicly to the law at that time?

5. You do not meddle with what I said touching your criticisms on *παν το πληθος*; and beside some reflections and a complaint about pages, and references to pages of your book, to oblige the reader, perhaps weary of your book before, to read it over again, I find nothing but what is by no means to the purpose; namely, that the churches in the first three centuries, according to King, were not independent of councils. For the question was, if the *παν το πληθος* of each of these churches came together in one place to observe the ordinances of worship? And if each of them had but one altar, or many? And if the *παν το πληθος*, under the care of a primitive presbyter or bishop, came together in one place to eat the Lord's supper? And all your answer is, they were not independent. I own, as I said before, they were some way dependent on councils after the rise of the one bishop, and as a consequent of that; but the one bishop is with you an innovation, and so is that consequent of it.

6. You call the sixth instance a pitiful point; yet you take some pains on it, and I shall not put you to further trouble about it. Only, as from this and other instances you may learn more modesty in your assertions, so I find when you are extricating yourself on this pitiful point, a point of some importance

casts up to you. It seems several things were wanting among the disciples gathered by the gospel in the several cities of Crete, who had nothing for the New-Testament scripture that we have now, but the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, and among the rest of the things that were wanting, elders or bishops, most necessary unto the churches, seem to have been wanting in these churches. The scripture speaks nothing of elders there before, but seems to say they were wanting: and as little does it speak of Paul's leaving any of his ministers, the evangelists, there but Titus. This straitens you, and you imagine it will straiten me likewise. For you say, "Then he was to ordain them by himself. But you will first give an instance in the New Testament, that a single person did ordain, and then reconcile such a practice with Matth. xviii. 20." I am not sure what you mean by ordination; but because you speak of a single person's ordaining, I imagine you take ordination and the imposition of hands for the same thing. And if this be your mind, I must differ from you, till I see that hands were laid on the first elders or bishops of the first Christian church, Acts i.; and till I find that Apollos became a New-Testament minister by the imposition of hands, Acts xviii. 26. 27. 28. I do not question that when elders were ordained where there were elders, hands were laid on them; because I find a presbytery laying hands on deacons when they were ordained, Acts vi. and on an evangelist when he was called and set apart to that work, 1 Tim. iv. 14. But I am far from being clear to say, that ordination consists in the imposition of hands; neither dare I say, that no man is a minister of the gospel, but he that is ordained by the imposition of the hands of a scriptural presbytery.

By this you may see that I am of the mind Titus was not single or alone in the ordination of the elders in Crete, though there was none in office there but himself when these elders were ordained. And
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it seems plain to me there were no elders set among the disciples in Crete at their first conversion; because I reckon the Apostle observed the same rule in setting apart of elders or bishops that he gives to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 22. And it behoved a bishop to be no novice, or one newly planted, but one holding fast the faithful word as he had been taught. Because there was not time sufficient for setting apart bishops so qualified in Crete while the apostle could stay there, he left Titus behind him to supply his place, and do according to his direction, what he himself could not stay to see done. We do not read of any other evangelist or officer left there but Titus alone; and where the scripture is silent, so must we. So that, if you will have it that Titus laid hands on these elders or bishops in their ordination, then here is an instance in the New Testament of the laying on of hands in the ordination of elders by no officer but one; yea further, an instance of the ordination of elders where it cannot appear there was any bearing office acting in it but one. Neither is there any difficulty in reconciling this with Matth. xviii. 20. where our Lord speaks of two or three elders set in a church; and this will never apply to the case of a church wanting elders, or destitute of a presbytery, that is, two elders at least. It is the law of Christ that makes elders; and the Christians in the several cities of Crete had that law no otherwise but from the mouth of the apostle, or Titus his minister in his place, and under his direction. But a church now, destitute of a presbytery, and having that law written to them in the New Testament, which the Cretians had from the apostle, and from the mouth of Titus, and observing that law to their power, may have elders, and get a presbytery among them, as well as the disciples in any city of Crete could have elders when Titus was with them.

7. As to the next instance, touching the word *brethren*, your business was to prove, that it denoted always

ways persons in office, and even when distinguished from officers, as Acts xv. or you said nothing to your purpose. But have you now manifested, that the word *brethren* is any where by itself used to distinguish persons in office from those that are not in office? Nothing like it that I see; and I told you before, I did not see how it could be done. You say now, "The brethren in Acts xv. have such work ascribed them, and are joined with others in jurisdictional acts, which, in very clear terms, discover they were brethren in office; and on this foundation I have called them so." But this is only an assertion of the grand point to be proved, and you must look about for another mean of proof than the import of the word *brethren*, from whence you was bringing a proof for it before. You tell me, you have a strong imagination that the name *brethren* is taken in the sense you have been pleading for, Acts xv. 7.; on which text you propose a question to me thus: "Sir, was the choice made among us private persons?" You also answer your question, and say, "Peter himself was a person in office; and this choice was made out of the multitude, to which he addressed himself: but if the choice was made out of this multitude, then these out of which the choice was made must be supposed to be in office, or in some measure qualified with him for that office of preaching to the Gentiles."

Here you acknowledge that Peter, Acts xv. 7. is addressing himself to that multitude out of which God made choice of him to preach the gospel first to the Gentiles, *i. e.* to Cornelius, and them with him, Acts x. before there was any church of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, or Cilicia. From this I have a strong imagination, that Peter is not addressing himself to a synod, whereof the officers of the churches in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia, were constitutive members; but to a society that had a being before any church of the Gentiles was, and before there can be
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any pretence of a synod; for you do not so much as pretend a synod till Acts xv. and I reckon you imagine that you have there the first synod. And the *us* among whom the choice was made are, as is plain from the whole of Peter's discourse, and from this text, Jews distinguished from the Gentiles; so that he is neither addressing himself to the Gentiles personally present, nor represented there; but he is addressing himself to the company that sent the epistle containing the decrees to Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.

Again, by *us* I can imagine no other society to be intended but that same which at the beginning received the gift of the Holy Ghost, even the first church of the Jews, the church in Jerusalem; which, notwithstanding of all that had passed over it, was still in being when Peter was here speaking; and this my imagination has some foundation in the situation of *us* in ver. 8, 9. When Peter has done discoursing to this society, and thereupon they all gave ear to the information of Paul and Barnabas, James addresses them again thus, ver. 13. *Men and brethren, hearken unto me,* ver. 14. *Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles.* ver. 19. *Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God. But that we write unto them, &c.* And when his speech to them is concluded, it is said, ver. 22. *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas.* ver. 23. *And wrote letters by them after this manner, The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles, &c.* This is that company to which Peter addresses himself when he said, *Men, brethren, ye know how that God made choice among us.* And these are they that received Paul and Barnabas when they were come to Jerusalem, ver. 4. These were all brethren, but some of them were also apostles, some of them were brethren, and also elders or leading men, *οὐκ ἦσαν* among the
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the brethren, and some of them could have no designation, importing a distinction from others by office; and therefore are called only brethren, ver. 23.; and this is the whole church, ver. 22. distinguished from the office-bearers, who there get their distinguishing titles.

Of this company, whereof Peter was one, he says, *God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should bear the word of the gospel.* But you infer from his being in office, and from his being made choice of among them to preach, that it behoved them all to be in office, or qualified with him for that office of preaching to the Gentiles. And, by the same kind of reasoning, you might infer, they were all apostles; and so might any man infer, from one's being made choice of among the members of the general assembly to preach in India, that all the lay-elders and commissioners from boroughs are certainly preachers, or qualified for that office of preaching; which, I conceive, would be notoriously false. And yet we must see the strength of these kind of inferences, or be declared to have cast off reason as a mean of judging of things sacred. Next, you make the brethren, Acts xxi. 17. to be the same thing with the elders, ver. 18.; for still where brethren and elders are distinctly mentioned, you must have the word *brethren* to signify *elders*. Your reason for this is, that the private Christians were stumbled at Paul; and, in order to appease them, he was advised to purify himself: and it is not easy to believe, that it was these that received him gladly. But was it not easy for you from the text and context, ver. 19. to believe that his first meeting with the elders was after the brethren had received him gladly? And was there any difficulty in believing, that Paul visited his peculiar friends and acquaintances among the members of the church so soon as he came to the city, or they him, before he went into James and the elders; and that these were not all the multitude whom it behoved

hoved to come together; when they should hear that he was come? Further, you might have perceived, that even the elders that received him, and glorified God on account of what he related to them, insinuated to him, that, according to what was reported of him, he had gone a considerable step beyond what they had written and concluded, Acts xv. And they desire him to let it appear to the people, that he himself walked orderly, and kept the law. And here is the issue of your criticism and reasoning on the word *brethren*.

8. Upon the next instance you are found to own, that you can err, so far as not accurately to express a sentence. And, after this condescension, you give the sentence another turn, *i. e.* according to your custom, you put another in the place of it; for you say, "Upon a review of it, it ought to have run thus: yet Judas and Silas were no more members of the church of Jerusalem than prophets at Antioch, though some time members there. The plain force of the argument is, that in Jerusalem was the first Christian church, and from thence extraordinary officers came, or were sent by the apostles, to assist in planting and watering the other churches in the world." But I am not yet able to perceive the accuracy of your new sentence, nor the force of your argument, if it be still intended to prove, that the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem, with that whole church, could not send Judas and Silas to Antioch; and therefore it must have been a synod that sent them. To prove this you alledged before, "That Judas and Silas, though they were of the company that ordained the decrees, were not members of the church of Jerusalem, but prophets at Antioch, and some time members of that church, Acts xiii. 1. 2. 3. and xv. 32. 35. Now, what power, said you, had the elders of Jerusalem to mis-sionate Judas and Silas, when they were not members of that church, but prophets at Antioch, unless they

they had been a part of that synodical meeting? These were your words, and this was your argument. But after you yourself are forced to withdraw the foundation and strength of it, you still think the force of it remains.

In your new sentence, which you would have me to think is more accurately expressed than the former, you acknowledge, that Judas and Silas were some time members of the church of Jerusalem; and in that which you call the force of your argument, you acknowledge, that from the first Christian church in Jerusalem extraordinary officers came, or were sent by the apostles, to assist in planting and watering other churches: and I am sure you do not read of Judas and Silas, some time members there, their coming from thence, or being sent by the apostles, to any other church, till Acts xv.

But the force of your argument is, "That when Judas and Silas became extraordinary officers, they were no more members of the church in Jerusalem; and so could not be sent from thence by the apostles and the elders, with the brethren of that church." Yet if I should tell you, that, at this rate, there were no ordinary officers, having any fixed relation to any church, or members of any particular church in your synod, but the elders of the church in Jerusalem that received Paul and Barnabas when he came there; you would readily answer me, according to your scheme and way of arguing on Acts xv. That they all acted there as elders related to the particular churches from which they were sent, and that were represented by them in the synod. And when you use to take it so ill, that any should speak of extraordinary officers acting as such in that assembly, Acts xv. you ought yourself to beware of considering extraordinary officers as such in that passage, and of betaking yourself to that shift, which you would have us believe is but a pitiful one when used by your adversaries. According to the notion I have of the
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synod you plead for in Acts xv. it had as little power to commissionate extraordinary officers as such, as you can pretend the particular church in Jerusalem had. And I desire you, if you will maintain your scheme, to keep by it, and speak consistently with it; which I humbly conceive will recommend it more than this your way. Now, though men endued with extraordinary gifts, might perhaps use a greater liberty in going from one church to another, where there was more need and use for the exercise of their gift, as Silas chose to remain at Antioch; yet did they not act their part as members of that particular church where they resided ordinarily, as Paul and Barnabas at Antioch? And had not that church power to send them, as the teachers as well as prophets in the church at Antioch sent away Paul and Barnabas, Acts xiii.; and if the church in Antioch had power to commissionate Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, had not the church in Jerusalem as much power to send Judas and Silas members there unto Antioch? And if the extraordinary gift made them no members, and so not capable to be sent, was not the case the same with Paul and Barnabas at Antioch?

Because prophesying, with you, does not make a person an officer, but being called a prophet, and because that extraordinary gift, when bestowed, made a man, according to you, no more a member of the particular church where he was before; let me inquire, for my own satisfaction, if these prophets that prophesied by revelation, 1 Cor. xiv. 29. 30. 31. 32. were then members of that church; and if they were all church-officers and elders in that church while they prophesied in it? the reason of my question is, that I find none debarred from the exercise of that gift in that church and its assemblies, but women; and though the members did not all prophesy, as they did not all speak with tongues; yet the Apostle says, *He would they all spake with tongues, but rather that they prophesied,* ver. 5. and 31. And I am not
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ready to think, that he would have the whole church to be elders. Till I be some way cleared as to this, I can never be satisfied, that it can be inferred from Judas and Silas their being endued with the gift of prophecy in the church at Jerufalem, and so called *prophets*, that they were elders. As it cannot be denied, that there were elders in the first churches that had the gift of prophecy, and so were prophets; so it would not be easy to prove, that brethren that were no elders had not that gift, and that they that had that gift in any measure could not be called prophets. Whether Judas and Silas were of the one sort or the other, it alters not the case to me, so as either way to do the least service to your cause or your argument. For if you will affirm they were elders, from the word *ἡγούμενοι* applied to them, Acts xv. 22. compared with Heb. xiii. 7. 17. then you can no more infer, that the brethren among whom they were *ἡγούμενοι* were also *ἡγούμενοι* than you can infer from 1 Pet. v. that the people, among whom were these elders, were also elders. Thus I have attended to you in your critical lucubrations, serving to support your scheme of a synod on Acts xv. For as to what you say, according to your distinction of *at* and *of*, upon Acts xvi. 2. 4. and Acts xv. 2. I have told you enough before.

And so I come, in the last place, on this head, to see if you come off any better with your criticisms on the import of the word *church*. And here I wanted you should prove to me, that the disciples of Christ throughout the world are any otherwise called the church, but in so far as, in the judgement of charity, they may be reckoned to be of the *general assembly and church of the first-born*. But all the proof I find is in the positions you are pleased to lay down, after my thesis, touching the distinction betwixt the invisible and the visible church: from which positions you infer, in the close, that when Christ gave officers to his church, it was not to her as invisible.

visible, but as visible. I shall take the trouble to go over these positions, because it seems to me you imagine, they contain a confutation of my thesis, and also clear your way to the vindication of the texts you have brought to prove a catholic church visible.

As to what you say, in the first place, of the twofold vocation or calling, the one merely external by the word, the other internal and invisible by the Spirit: If you mean any other call of the Spirit, but his enabling a sinner to comply with the word, and that by means of the word itself, I cannot assent to it. Neither do I see that the distinction here laid down by you is in the two branches of it so comprehensive as it ought to be: for besides that which you call merely external, and the internal, mentioned Rom. viii. 30. I conceive an influence of the word and Spirit upon some, that yet, in the issue, prove reprobates, which goes further than merely external calling; for your merely external calling is unto them that make light of it, and persecute the servants, as well as to them that are gathered together by it, and come as guests to the wedding: and among these again you find some not having the *wedding-garment*, Matth. xxii. 2. to 14.

Next, You tell me, that, agreeable to this twofold call, there is a twofold faith, the one common, which is to be found in the reprobate, Acts viii. 13. Matth. xiii. 20. the other saving, and only in the elect, Tit. i. 1. Gal. v. 6. And if you reckon this faith twofold, in respect of the object or thing believed, as if there were one faith of the external call of the word, and another faith of the internal call of the Spirit, I cannot assent to it. I am for no faith but the faith of the word. But if you mean a faith proceeding from the call of the word, as it is merely external, without any concurring influence of the Spirit upon mens souls, engaging them any way to comply with it, there is no such faith spoken of in the texts you cite for it. The scripture does indeed

indeed speak of *the devils their believing and trembling*; but the difference between that common faith and saving faith of the gospel, arises not from your difference betwixt the call merely external and the call internal by the Spirit; but from the difference betwixt the common and saving influence of that same Spirit, by that same gospel, upon the souls of men. And if your distinction betwixt the visible and invisible church stand upon this twofold faith, then the objects of the gospel-call that come not the length even of the common faith, which may be found in the reprobate, are not members of the visible church.

Then you speak of a twofold sanctity or holiness, the one external and federal, Ezra ix. 2. Rom. xi. 16. 1. Cor. vii. 4. the other internal and absolute, which is only to be found in the regenerate, Psal. xciii. 5. And I own there is a twofold holiness, typical, as that of the whole nation of Israel, and real or true, as that of the heavenly nation, or kingdom of heaven, the antitype of that earthly nation; but both these are federal. Again, there is a real holiness, as there is a real covenant-relation betwixt God and all the true children of the kingdom of heaven, that are *born from above*, and upon whose hearts he writes his law. And there is an apparent holiness, as there is an apparent covenant-relation betwixt God and all them whom he calls us to look upon as children of the kingdom of heaven, and points out to us in his word as objects of brotherly love; and this is the appearance of the real, as it can appear to us in the world, and both these are to me intended Psal. xciii. 5. But how you come to call the external only federal, I cannot understand.

Further, you tell me, "That, answerable to these, there is a two-fold communion allowed to such as are within the bond of the covenant, the one merely in its external privileges, and the other in those which are saving also." If you mean a communion in the death and resurrection of Christ, and the appearance
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of that, as in baptism, which belongs to every visible member of the true mystical catholic body of Christ, and to none else; a communion in the body and blood of Christ, and a communion in that bread and cup which it shews forth; a communion in the one faith, or in that word whereby we are united to Christ, as it is believed in the heart, and a communion in it as it is confessed with the mouth; a communion in the Spirit of Christ, as he is the worker of faith in the heart, and a communion in that Spirit as he is the author and worker of gifts, and enables us to make the scriptural confession of that faith. I say, if this be your meaning, you say well; but these two communions have a very near relation to one another. And while any person has a right, according to Christ's law, to that which you call a communion merely in external privileges, neither you nor I have any ground to think otherwise of that person, but that he has communion in those privileges which you call saving; for when their profession in the event proves false to us, then as to us they have no right to the external communion. You say, "That these that have a right to the external communion, are some way said to be ingrafted into Christ, though they do not abide in him, nor bring forth fruit, John xv. 2. 6." But if they be some way said to be in Christ himself, according to that scripture, and Rom. x. 7. 8. John iv. 15. &c. may they not in that same way be said to be in that catholic mystical church, which is his body? And as these who are thus in Christ are said to be taken away, so we are told, that Christ, at his coming, will gather out of his kingdom *all things that offend, and them which do iniquity*: These, therefore, were in that his kingdom, which still stands after they are gathered out of it, that is, the holy heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ; and they are taken out of it as the fruitless branches in Christ are taken away from him, and as the man, among the guests at the wedding, wanting the wedding-garment,

ment, is taken away from among the guests, and from the wedding. Thus, this one text brought by yourself, serves at once to establish my thesis, and to overthrow your arguings for a catholic visible church, drawn from these scriptures that speak of persons being in the church and kingdom of Christ, who yet are not elect, and believe not with that true and lively faith that worketh by unfeigned love.

9. Lastly, You lay down this position, "That from all these considerations, there ariseth also a two-fold face, or form of the church of Christ here on earth, the one visible, which consists in an open profession of the Christian faith, and practice of the duties of worship; the other spiritual, invisible, and mystical, which owes its original to election, and is consummate in a lively faith, which worketh by love." What you mean by the spiritual, invisible, and mystical face or form of the church of Christ here on earth, I confess I do not understand; But not to insist on the words wherein you express the distinction; I shall tell you how far I own a distinction on this subject, according to what I have before laid down. There is one holy catholic church made up of all them in heaven and on the earth that are born of the Spirit; and this church is not itself to be seen till Christ appear: yet of this church every one in the earth that is, according to the law of Christ, an object of the Christian brotherly love, is a visible member, and is, to us, in that church by the law of Christ, and, as such, has a right to baptism, wherein we are all baptised into that one body; but many that are such, prove, in the issue, to have been no real members of that body, though they were visible members of it. There is also a church, consisting of visible members of the heavenly church, visibly joined together in the profession of the Christian faith, hope, and charity, and assembling together in one place to partake of the Lord's supper, and to observe all Christ's institutions continuing stedfastly together in them;

them; and in every such visible church, the mystical church is shewed forth and represented to us; but, besides this, I do not know of any visible face or form of a church upon the earth.

You tell me that your distinction is pointed out to us by the Apostle, John ii. 19. *They went out from us, but were not of us. They went out from us*, that is, say you, from the visible assembly of those who professed Christianity. But they were of the professors of Christianity; and the Apostle says, *they went out from us* of whom they were not, but appeared to be; and their going out manifested them not to be of *us*, of whom, if they had been really as they once appeared, they would no doubt have continued with *us*. So that the *us* from whom they went, are the very same with the *us* of whom they were not; that is, by your own acknowledgment, the society of the elect that are effectually called. And they went out from them, by going from that whereby they appeared to be of them, *i. e.* the right gospel-profession, and when they were gone, the Apostle reckoned all them that held fast the gospel-profession to be of that society, of which whosoever really is, they will continue. Wherefore this scripture, if you will consider it a little more narrowly, is indeed a great support to my thesis, and answers to the positions as I have laid them down; but not to yours, nor to your catholic visible church.

In the conclusion of your positions, you own what you seemed before to impugn, *viz.* "That it is agreeable to the nature of this secret state of man, which is only certainly known to God, to discover itself so far as to give a credible ground of charity." But you add, "yet not so as if it could be discovered in all by positive determination to be really different from its counterfeits." And upon this I would ask you, when you come to have that credible ground of charity, are you not bound to exercise that *charity that thinketh no evil*? And who gave you power to go

about to judge in a matter wherein God alone can judge, *i. e.* to discover it in any to be really different from its counterfeits? And seeing this neither can nor ought to be done by you, are not you charitably to judge it to be real and not counterfeit, while you have the credible ground of charity? Are not you therefore bound to look upon every one in whom this credible ground of charity is found, as a member of the general assembly and church of the first-born, and act toward him accordingly, as did the apostles?

But after all, how flows this inference of yours from your positions? "Thus when Christ gave officers to his church, it was not to her as invisible, but as visible." Your next missive, if you condescend to continue the correspondence, must satisfy us as to that.

Having laid down these things, you come next to the vindication of the texts attacked by me, as not importing a visible but an invisible church. But all that I say is, that they do not import a catholic visible church distinct from the holy catholic mystical church, and from the visible churches of the saints, in every one of which that invisible catholic body is shewed forth: And till you prove, that these texts can neither be understood of the one or the other of these, nor both, you cannot find your catholic visible church in them.

You begin with the first, which is, 1 Cor. i. 2. connected with 1 Cor. xii. 28. and passing, for your own ease, what I say on that connection, under the notion of angry words and invectives, you contend, that it is your political catholic body that is meant, 1 Cor. xii. and not the invisible or mystical body. And you say several things in the proof of this. It is evident, say you, in that there were apostles, prophets, and teachers, set in this church, that it is not meant of the invisible or mystical body. This was said before and answered; and the mere repetition of it cannot take off the answers. But you think
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you add, when you alledge, that the mystical body is not political, *i. e.* as I take it, it has not the gifts of apostles, prophets, teachers, set in it, and is not this a mighty addition? That it is your catholic body political that is meant, you seem to prove thus: for, say you, Christ is the head by his special guidance and means, and the dispensation of his ordinances no less than mystical by his spiritual influences. By which it seems you reckon Christ is not the head of the mystical church, or the church of the first-born by his special guidance and means, and the dispensation of ordinances, and that he is not the head of any visible church, but only of the mystical, by his spiritual influences. Or if this be not what you are saying, let any man declare to me what you are saying to the purpose.

When you have repeated your assertion, contrary to plain scriptures brought to you in the Observations, that apostles, prophets, and teachers are not set in the mystical body of Christ; you tell me, for the same reason it is not the single church of Corinth that is meant. For what reason was not that church a political church, as you speak? And were not these officers set in it as they were also before in the first visible gospel church in Jerusalem? Yea, has not every such church, to the end of the world, the apostles and prophets, that has the New Testament, as the church of the Jews in the time of our Lord, had Moses and the prophets? and has not every such church, by the law of Christ, teachers in it explaining upon the word of the apostles and prophets? You say the apostles which were set in this church were catholic officers, and had not their relation restricted to any particular church, having the whole world for their charge. This was all said and answered before; and still it seems your catholic church and the whole world are one and the same; but when these officers, to whom it seems you reckon it was peculiar not to have a restricted relation to any particular

particular church, are gone; where is their charge? Or who succeeds them in that wherein they were distinguished from the pastors or elders, or bishops of particular churches? But you have another argument on this text, which is, "They themselves were visible messengers, and some of them no more but only visible," and, "that which is invisible cannot, under that notion, have a visible ministry set into it." To this I answer, Is it mainly the men or the offices, the men or the gifts, that are spoke of in that text or context, and said to be set in the church? And had not these offices and gifts a real action upon the invisible body, and invisible as well as visible effects?

As the gifts of apostles, prophets, and evangelists had invisible effects in the first joining together of the invisible or mystical body of Christ, so has the gift of pastors and teachers upon this body in the edifying of it "till all its members come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." For this purpose, these gifts had, and still have an influence on the unbelieving world, which is not the church, to gather men out of it, and bring them to the faith and the confession of it, and so add them both invisibly and visibly to the catholic mystical church; and thus these offices and gifts have both visible and invisible effects. They serve to gather men out of the world into the mystical church, and into the visible churches of the saints where they have an influence upon them, to confirm and stablish them, to make them grow in the "unity of the faith till they come to a perfect man." And before these offices and gifts, which were given unto the catholic mystical church, and for it, had influence upon the world, they were first set in a particular visible church of the saints; and from such churches their influence went out into the world, as I shewed you in the Observations. You next bring me the testimony of Hooker; as to which, I
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have told you something before, which I need not now repeat. And then you conclude what you have to say in vindication of your sense of this text, by telling me again what you think only makes a man a member of the body mystical, and that my judgement of charity can neither add nor pare in that point.

Truly, Sir, I am scarce able to discern what account you make of a person, in your judgement of charity about him; but I may know this, that if my judgement of charity, or yours either, be according to the law and rule of that judgement laid down by Jesus Christ in his word, we account every person a member of Christ and his mystical body of whom we make that judgement; and so he is to us a member of that body by the law of Christ: so that, in doing the deeds of brotherly love to that person, we do them to Christ the head, and to the whole body; and in persecuting any one whom we that cannot search men's hearts, are bound, by Christ's law, to look upon as a member of Christ, we are persecutors of that whole body. Men are not visible members of Christ and of his mystical body, according to your fancy or mine either, and our judgement can neither add nor pare as to his law in that point. It is his law that determines this matter to us, and requires of us accordingly, as we shall be answerable to him in that day, when what you here alledge will not stand for an excuse to us, in not looking upon his visible members, the least of them, as such, and in neglecting the duties of love to them, as to himself. It will be then but a mean shift to say, *When saw we thee, &c.*

On Eph. iii. 10. you give me the same things over again; only you say, the body, ver. 7. and Col. i. 24. is your visible catholic body, because Paul was a minister of it, as I say he was a minister of the invisible head of the mystical body; and because he suffered for it, as I say he *endured all things for the*
elects

elects fakes, 2 Tim. ii. 10.; but perhaps you will alledge, they were invisible sufferings that he endured for the elect's fakes, because they are invisible. But the body, Eph. iii. 7. is the same of which the Apostle had been speaking, Eph. i. 10. 22. 23. and ii. 15. 16. and the body, chap. iv. 11. 12. is no other. So likewise the body whereof Paul calls himself a minister, and for which he suffered, Col. i. 24. 25. is that same of which he had been speaking, ver. 18. 19. 20. And if you thus regard the context, you will see that Paul was a minister of the mystical body; and so you may add these texts to the text I gave you before, Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14.

When you come to 1 Cor. x. 32. you turn the proof upon me, to whom you was proving your catholic visible church from this text; and say, because it is not proven to be the mystical church that is meant, therefore you take it for the body catholic visible. But you cannot make your catholic body visible to me in this text, till you prove, that it can neither be meant of the body mystical, nor of a particular church, nor of both: and this is what you have not yet done. You say the precepts here are negative and indefinite; and from this you infer, that they bind *semper et ad semper*, and must at the same time respect all places and persons. Well, what then? You say further, "In these travelling times, some might give offence in one place, and some in another, and one in many places." And what is the consequence of that? You say, "The whole body was liable to offence, though it was not by one man;" and so the object is set down indefinitely, thereby to comprehend the whole. Thus you think you have manifested, that it is not the mystical body that is meant. But this whole mystical body is liable to offence, either by one man, or many men: for as when one apparent member of it is offended, the body is offended, so likewise when many; and the whole may be offended, even as the invisible

visible head: and whether one man give it offence thus, or as many men, in as many places of the earth as the visible members of it are to be found, still the whole is offended, as I told you. For what I said of one is applicable to as many visible members of that true church as are any where offended, and as many as in all places and all times offend them.

When a man, or as many men as you please, offend a visible church, wherein that mystical body is shewed forth, they remarkably offend the mystical body, even as love to that body is most remarkably manifested in the deeds of love towards the representation of it in such a church. Thus the Corinthians, in offending the church of God in Corinth, whereof they were members, were capable of offending the whole mystical church; and what is said of it is applicable to any other church of the same kind, where Christians happen to be, as I told you. And I am still persuaded, that what is said to the church in Corinth is applicable to every such church to the end of the world. The Apostle speaks of their judging, and of his judging them that were within, in opposition to these without: and as the church in Corinth judged only its own members, so the Apostle is speaking of his judging a member of that church as if he had been present. And it does not appear that the apostles exercised church-discipline but upon church-members, nor that they exercised it any where else but in a church where they happened to be, and acted as elders, 3 John 10. And if they had to do with many churches, it was because they were unto them in place of the New Testament, that every church has now complete. And if in this sense you say the churches are one, because they have one New Testament, as the visible rule of their government, I never reclaimed against this.

But still I am to seek as to the visible catholic body intended in this text. You say it is only the visible church that is capable of offence, and to receive satisfaction.

tisfaction. But was not the visible church in Corinth; and is not any other such church, capable of offence, and of receiving satisfaction? And is not the catholic body mystical every way as capable of offence and satisfaction in its visible members; through whom it is injured in offence and persecution, as you can imagine your visible body to be! You will perhaps tell me, they all receive satisfaction in their representatives, a general or catholic council. Yes, when that assembles and agrees about being offended and satisfied. But the head of the body mystical, and that body is satisfied, when a sinner repents, and observes the law of Christ, the rule of repentance. Yea, there is joy in that part of the church that is least visible to us *over one sinner that repenteth*, or over a returning backslider; and that is now by far the greatest and most considerable part of this church. And you will find the Lord, in speaking of offences among the visible members of this church or kingdom of heaven, some way referring to this, and to the concern that *the innumerable company of angels* that belongs to this heavenly society have in this matter, Matth. xviii. 10. He speaks of the kingdom of heaven into which none can enter *except they be converted, and become as little children*. He speaks of our *receiving or offending any one of these little ones*, (who you say cannot be seen, and so not received or offended, and despised by us), and therein receiving or offending him and their Father, and *the innumerable company of angels*. He calls others besides these whom he would have us to account converted, *and the children of this kingdom, and of his Father, the world*. When he speaks of a visible church, he speaks of it as consisting of these, and these only, whom he would have us to account such children, and therefore our brethren; and when they discover themselves not to be such, in trespassing and not hearing the visible church, whereof they are members, he bids us look upon them as the Jews did on Heathen men and publicans,

publicans, and so not *children of the kingdom of heaven*; and he declares, that what they *bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and what they loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* And after all this, will you yet say, that it is only the visible church that is capable of offence, and to receive satisfaction? And this for the sake of an imagination about a catholic visible church, which I dare say has served as much to the offending of the kingdom of heaven, and the injuring of its little ones, and to the ruin of the visible churches of them, as any thought that ever came in the mind of man?

On Heb. ii. 12. you complain of want of closeness in my arguing, and so put the proof again upon me. But why should I be complained of for want of proof on this head? You affirmed your visible body catholic is in this text, and you did not more. Do you imagine, that every thing that you say and I deny is truth, unless I prove the contrary? Is it enough for you to affirm, and must I prove? I referred to John xvii. 26. because the text speaks of the declaration of the Father's name to Christ's brethren, and not to the world; but you will not explain scripture by scripture, which I took to be the closest way of doing; and you speak of the declaration of his name by Christ to his brethren, and explain it so as to be as much the privilege of all the world as of his brethren, to whom he shews the Father, *and manifests himself so as he does not to the world.* For here again you tell of the declaration of God's name to all the world by the apostles; from which, after your custom, you infer, it could not be a congregation; for still you make the world and your visible church the same. And it seems you imagine, that as many as the apostles preached to were Christ's brethren. You say, "That Psal. xxii. contains a prophecy of the visibility of the catholic church under the New Testament, and so do other Old-Testament scriptures." And I am also of the mind that the true

catholic and mystical body of Christ is declared in the New Testament to be visible, in every way wherein the Old-Testament prophecies foretold it should be so. I have told you once and again, how far I think the New Testament says it is visible. And till you shew me some other church in the New Testament beside the mystical body, and a congregation of its visible members, (except the great whore, and the harlots that are come of her, and also, *commit fornication with the kings of the earth*, also foretold in the Old Testament), I must look upon your understanding the prophecies, to signify a catholic visible church of divine institution, as a private interpretation; and apply the prophecies only as the author of them directs me in the New Testament, where he explains them.

On 1 Tim. iii. 15. which is your last text, you tell me, I take it for granted, that the church is the little habitation of God at Ephesus. But you say, 1. The church here must be visible; and was not that little habitation of God, the church in Ephesus, visible? 2. You say it must be an organised church, because of the directions about bishops and deacons. But was not the visible church in Ephesus an organised church with bishops and deacons? 3. You say, "It was not the church of Ephesus, seeing the epistle was written to Timothy an evangelist, who had not a fixed residence in any particular church," &c. But was not the epistle directed to Timothy then abiding at Ephesus, by the apostle's intreaty and direction, chap. i. ver. 3? And are not these the very words of the Apostle to him, in chap. iii. ver. 14. after he had been giving him directions about bishops and deacons, and in the text, *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God?* What easy work would I have, if you would once learn to consider
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the context, and what light it affords to the understanding of the text! 4. As to what you say in the next place, as I see no argument brought against any thing I have alledged, in the place of your book to which you refer; so the argument has not appeared to me that manifests any church to be meant in this text but the mystical body represented in a particular church. 5. In the last place, you go about to vindicate yourself from something very like a contradiction, and appeal to the candid reader. Will the candid or uncandid reader have the brow to deny, that Paul called the elders of the church in Ephesus, *To take heed to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost made them overseers, to feed the church of God which he purchased with his own blood?* Or can any reader deny that you said, in answer to an argument of mine, This is not the visible, but the invisible church, which can only be said to be purchased with the blood of God, and that you insisted on this at some length?

And now, when your whole arguings for your visible church depend upon this proposition, That officers cannot feed the invisible church, let the candid reader, or any other reader, tell me, what is the sense of your evasion as expressed in these words: "I held the church, in which the elders were set, to be visible, though every thing there be not spoken of it as visible." Will he tell me you mean these elders were set in the visible church in Ephesus, to feed the invisible catholic church? Or will he perceive that you mean that these visible officers were to feed some members of the invisible church, and, in feeding them, feed that church? Or will he perceive easily, that you mean the invisible church was represented or shewed forth in the visible church in Ephesus? I dare say he will not, in a consistency with what you have been saying in the proof of your visible catholic church, if he be at all a reader. Then let him tell me, if he easily perceive it, or even reach it by the

utmost stretch of the most sublimely metaphysical thought, what you mean by the visible church, wherein these elders were set as invisible? or what you mean by the church of Ephesus as visible, and as invisible? And this is the end of your efforts to make your catholic visible church, and not the invisible, nor any particular visible church, visible to me in these texts. And, after all that we have been saying, if it be visible to any reader, I shall declare him a reader so far beyond me in seeing, that I shall not presume to offer any more on the subject to his view. You tell me, you could give several other texts, or reasons, I know not which, besides; and I wish I could hear them; but I am pretty confident I may pass this as a flourish to the ignorant reader.

You say, you have justly alledged, Eph. iv. and Rom. xii. As to both which I have said as much in the Observations as satisfies me, that it is not in your power to prove your catholic visible church from either or both of them; and that they both intend quite another thing. But, lest a contradiction should arise upon you as to Eph. iv. you tell me, "Though you own still, that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors, were given intentionally to feed the mystical and invisible body of Christ; yet still they were set in the church as visible, under which view of it there is a mixture both of good and bad." But were they given intentionally to feed that which, according to you, they could not feed? Could visible ministers feed that church which is invisible? What then becomes of your argument against their being set in the mystical church? And if they were given to feed it, why may not these gifts be said to be set in it for that purpose? As I have given you several scriptures, by which you may see they were set in the mystical body of Christ; so I think I have made it appear, they were set in the churches or congregations of the saints, where I own there are good and bad, but not visibly good and bad. And you have
not

not yet made any other church visible to me in the New Testament where they could be set.

Upon my enquiring, why are not the children to be reputed members of the mystical body, if one of the parents be to be so reputed? you answer several things; as, 1. It is not our reputation of them that constitutes them members of that body. But if the law of Christ command us to respect them as such, they are such to us, and that by Christ's law, as I have told you before; and you have not found another catholic church whereof to repute them members, but that mystical body of Christ whereinto we are baptised, even as we are baptised into Christ. 2. You say the children of professing parents, whether believers or unbelievers, are to be baptised. If you mean believers or unbelievers, and so members of the mystical church or not, in the sight of God, it is true; but if you mean in the sight of men, according to the law of Christ, it is most false; for they are not professing parents, if they be not believers, and members of the mystical church in the sight of men, according to that law. I know there is a good argument for the baptism of the infant-seed of them whom the New Testament commands us to look upon as the true Israel, drawn from the circumcision of the infant-seed of the typical Israel, or Israel after the flesh, Acts ii. 38. 39. Col. ii. 11. 12.; but not in the way you draw it. For it cannot be proven, that these who are externally in the Christian church, are either externally or internally under that covenant that was made peculiarly with all Israel after the flesh; nor can it be proven, that the children of any parent under the New Testament, come into the world by virtue of such a promise as that by virtue of which the children of Abraham according to the flesh were born. 3. Then you infer, that, because baptism is catholic, therefore the partakers of it have their freedom to that whole corporation or kingdom, and have at least a right to all its external

ternal privileges. But have you manifested that baptism, the sign and seal of our ingrafting into Christ, belongs to any catholic society but the mystical body, or the true church and kingdom of heaven? Or have you made it appear, that we are baptized into any particular church, or that it of itself, without more, gives a right to the privileges of any particular church? Or have you made it your business to confute what I said on this head? Nothing like it that I can see; but you take your principle of a catholic visible organised body for granted, and that this is the body into which we are baptized; and then draw your inferences.

When I desire you may shew me where, but in your own head, all the professors of the name of Christ are united together in the unity of one ecclesiastical government?

You, 1. refer me to a part of your book that by no means shews me where; but shews your fondness, that appears throughout your Review, to have your tedious book more narrowly considered and diligently read, as if there were some mysteries and depths of reason and wisdom in it that we could not fathom at first view.

2. You deny that either you or any Presbyterian asserted, that the church catholic visible, is one external, stated and actual society. I must therefore think that you have not been asserting and endeavouring to prove, that the catholic church visible is one external society, but that it is an internal society or nothing; not that it is a stated society, but an unstated society, or a society that has not the state of a society; nor that it is an actual society, or one actually; but you say, it is sufficient, if it be one habitually. Well then, it is an habitual, but not an actual society; it is habitually one, but never actually one. And till you explain this your distinction, as here applied, I must say, it is the most inconceivable

conceivable society, to be a visible one, that ever I yet heard of.

3. Then you tell me, that "though we cannot actually and at one view, see all the members of the catholic church; yet this will never be a good argument they are invisible." But I was not inquiring about the members of the visible church, according to your way of speaking, or all the visible members of the church, according to mine. My inquiry was; where are they united in the unity of one visible ecclesiastical government? To this you answer, all the visible members are visible. I own what you say, that all the countries in the terraqueous globe, are no less visible than our own country, even as I own that all the visible churches in the world are no less visible than that whereof I am a member; but if all these countries were united any where in the unity of one visible civil government, I would not be in a great strait to tell where. And I see the churches as little dependent on any one visible catholic ecclesiastical government, as I see all the countries of the world depending upon one catholic civil government.

But you say, "I conceive you mean an universal idea or genus which has no other existence but in your own brain." And so you proceed to propose some questions about this universal idea. This is not a proper place for discussing the question, If there be any universal idea? and therefore without troubling myself or you about that, I shall give my answers to your three questions. And, 1. Your catholic visible church can have no officers given to it, but in your brain; because it has no existence without your brain; and a political body, as you say, is something real. 2. I likewise acknowledge, that it has no actual existence, no being in nature without your brain, till you shew me where it is united but there. 3. And, for the same reason, I deny that it has members. There are visible members of the real catholic church; there are also members of these visible churches,

es, in every one of which that catholic church is shewed forth ; but I cannot see that these are parts of a catholic church visible, till I see that they were ever or shall be united in one visible catholic government of divine institution.

Upon my refusing, that the churches scattered through Pontus, Galatia, &c. are expressly called the *flock of God*, and that the elders are conjunctly called to feed or rule that *one flock*; you tell me I ought to have replied to your question, whether this flock was one, because they assembled in one place for public worship? Or on account of their being united under one ecclesiastic government, or their having a right and inherent power so to do? but it was time enough for me to answer this question, when I owned that all the Christians in these parts are called *one flock* by themselves, as the Christians in the city of Ephesus under the oversight of the elders there, are called *the flock*. So I denied the foundation of your question, and gave good reasons from the text and context for my so doing, to which you have answered nothing, but by repeating assertions of that which is to be proven, and which is plainly cross to the very text. For though it be manifest that the exhortation, 1 Pet. v. 12. 13. applies to as many companies of elders or presbyteries as were in these parts, and as many flocks as had these elders among them, and to all the presbyteries and the flocks whereof they are overseers to the end of time; yet though the exhortation be thus far indefinite, as you speak, it is most manifest, that the exhortation is directed to a company of elders as standing related to the flock which is among them, and whereunto they are ensamples; which flock they are exhorted to feed in the full sense of that word. And there is no flock any way spoke of there, but a flock which is among them; nor are they called to oversee any flock there, but the flock which they are to oversee, not as lords, but as ensamples; nor are they exhorted to
feed

feed any flock there, but the flock which they could feed in the full sense of feeding, and where they dispensed the ordinance of the supper, as well as exercised discipline and government; nor is there the least insinuation of any flock fed with discipline and government distinct from the flock which was fed with the word and sacrament.

How then do you propose to make it appear, that all the churches in these parts were one church, and all the presbyteries were one council of elders ruling that one compounded church in matters of general concern? Though you repeat this never so oft, till you find some foundation for it in this or some other text, it signifies nothing. And till you prove that all these flocks or churches are called one flock, though they all had one king, Jesus Christ, and one law that is now written in the New Testament, you say nothing to your purpose. As to what you say of my begging the question about the church in Ephesus; after you have destroyed the argument taken from the large conversion there, which extended to all the little Asia, by saying the flock or church in Ephesus consisted only of these in the city, you can do nothing but beg upon the question. Every presbytery in these provinces, yea and every where else, is as expressly called to feed the flock which is among them, and oversee it as ensamples, as the presbytery of the church in Ephesus is called to feed that flock; but it is not yet proven, that any such flock consists of many flocks. I also denied that the twelve tribes are all designed *church*, James v. 14. and gave my reasons, to which you answer nothing, but criticise upon my manner of denying, and come off with a bare repetition of your poor assertion, and a reflection on me, as using mean shifts, *i. e.* arguments and exceptions, as I take it, which you will not venture to remove.

Then you lay down a scheme about the gospel-ministry, and assert, 1. The relation of the Testament

ministers or elders to Christ as his stewards and ambassadors; but you speak of no relation to the mystical body whereof he is the head. 2. You assert another relation under this, to Christ's universal visible body, 1 Cor. xii. and Eph. iv. But we have seen the weakness of your arguments on these texts to prove any such body of Christ, or any gift of a ministry unto it. And baptism neither respects a single congregation, nor your visible catholic body. Excommunication is out of a particular church, and if it be warrantably done, is ratified in heaven; but there is no visible catholic church yet proven, out of which any person can be excommunicated. 3. You assert, that under this there ariseth another subservient to this, and more particular relation, and that is, their relation to particular congregations, by which you say, they are denominated the elders of such and such *churches*, and not of others. And then you apply this chimerical scheme to the case in hand, by repeating your unproved assertion, That many churches are called *church, flock, assembly, and one lump*. And because the members and elders of one church may be occasionally received by another, and there act as members or elders, you infer I have not answered, but trifled about the churches of Galatia.

I am still ready to acknowledge, that it is the duty of the churches of the saints to hold that communion together, and to do every thing toward one another that is required of them, or that they have any example for in the New Testament, which is all agreeable to their having the same King and Lord, and the same law and rule of worship and government, and the same ordinances appointed for each of them unto the edification of the mystical body of Christ, whereof every member of them is a visible member, and every minister a minister: but beyond the communion of churches pointed out to me in the New Testament, I dare not follow you, nor assent to any such communion and oneness of churches as has already
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ready served to destroy their being, and to bring forth and nurse up the man of sin; and that is the thing you are contending for, without any shadow of ground for it in the New Testament. As to your saying, that I have trifled, instead of answering what you say on the churches of Galatia, I tell you again, that it is easier to speak thus, after your custom, than to be at pains to take my exceptions out of the way. And I am of the mind that I have said more on the churches of Galatia than you durst undertake to answer.

Then you proceed to your next import of the word *church*, which is the pastors and rulers of the visible body of Christ; and you satisfy yourself with saying, that I have not answered what you said on Matth. xviii. and Acts xv. 22. and Acts xviii. 22. and referring the reader to what you have said, giving him liberty to judge for himself. So that I have no more to do here but refer him also to what I have answered, if the bare reading over of these texts be not sufficient to let him see, that the word *church*, in them, cannot signify the elders, as distinguished from the flock. But you put me in mind of another scripture that you brought in the proof of this in another part of your book, and that is, Acts xiv. 27. where you say, by the *church* we must only understand the presbytery of Antioch; because it was only that presbytery that sent them forth, and not the church; and it is not easy to conceive that they should report the success of their embassy to any but those by whom they were sent.

To this I answer, That as Paul and Barnabas made the same report to many others besides these that sent them, that they made to the church in Antioch, Acts xv. 3. 12. so by the church which they gathered together, and to which they rehearsed all that God had done with them, I can understand nothing else but that church wherein that presbytery was that laid hands on them, Acts xiii. 1. But by the same rule,

by which you make the church distinguished from the elders, Acts xv. 22. yet to signify the elders, you may make the church here to signify the presbytery that was in it: and who would be at pains to confute such assertions? And now, Sir, I have mentioned all the scriptures that you have called in to the support of one of the grand foundations of Popery, namely, a church representative; but let me say, that there needs no more but the mentioning of these texts, to shew that the notion of a church representative never took its rise from the use of the word *church* in the New Testament.

But before you leave this head, you tell me you have two things more to propose on Matth. xviii. For I reckon you imagine your main strength lies there. And you begin with declining to shew a warrant in the New Testament for elders their binding and loosing any otherwise but in the presence, and with the consent of the flock. And, as is your custom when it comes to the pinch, you complain of me for giving you a negative to prove. But after the evidence I have brought from the scripture account of the nature of the rule and government of Christian elders, or presidents, leaders, feeders of the flock of God which is among them, not as Lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock, and after what I have pointed out of the practice of the apostles and elders of the apostolic churches, and particularly the practice, Acts xv. 22. to which agrees the practice of the primitive churches as far down as the third century, I must be allowed to say, that the elders of a church are warranted to bind and loose, in the presence and with the consent of the flock which they oversee, and that there is no warrant in the New Testament for their doing it otherwise. Yea, I may put such confidence in you as to reckon, that if you had but had the least shadow of a warrant to produce, you would have produced it, before you had betaken yourself to the shift of making it a negative, and

so refusing to prove it, by a rule of the art of scholastic disputing.

The two things that you propose, and leave to my cooler thoughts, are, “ 1. Tell the *church* is meant of a church of rulers, and consequently it was them the text speaks of, as having the power of binding and loosing, without the least hint of the necessity of the consent of private Christians.” Well, this is the thing in question, and it has been in my thoughts long before now; but neither my coolest nor warmest thoughts can find any ground for it in the text. How is it proven? By two things again. “ 1. If the *church* here meant be not a church only of rulers, then there may be a worshipping assembly or organised church, consisting of no more but two or three; for the promise made ver. 20. is unto that number, which plainly supposes there may be a church of no more in number.” But how does it suppose that? Are the two or three called the *church*, ver. 19. 20? Or is the church, ver. 17. no more but the eminent two or three pointed at ver. 19. and 20.? The church, ver. 17. is a society, whereof the trespassing brother and the offended brother, to whom the Lord's discourse is directed, and the one or two more, are members. And therefore the church, ver. 17. cannot be merely the two or three spoke of, ver. 19. and 20. The promise, ver. 18. is made unto the church, whereof the offended brother is a member. Again, there is a promise particularly made to two or three of them to whom the promise was made ver. 18. and these are the elders, or these that preside in the church, or their leaders and ensamples in this matter. These are not called the *church*, but *two of you*, which is the very least number of which a presbytery of a church can consist; and these two have this promise as well as twenty.

Now, Sir, suppose, as our Lord supposes, there be no more elders to act in this business but two, then tell me what is intended by *you*, of whom he says

says these two are, if it be not the society of which he had been speaking in the foregoing verses, whereof the offended brother, to whom his discourse is directed from the beginning, is a member? Thus I am of opinion, that you shall never be able to prove, that the two or three, whom our Lord makes only a notable part of the church, are called the *church*, Matth. xviii. 17. It is to me manifest, that the whole church, the whole society, whereof two or three are an eminent part, has some part to act in this matter of binding and loosing: for these two or three are plainly two or three of that church to which the offended brother tells the trespass, ver. 17. and of them that *bind or loose on earth*, with a promise of *binding and loosing in heaven* what they *bind and loose on the earth*, ver. 18. The brother that tells the church whereof he is a member the trespass, has plainly a part to act in this matter; and so has the whole brotherhood, according to these words, *If he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as an Heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them, &c.*

Now, as I reckon you will not confine to elders what is said to the offended brother, lest you make this whole discourse to touch only offences and trespasses among elders; so you may see that these to whom he speaks, together with the offended brother, are more than the two or three of them. These two or three, then, are not the whole society that acts in binding and loosing, or the church; but they are those that preside among them, that guide and lead them, not as lords, but ensamples in the business of binding and loosing; and they have a special promise, as they are such a part of the binding and loosing society, or of the church; but they have no promise as separated from that society, and acting
without

without them; or agreeing to ask, touching binding and loosing, and gathering together without them, to that purpose.

By what has been said, you may see the great weakness of your inference; if the *church* be not meant of a church only of rulers, then there may be an organised church, consisting only of two or three: and you may also perceive the falsehood of the alledgeance that supports it, *viz.* That the promise, ver. 20. being made to that number, supposes there may be a church of no more but that number. And from what has been said, you have an easy answer to your second argument, to prove that the church, ver. 17. means a church only of rulers: for you propose a question upon ver. 19. which you do not cite fairly; and the question is, “Now, is the church here meant in the preceding verse, of a congregation of Jesus Christ with its presbytery?” And then you tell me, “If I will not reject these words, they must stand as a demonstration, that *Tell the church* is meant of a church representative. But ver. 19. can never shew that the church, ver. 17. is to be understood only to mean the two, who are the smallest presbytery that can be in a church. This is not the whole church to which the promise was made, ver. 18. but an eminent part of it, even the presidents in it: and the promise made to these two, ver. 19. is not made to them as acting separately from their brethren, the members of the church, so as to bind and loose without them; but as acting their proper part among them, as presidents in the society where this affair is transacted. The promise supposes there are no more but two of that kind in the society of which he had been before speaking: and his words for the encouragement of the smallest presbytery or council of bishops in a church, and therefore also of the greatest, are, *If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them.* Now these two, or as many more elders

elders as can be in a church, are not the whole church, but two of the church: so that, in answer to your question, I can tell you that I find both a congregation of Jesus Christ, *you*, and its presbytery, *two of you*, pointed at ver. 19. And thus, this verse can never demonstrate, that *Tell the church*, ver. 17. is meant of a church-representative, but the contrary. But indeed you say nothing for a church-representative here, till you prove that the two or three are called the *church*, separately from the society where they rule; which, for what I can see, can never be done.

From what has been said, you may also see, how groundless your bold assertion is, "There is nothing here to give the least countenance to the consent or concurrence of a congregation in binding or loosing." You conclude what you say on this head with something like a contradiction to yourself; for you had told in your book, p. 607. 608. That to meet in Christ's name included their concord and agreement in the thing they are to address him for; and that this is pointed out to us in what he immediately lays down, before he gives this encouraging promise to such as assemble in his name, ver. 19. and then you apply all this that is said to two or three, to twenty or thirty, p. 610. 611. 612. But now you tell, where there are a multitude of rulers, the agreement of the plurality must determine the cause, unless we should put it in the power of any one to have a negative over a whole assembly, which is absurd, and contrary to common sense.

It is true you still acknowledge, what cannot be denied, that where there are only two, as is supposed in the text, there cannot be a decision but by their agreement or joint act; and you further acknowledge, there cannot be a decision by two against one, if there be three, as is supposed in the following verse. But is it any way more absurd, and contrary to common sense, that ten should have a negative upon twenty, than one should have a negative over two?

Further,

Further, if the multitude of rulers meet in Christ's name, then it is not contrary to your sense, that is, common sense, that they should proceed by concord and agreement; for that is according to your sense to meet and act in Christ's name. I am sure this text warrants and obliges two or three elders in a church to act in binding and loosing in the way of concord and agreement; and, till you find a warrant for their doing otherwise when they are more in number, you will not be able to say, that they are regulating their actions agreeably to his word, which you own is imported in meeting in his name. But you have not asserted that it is contrary to scripture, that the greatest number of elders should always act in binding and loosing by concord, unless you intend to say, that whatever is contrary to your sense, or differs from the common way of proceeding in decisions in numerous civil courts of the rulers of the nations of the world, is contrary to the rule of the scripture, touching the procedure of elders in the church where they preside. It will not be so easy for you to shew me the absurdity of putting that same thing, and no more, in the power of any one elder over a whole great company of elders, that is put in the power of every other in that company over him and the rest, as I think it will be to shew the absurdity of putting it in the power of any one in an assembly of thirty elders to bind or loose over the belly of fourteen of them.

The second thing that you propose, and leave to my cooler thoughts, would need some explication, before it can come so low as I may have a clear thought about the sense of it. As I can take it, you point some way to that old controversy about the donation of the keys; and so you say that my sense of Matth. xviii. still goes on the supposition, that this text was an institution and donation of the keys to a church of Jesus Christ and its presbytery. In opposition to this, you tell me, it is owned by most,

if not all, that the text supposeth only that the keys were given to particular churches. Excuse me, Sir, if my capacity do not reach your sense or scope here. If the following words explain your meaning, it is not me; for I am incapable to comprehend them. They are as follows: "They were given to the apostles together, and they, being general officers, standing in fixed and stated relation to no particular churches, the keys came to the ministry in particular churches, as parts of the whole organised body; and yet at the same time immediately, and not as if by commission from the catholic church."

Without breaking my head about this mysterious discourse of yours, I shall take the trouble to tell you my judgement about the grant of the power of binding and loosing in discipline; for of that it is that Matth. xviii. speaks, and that is what I reckon you mean by the keys, as far as this text has a relation to them. It is my judgement, that the power of binding and loosing in discipline is not given, nor supposed in this text to be given, to the apostles as such, and as distinguished from the elders or bishops, and the brethren of the churches; and the reason of my judgement is, that, if it were so, there could be no binding or loosing after the apostles are ceased. It is also my judgement, that the power of binding and loosing is not given here, nor supposed to be given to the whole organised body, the catholic visible church, whereof all particular visible churches are parts; and this I say, because, as it is evident this is not the church spoke of Matth. xviii.; so, after what I have before said, I may be allowed to affirm, there is no such church so much as supposed in the New Testament. Further, from what is before said, you may see it is my judgement, that this text does not so much as suppose that any company of elders has power to bind and loose, but as presiding in the church to which the offended brother tells his brother's trespass, after he has neglected to hear the one
or

or two more; neither does the text suppose, that they have any power to bind and loose in dependence on any superior court of elders, but only as depending immediately on Jesus Christ, who ratifies in heaven what is done by a church of his brethren and its presbytery on the earth in his name.

You profess dullness where an answer was expected to my critical argument against a catholic visible church, and a church-representative. And you leave me as much in the dark as before, as to the inference you make from the constitution of the Jewish church to that of the Christian. Only you say, synagogues were of old time, which is no news to me; for I know they took place soon after the return from the Babylonish captivity: but this is no contradiction to what I said, far less a proof of the contrary. I have said enough before of the synagogues and the subordination that was in the Jewish church, and of the equality and inequality of rulers, and I need not here repeat. You own there was not an equality of rulers of old; and therefore this cannot remain when the rest is abolished. You say your argument is not taken from the identity of the thing, but by way of analogy. But what is the analogy between equality and inequality? You still affirm, that the government of the Jewish church was moral as to its essence; and therefore it is your mind, that the Jewish church, as to its essence, was moral; but you refuse to prove it, after your custom, by making it a negative: for to say it is moral, is to say it is not typical, and this is a negative. Now what this moral essence of the government of the Jewish church is, according to you, I know not, if it be not the Presbyterian model, which yet you must own appeared not in the institution of that church. But it seems when every thing else in the constitution of that church is abolished, the Presbyterian model, which was hid before as the essence, is now apparent as the essence of the Jewish church stripped of all its coverings.

verings. And if this be moral, then be pleased only to satisfy me how any other model might as well have been instituted by Christ, as you yourself acknowledge in words that I have before cited?

I have attended upon you with some pains in the foregoing part of your Review, and particularly upon my third observation, where you labour much in the maintenance of your credit as a critic, and do your best in the support of your catholic visible church, and church-representative, and of the arguments you had used for these; and, after all, I must say my observations and this observation are very much confirmed to me by your Review; and the weakness of your cause is still more manifest as to the interest it pretends in the scripture, as I hope it will still be further manifest as you write further upon it. The following part of your Review depends upon what you have been saying in this foregoing part; and, as you are shorter, therefore on the following observations, so, I think, may I be.

On the fourth observation, you labour more in the vindication of your own unguarded expressions than in the proof, the point in question, or in the taking off of my exceptions; and answering my arguments. You say you have given a good reason towards the end of that section that begins, p. 108.; wherefore you could not take the thesis that I laid down in *The explication of the proposition*. But was not that the book you was pretending all along to impugn? And now, when I had, in the Observations, referred you to that Explication, the thesis laid down there, and the arguments that support it, why could you not take that for the thesis to be impugned by you now? And what concern have I with your arguments any further than they touch that? But as far as I could understand, from the whole of that section in your book, that your notion of the profession of Christianity that fits a man for being a member of a visible church differs from mine, I have impugned it;
and

and brought scriptural arguments against it; to which I see no answer, but reproach of my notions of brotherly love, and complaints of flaming speeches, and flights, and ludicrous banter, and methods unbecoming the sobriety of a Christian, &c. But as I spoke the *words of truth and soberness*, so I see they have affected you one of these two ways, that the truth uses to affect the sons of men. And as you have not ventured upon any other kind of answer to my arguments, so I hope you will excuse, if I can make no further return to these words of yours. You propose one question to me upon the thing in question, and to that I shall give you a plain answer; and your question is, "Was the church of Corinth particularly, or any other church, mentioned in the New Testament, where there were so many abominable principles and practices abounding, all saints and faithful ones, or members of the mystical body in the judgement of charity?" My answer is, beside what I have said on this subject in *The explication of the proposition*, to which I refer you, That all the members of the church in Corinth, or any other such church, having come to be so upon the appearance of their faith, love, and hope in Christ Jesus, behoved to be reckoned saints, and faithful in Christ, and members of his body mystical, till such time as the law of Christ, touching offensive principles and practices, warranted and obliged the church to reckon them as Heathen men and Publicans, and the church in Corinth could not lawfully keep them in her communion after that; nor was it then lawful for any Christian to hold communion with them in any visible church: for that law, if he neglect to hear the church, *Let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a publican*, is obliging upon every single member, as well as upon the whole church.

As to what you had formerly asserted about the members of the visible church as such not having any right from God to partake of the seals of the new covenant;

covenant; after your complaint of my words, which yet were your own, and several fetches to clear yourself, you now advance, "That all the churches in the New Testament have an express law requiring them to partake of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, and binding them at the same time to do it in faith." Thus you have now acknowledged, that the members of every visible church have a right from God to partake of that seal of the new covenant. But you speak of a saving title and inward seal of the Spirit which can only be had by faith; whereas before you said the members of the visible church, as such, had not any title, and you seemed to speak of the sacraments. As to what you say of the covenant, within the bond of which all that came out of Egypt were, you will be in a better case to speak with me about it, after you have considered and attempted to answer my book on the kingdom of Christ: for I will not be always repeating what stands there unanswered touching the difference betwixt the covenant at Sinai and the new covenant.

As to a minister's preaching as a minister to none but the church whereof he is pastor, you cite the Independents; and when I say that the pastor of a church bears Christ's commission to preach the gospel to every creature, you repeat your ordinary cant about a catholic church visible, and the identity of that with all creatures under heaven, and propose a deal of questions to me upon the supposition of your own scheme about a catholic visible church, as in order of nature before particular churches, which yet sometimes you make the parts of which that whole is made up. But as I have shewed that no such catholic church appears in the New Testament, so now I give you these things for an answer to all your questions.

1. Every man that has the commission recorded, Matth. xxviii. is the minister of Christ, the head of the mystical body, and of that catholic body which is his church, and not of any catholic church visible.
And

And there is no other catholic church but this so much as supposed to be constituted in the ministerial commission.

2. For the edifying of this catholic body, already formed by the ministry of the apostles, Christ's ministers, the ministers of his mystical body, are set in churches as pastors, elders, or bishops of these churches; and that by his laws so appointing. And as pastors of these churches, which are subservient every one of them to the mystical body, they are to preach the gospel to them that are without, or the world, to gather them men out of it into the mystical, and then labour to confirm them in it, by gathering them into a visible church after they are baptised, and teaching them there to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded.

3. As the ministerial commission was granted in the first congregational church, as I shewed in the Observations, and proceeded out of it in its execution, so the most proper way for the execution of it is by the pastors of such churches; and every other way is irregular, that is, not according to the rule of the word. Apollos acted regularly, when, upon his being qualified to execute that commission in a place where there was no church yet erected, he went forthwith to the church at Corinth in Achaia, and did not stay to exercise his ministry, or fulfil his commission among his disciples, according to John Baptist's ministry that were there, Acts xviii. towards the close, and chap. xix. from the beginning.

4. I do not perfectly understand what you intend by what you say about investiture, if you be not some way seeking to establish the uninterrupted succession; as to which I refer you to the author of the *Original constitution of the Christian church*, p. 616. & 617. And I am ready to maintain, that it is in the power of the disciples of Christ, at any time, or in any place of the world where they are, to assemble together, and chuse their pastors; who, if they be qualified

lified by Jesus Christ with ability to teach and exhort, and answer the characters laid down in his law, bear his commission as truly as any pastors in the first Christian churches; yea, I will acknowledge, that every man that is qualified by Christ, and accepted by his disciples, hearing his voice, though they be not yet gathered together in a church, bears his commission; and without this, all the investiture in the world will not invest any man with that commission. And if you mean by investiture, the imposition of hands, there is no other Presbytery that can do that but the presbytery of a congregational church; and they have this power as well as the power of binding and loosing, as they are independent of any superior church power, and depend immediately on Jesus Christ, the head of the catholic body mystical, who has all power in heaven and earth.

Further, it belongs properly to a congregation or church of the saints, as the society wherein the true catholic church is represented, and as instituted by Christ for holding up and spreading the light of his gospel in the world as a golden candlestick, in a subserviency to the mystical body, to set apart pastors and teachers for the edifying of that body, and when they are placed in such a church, they are a light set on a candlestick, that it may shine to all about. But as they are indeed to be pitied, who pretend to be ministers, and have no other evidence for it to their own consciences, or the consciences of others, but that hands were laid on them by a diocesan bishop, or by a classical presbytery, and thereupon, by the custom of the country, they were called ministers, and enjoyed benefices accordingly; so your questions about investiture, and the commission to preach, put me in mind of an ancient question, *Who gave thee this authority?* That has been put by the Roman church to them of the reformation, especially the first of them; and when you answer me distinctly, who made the investiture of Christ's
Commission

Commission to them? I think you will furnish answers to your own questions to me. Whereas I had told you, that by your own argument against the Independents, you can preach only as private persons, to the rest of the world, that are not members of the catholic church visible, seeing you do not pretend to be pastors to more than that church. You, 1. Repeat your assertion, that ministers are officers of the catholic visible church; for which, as I have shewed, you have no countenance from i Cor. xiii. 28. nor from any other scripture. But what is this to the purpose? you tell me, 2. The same commission by which the catholic church visible is constitute, gives ministers an authoritative power to preach to Heathens, in order to bring them in to the church, that they may receive the stated and orderly dispensation of ordinances, as well as it makes them the ministers of that church when gathered.

But where is that commission by which the catholic church visible is constitute? This will be as hard for you to shew, as where that church is united in the unity of one ecclesiastic government? And does that commission make you a pastor to Heathens before they be brought in to that church by preaching? If not, do you preach to them as a pastor or a private person? I reckon this is the pith of your mighty argument against the Independents. You say you have an authoritative power to preach to them: And so has every pastor of a church of the saints an authoritative power, as the minister of Christ, the head of his body the true church, and the head over all things to it, to preach the gospel to every creature; and this power he has from him that constituted the general assembly and church of the first-born, and instituted every church of the saints, to shew it forth, and to serve to the edification of it till it be perfected; but never instituted a catholic visible organised church, nor appointed any officers for it.

Your proving that Eph. iv. 11. 12. is meant of the

invisible church, is still inconsistent, as I said, with your bringing that text as a proof for the ministry's being given to the catholic visible church: for you cannot prove that the catholic visible is meant there, till you manifest that it cannot be understood of the invisible, as you do on other texts you bring to this purpose. Neither do you reconcile what you say of them that are baptised, having a sealed right to all the external privileges belonging to the covenant whereof baptism is the seal, and of this continuing till it be forfeited by some deed or action of the person, either with what you said, p. 111. of your book, which you have now unsaid, or with what you say, p. 118. where you require, in the baptised, as needful to the end of their being admitted members of the visible church, that they make a serious profession of subjection to the ordinances of Christ.

You forbear to prove a supposition, which was the foundation upon which an argument of yours leaned, and excuse yourself from proving it, by denying it was your words; but take away that supposition, and then let your own judgement direct you where the strength of your argument lies. And I took very good care to touch upon the question, how the preaching of the pastors of churches of the saints, for the conviction and conversion even of hypocrites consists with their judgement of charity of every church-member; when I denied the supposition, and pointed you to your own distinction, p. 147. and to Paul's calling them to be reconciled to God, whom he yet declares to be saints. And now I further tell you, that the pastor of such a church may preach the same way to his church-members, as you may do to that part of the catholic church which you admit to the Lord's supper, supposing them to be converted already.

I must say, you have a strange medley of principles about church membership and communion. For you affirm, "that all the churches in the New-
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Testament have an express law requiring them to partake of the Lord's supper," as was before noticed. Again you affirm, "I could be very clear to admit a Heathen to be a member of the visible church, on his moral and seemingly serious profession of the gospel; though, at the same time, I could not determine myself he was to be esteemed a member of the mystical body." Then you affirm, "Thus, as the Lord's supper is not a formal mean of conversion, but of farther growth and nourishment to those that are already converted, so these who give no discoveries of their belief in Christ, are not to be admitted to partake of that ordinance, lest they profane the holy things of God, and the minister be accessory thereto: but in the admission of members to the visible church, this cannot be said, this being the necessary and ordinarily possible mean of conversion."

I required scripture-proof for the sentence of suspension from the Lord's supper. In answer to this, 1. You desire me to shew you express scripture for my asserting this proposition, viz. The apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem. Instead of scripture-proof, you tell me express scripture, and for a proposition asserted by me, you produce some part of a proposition, which is no assertion. But to satisfy you in the way you satisfy me sometimes, the author of the *Original constitution of the Christian church* has these words, p. 291. "from the presbyterial church of Jerusalem, the apostles, and presbyters." And to warrant him in this way of speaking, he brings Acts xv. 6.; and I add to him for a warrant of what you call my assertion, which is not in all respects the same with his, Acts xv. 2. 4. 22. xvi. 2. 3. 4. Give such scripture-proof for suspension from the Lord's supper, and I'll embrace it. 2. You bring me the judgement of Independents in New England; and you signify I cannot refuse their authority, unless I reject them as brethren, as well as the Presby-
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terian divines; whereby it seems to me you think I should reject every man as my brother, from whose judgement I differ in any thing. And when you set up human authority in this dress, it looks very awful; yet it does not fright me, even in this shape, when it stands in the place of scripture-proof. You tell me of scriptures they cite; but it is not the scriptures, but their authority in their judgement upon them, that you would have to weigh with me. As to Matth. xviii. it speaks not of suspension, but excommunication; and it informs my judgement against suspension. Tit. iii. 10. agrees with Matth. xviii. and speaks of no censure but admonition and excommunication. Matth. v. 23. 24. Luke xvii. 3. 4. speak not of any church-censure, but of private grudges and offences to be privately removed; or if they cannot be that way removed, then Matth. xviii. takes place: And so I remain unsatisfied about this suspension, by means of which it is, that you hold "flagitious and lewd hearers, and those who are openly flagitious, and evidence themselves unbelievers," to be members of the visible church.

You note down some texts to support the distinction between these suspended members, or the members whom you admit not to the Lord's supper, and these members whom you admit to that ordinance; but for brevity's sake you have not told me how they support it. The first is Matth. vii. 6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.* By this it seems to me that you hold them members of the visible church whom you will not admit to the supper, because you can call them "dogs and swine, that would trample holy things under their feet, and turn again and rent you." And hereby it appears to me, that you would exclude the ordinance of excommunication, which is very clear in the scriptures, and set it aside altogether by this suspension: for if you keep in them whom
you

you can call *dogs and swine*, I see not whom you are to cast out. But is not church-membership a holy thing; and do not you call the members of the visible church federally holy? How then comes this holy thing, this privilege, to be given to these *dogs and swine*? And how much more do I injure them, that call them the *world*, in distinction from the *church*, and preach the gospel to them to bring them into the church, than you, that can call them *dogs and swine*, and yet members of the church, that they may hear the gospel? Your next text is, 2 Thess. iii. 6. 14. 15. of which I have given an account in my Remarks on the memorial of the synod of Angus, where I shewed that it can neither be understood of suspension nor excommunication, and to that I refer you. Your last is 1 Cor. xi. 27. to the end. But that text speaks of the evil and danger of unworthy communicating in church-members, that usually came together to eat the Lord's supper; and the remedies against this are proposed to them. *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat. And my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another; and if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation.* And is there the least shadow of suspension in all this, or any thing like some church-members laid by from the Lord's supper while the rest were partaking? Or, is not this very scripture an evidence to the contrary?

On the 5th Observation, you have plainly shifted the proof of that supposition, upon which the whole of your scheme stands; and I hope you now find where you are pinched on this head, and that your argument for a plurality of congregations or churches, in the church that was in Jerusalem, cannot be made out, without the proof of a plurality of negatives, which you will not undertake to prove; and you complain of my indiscretion in calling for the probation of them. Where you do not say that the thing to be proven is negative, there I have as little
proof

proof from you as where you complain of a negative; and you do not give answer to any thing of argument against your supposition that is to be found in this Observation. Only you insinuate, that Peter's sermon, Acts ii. was delivered by him to that multitude in different languages; and this is another prop to your supposition. You have also tried your critical skill, for my diversion, on the word *myriads*, Luke xii. 1. But the best of it is, you complain of my shifting scripture-proof as to what I say of churches throughout Judea and Galilee, and rebuke me for disregard to scripture history; and for my conviction you cite Acts viii. where you say the Holy Ghost has been express as to this point. But what is the point that he is so express upon there? Is he express upon this point, That there were no churches throughout all Judea and Galilee, but that in Jerusalem before the dispersion? I have looked through that chapter, because of your confidence, imagining that though I had read that chapter, as well as the whole book of the Acts, with some attention before, there might still be something in it to which I had not adverted. But as I see not a word of Galilee there, so except I should say, that because the church in Jerusalem was scattered throughout the regions of Judea, it was impossible there could be other churches, beside that in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Galilee, before the dispersion, I cannot perceive how this proposition of mine is any way disagreeable to that part of the sacred history. "Though churches be not mentioned throughout Judea and Galilee till after the dispersion; yet, when we come to speak of impossibilities, it will be hard to prove it impossible, that there were churches throughout Judea and Galilee before." And this is the sample that you say you have of my candour among other instances. But lest you begot an impression on mens minds, that where you have least foundation, there you are most confident, and bring the heaviest charges, I humbly advise you to
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use less confidence, at least till you be better acquainted with the scripture-history; and while you are declining proof as upon this Observation, be modest, and beware of supplying the place of an argument by an impotent attack upon the character of your adversary: for this, I think, would tend much to your credit as an author.

After all, since you and I are agreed, that the church in Jerusalem was made up only of the Christians inhabiting that city, or, at most, the suburbs; and since you have not undertaken to deny, that the conversions in Jerusalem before the dispersion, extended farther amongst the Jews that were resorting there, the impossibility of the church in Jerusalem its being one congregation remains still to be made out, as before, from the multiplicity of converts, whether there were churches throughout Judea and Galilee or not before the dispersion. And you have hesitated, and will for ever hesitate, in making it out from this topic. This being the case, I will easily compound with you about churches throughout Judea and Galilee. Be you silent where the scripture-history is silent; let what it says not be nothing to you, and I shall not so much as mention churches throughout Judea and Galilee, beside that in Jerusalem before the dispersion.

On the sixth Observation, you say nothing of the catholic church visible, but slightly repeat some of your former assertions, fully considered already. Your answer to all my arguments and exceptions is to be sought out of these expressions: "I find nothing but poor shifts and carpings, with long stories that come not near the point in debate." Again, "And all your popular harangue comes not near the question." "And your strong assertions and uncharitable charges," and the like. This is indeed the shortest and the easiest way of answering. But as I am not certain that it satisfies your own conscience, so I shall, I hope, never write for the sake of a reader that counts such things

things satisfying answers. You are so much touched with what you call my poor shifts and carpings, and popular harangues, and strong assertions, that you cannot forbear attacking my character, though you seem to have been very scarce of furniture for it from what I said on this subject; as appears from your charge, and the ground of it. Your words are: "You further add, in the excess of your modesty, that you know no visible union of this body,—except you could make one visible pastor and bishop, &c." But how does that excess of my modesty appear in this? It appears; by your remark, in these words, "That visible bishop, you insinuate, has all along been against general councils, as I could evince in several instances, were it needful; and all we plead for is none of his favourite principles." You treat your reader pretty oddly here, when you found this your remark on the cutting off of a considerable part of that sentence by an &c. on which you make this remark: for where you have the &c. my words are, "Or unanimous college of bishops over all the pastors and congregations in the world, and one visible place of worship for the whole body to resort unto."

Now, Sir, if I had made such a concealment, and built upon it as you do here, what would not have been said upon it by you, that make such a noise and a clamour, merely upon my not noting down the pages where the words or opinions are found that I remark upon? Certainly, Sir, you that show such an uncommon zeal for candour, in laying an adversary's mind and words before the world, and rebuke me so sharply for the least shadow of the contrary appearing to yourself, and I believe to no other, should show me a good example, as to this piece of reformation in the practice of writers, lest you bring that to my mind, "But do not according to their works."

On Matth. xviii. you incline to make short work. You have nothing but what has been considered before, except a complaint of concealing pages, to make up
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the want of something better to say, and references to the Independents. And you take off my exceptions, and answer all my arguings on Matth. xviii. by such answers as this: "Thus my reasoning is owned to be good, even by the Independents, as to the subordination of courts; and I find nothing you have advanced against it, save in assertions, without any suitable proof. As for your impertinent questions and wranglings instead of answers, from p. 78. to p. 83. as they do not touch the strength of my argument, so they are signs of a desperate cause: And the very foundation of your cavils and quibbles on Matth. xviii. hath been more than once spoken to in this missive."

And this short way of answering, as it admits of no reply, so it is very agreeable to what you say of your hope, never to engage with such an one as you represent me to be, if you were once at the end of this missive, which it seems you are in haste to be at the end of. You touch a little at what I said about women their expressing their consent or dissent in deeds of discipline: I had left you to choice in this matter, according to your sense of 1 Cor. xiv. And now I find, because they cannot act these parts in the discipline that are a degree of teaching, you are of the mind, that the teachers may proceed without their consent any way signified, to bind and loose, and that they ought not to express their consent or dissent. Then, instead of answering what I said to you, cutting off a great part of it by an &c. you answer some woman's tale, as it is reported by your worthy friend Edwards; and then you tell me, you are wearied with such trifling and stories instead of answers. But these are only reflections on my arguments and manner of writing. My impertinent questions, &c. trouble you so on this part of the Observation, that it could not pass without another reflection on myself. I was before a man with many very silly and very ill things about me; but now it is a que-

tion if I be a rational creature capable of religion; and I am metamorphosed into something very like a brute: for I am "one that has cast off reason as a mean of judging of things sacred." And with that one you are never to engage after you have got to the end of your missive. But, for this good reason, you might have saved yourself the trouble of this missive; while yet, on the other hand, it must be owned, that when I have cast off my own reason, I am still the fitter to be served with your's in the place of it. And if you be to write against none but such adversaries as will not reject your reasonings and inferences from scripture, that to you are good sound reason, but admit them all peaceably; then I think it will be superfluous for you to write more, though it should be never so easy.

On Acts xv. I expected at least you would make some exceptions to my plain scripture-arguments, serving to overthrow the two great suppositions on which all your inferences were built, and to establish the congregational order, as clearly founded in that chapter. Instead of this, you tell me, "You find a long discourse made up of *ifs* and *buts*; and then, after you have told things in that comical dress, you desire me to draw my conclusion from what you have said." And then you complain of this as a way unsuitable to a disputant. But you say I have not attempted to give any answer to your arguments, more than by antisciptural assertions. And you offer to make this appear from an assertion of mine, that you affirm is not clearly founded in scripture; and the assertion is this, as you repeat it, "That it is very clear, that Paul and Barnabas were not members of the synod at Jerusalem, from Acts xv. 22." But my assertion stood in these words. "Now, that Paul and Barnabas were not members of the court that came together to decide this question, and that they were not of that company that ordained the decrees, is to me very clear from these words, ver. 22. *Then pleased*

ed it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren, and wrote letters by them.

After you have set down this assertion, and the ground of it, in your own way, you address me thus: "But where does this clearness appear? Is it because Paul and Barnabas are mentioned as the persons with whom Judas and Silas were to go down to Antioch? This is all I can find." But would you indeed have me to believe, that this is all you can find, or that this is indeed the thing you find, *Obs.* p. 86. 87. 88. to make the assertion clear? As I am clear, this that you say was not to be found, but another thing; so, if you had set down my assertion in my own words, with the words of the text from which I said I was clear to deny, that Paul and Barnabas were of that company that ordained the decrees, your reader would easily have perceived what was the ground of my clearness. But you did not, it seems, think this so fit. And when you are shewing the insufficiency of the ground you would have me to go upon, and coming over the text, why do you shun so much as to mention these words of the text, *Of their own company with?* Well, Sir, this was indeed the easiest way, to put another argument in place of mine, and other words in place of the words of the Holy Ghost, or conceal his words and my argument, and then seek the credit of an answer from such a reader as would be imposed on, by answering to another thing that needed no answer; but the easiest way is not always the safest and surest, nor will it always be found the way to true honour.

To ease yourself of the distress that this, which you call my assertion, puts you in, you say, "You are persuaded I am among the first that ever held this assertion." It seems then this is one of my distinguishing singularities, which you are bound to confute,

as not being confuted in the book to which you refer in your postscript. But it seems, by what you say, that I am not altogether the first; and, if I have Luke before me, it is enough. Then you tell your reader very confidently, hoping, no doubt, he will be so good as to believe you, let Acts xv. insinuate or say what it will to the contrary, "But we have nothing but your word for it, which you force us to believe is not canonical." Far be it that my word should be canonical; but I am clear we have the word of the author of the book of the Acts for it, and I believe his word is canonical. And it looks like as if you would have your word to be canonical with all them from whom you would hide his word, and to whom you give your own in the place of it.

Next, you think you have found me in a contradiction to myself, a real one; whereas your inconsistencies are only imaginary. And no doubt you reckon, that many imaginary inconsistencies will be abundantly counterbalanced by a real one. I did not apprehend that the question betwixt you and me was, which of us is infallible? or, which of our words be canonical? for I thought we were both liable to real inconsistencies. But if this be the very question, I shall freely yield my side of it, and so you may chuse you some other rival than one that has no pretensions to what you are contending about. But if I had no evidence against your infallibility, and your words being canonical, save what you say about this inconsistency, I would be certain that you are fallible, and that your word is not canonical. You say, "Now, I desire you may discover to your admirers, which of these assertions are truest, *viz.* the decrees were ordained by the apostles, &c. before the question and dispute was raised at Antioch; or, whether it behoved the news of that dispute to be notified to the apostles and elders, &c. by Paul and Barnabas, and the commissioners from Antioch, before any decrees about it could be enacted?" Sir, you have a dexterity in rail-
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ing imaginary inconsistencies, and I expect you will shew an equal skill in reconciling a real one." But may I not enquire at my hater, if he be indeed persuaded that the first of these assertions is mine? Or if this be what I am asserting in the words you yourself had cited immediately before your question? "In your speech before the commission," p. 9. "you say, 'These decrees were ordained by the apostles and these elders, with the brethren that were in Jerusalem, before the question and dispute was raised at Antioch, even that company that says, ver. 23. 24.'"

Whatever be amissing in the pointing; yet it is most evident, that, in these words, I am asserting the quite contrary of what you call my assertion, and giving the reason of it. And my assertion is the very same with this. The apostles and these elders, with the brethren, by whom the decrees were ordained, were in Jerusalem before the question and dispute was raised at Antioch. This was my assertion, and the ground of it is pointed out in these words immediately following the assertion, "Even that company that says," ver. 23. 24. "*Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words.—to whom we gave no such commandment.*" This is what they say, and it supports my assertion. But you, by concealing what they say, and taking away the main thing in my proposition by an &c. would have me to be asserting, that the question and dispute issued in the decrees before it was raised. And this was easier than to answer that argument in my speech, proving, that the decrees were ordained by elders gathered into a synod for that purpose out of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, or any other elders, but by the apostles residing in Jerusalem, and the elders of the church there, with the brethren of that church. And so I think I may give you back Augustine's saying, "Restore me my words, and your dreaming imaginations," not only of an inconsistency in
my

my assertions, but also of a synod in Acts xv. "will vanish."

You come next to my speech before the commission to consider it. And you first oppose yourself to that assertion, That the decrees about the keeping of Moses's law were ordained by the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem. I said several things, and adduced several scriptures to vouch this assertion, and that was one of them of which I have been presently speaking: but as it would not answer your purpose to touch it, and give it an answer in its proper place; so indeed you have not answered, nor touched any thing I say, or any scripture I bring to prove it in the speech, but Acts xvi. 4. which I had connected with Acts xv. 22. and you say that text is no proof of it, but declares the contrary in express words. "For," say you, "instead of saying the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem, it says, The apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." Here is our famous criticism upon *at* and *of*, upon which you form a syllogism, whereby you disprove my assertion; and this, with a reference to the Independents and their authority, is all the answer I have to that part of my speech. Only you say, "I desire you may let me see any scripture in the New Testament that will vouch this assertion, either expressly or by lawful consequence.

Because I know by this time you will reckon no consequence lawful that tends toward the congregational way, I shall only lay before you the texts themselves, from which I think I have this assertion; and let it not offend you, that I leave them with your conscience to draw what conclusion from them you can best answer for, but not to men. Acts xv. 2. *They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question.* ver. 4. *And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders.* ver. 6. *And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.*
ver.

ver. 22. *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.* ver. 23. *And wrote letters by them after this manner, The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia.* ver. 24. *Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words;—to whom we gave no such commandment.* Acts xvi. 1. 2. 3. 4. *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra, and behold, a certain disciple was there named Timotheus:—which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.—Him would Paul have to go forth with him.—And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem.* Acts xxi. 20. 18. 25. *And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.—And they—said unto him.—As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, &c. Consider this impartially and in the fear of the author, together with what I have told you touching your criticism on the word *brethren*, and see if there be ground for the confidence you express in your demand.*

But against all this, and all I say in the justification of this assertion, in my speech, your criticism upon *at* and *of*, abundantly exposed already, furnishes you with this syllogism; which, no doubt, is, according to you, a demonstration. “The decrees were ordained” by the company “of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem,” Acts xvi. 4. “But Paul and Barnabas were apostles, and at Jerusalem when the decrees were enacted: therefore Paul and Barnabas were of the company who enacted the decrees.” It does not become me to meddle with the form of this solemn syllogism, when, perhaps, it has gone to St Andrew's, and got an *imprimatur* from some body that has bet-

ter skill in the affair of syllogisms than I can pretend to; though I am far from thinking, that it obtained it by the plurality of the voices of the masters of philosophy there. But I may venture to try if I can form one after the model of it, and so give you another of the same. And here it is: The decrees were ordained by the company of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, to which Paul and Barnabas were sent up, and from which they are distinguished in the enacting of the decrees, Acts xv. 2. 22. Acts xvi. 4.; but Paul and Barnabas were both in some sense apostles, and at Jerusalem when that company enacted the decrees; *ergo*, Paul and Barnabas were of the company which enacted the decrees.

Then, after you have asserted, upon what grounds you know best, that the words of ver. 22. discover, that Paul and Barnabas gave their suffrage, and that ver. 12. clearly intimates they gave their judgement; while yet it intimates nothing but that they narrated matters of fact relating to the question they came to propose to the apostles and elders; you proceed to take some notice of that part of my speech to which I referred you, that you might see that no consequence can be drawn from Acts xv. for the jurisdiction of one church over another; and so you touch at the reason's condescended on in that speech, why the question was sent to the church in Jerusalem, and determined there.

The first of these is, "The false teachers used the authority of the apostles and elders of this church from whence they came out against Paul and Barnabas, ver. 1. 2. 24. 25. 26; and it was the use of such teachers after this to call the apostleship of Paul in question, and represent him unto the churches where they came as differing from the apostles." Here are two things to be considered as the reasons of sending the question to the apostles and elders which were in Jerusalem.

1. That it was a part of the question, Whether
Paul

Paul and Barnabas, in the exercise of their ministry among the Gentiles, and in their opposition to the teachers that came from the apostles and elders to Antioch, were acting contrary to the apostles and elders which were in Jerusalem, and opposing them: and this could not be determined but by these apostles and elders. This is manifest from the epistle of these apostles and elders, wherein they declare that these teachers had no instruction from them to teach what they taught, and condemn their doctrine, and testify their love and regard to Paul and Barnabas and their ministry; and, lest Paul and Barnabas should be suspected at Antioch of making a false report in their own favour, they write, and send Judas and Silas along with them to testify the same things that they wrote. You do not meddle with this.

But there is a second thing to be considered here, and that is, that these teachers came out from the apostles and the elders of the church in Jerusalem, and being received by the church in Antioch as coming from them, troubled them with the doctrine that they pretended to bring from them. This is likewise manifest in the epistle, where it is given as one of the reasons why the apostles and elders, to whom Paul and Barnabas were sent up to Jerusalem, and who received them when they came to Jerusalem, came together, and decided the question; for they say, *Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words.—It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord.*

Against this you differ something: for you say, "But does the text say, that these false teachers came to Antioch from the church of Jerusalem? Nay, does it not expressly declare they came down from Judea, ver. 1.?" Then, because you would have us think, that these two could not consist together, by the same rule by which you would say, if a man came from Holland, he came not from Amsterdam; or if a man came from England, he came not from London, but from every

town of England: You tell me, "Now, according to your own argument, *the certain which went out from us*, ver. 23. 24. must imply, that the elders of the church of Judea were there, seeing these false teachers that came from thence, are said to *come out from us*. If they came from Judea, then the persons from whom they came, there mentioned, must be the elders of these churches, no less than that of Jerusalem, which was but one of them." Here you put me in mind of their way of arguing upon Ignatius's epistles, who would have all Syria to be his diocese, or all the churches in Syria, that one church whereof he was pastor; and the same answer you can make to them, will serve yourself.

But, 1. Does it appear to you that the church in Antioch in Syria knew that the elders of all the churches in Judea were in Jerusalem, when they thought of sending Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to the elders? Or were the elders of all the churches of Judea in Jerusalem ready to receive Paul and Barnabas when they came there, and not they only, but that church of Judea, whereof they were elders, as you speak, Acts xv. 4.?

2. How do you make out this inference, if they came from Judea, then the persons from whom they came, there mentioned, must be the elders of these churches, no less than that of Jerusalem, which was but one of them? Could they not come from Judea to Antioch, without coming out of every church in Judea, or did they not come from Judea to Antioch in coming from one church in Judea, and from the elders of that one of the churches in Judea?

3. But what authority had the elders of all the churches in Judea, or of the church of Judea, as you call it, over the churches in Syria and Cilicia, and over all the churches of the Gentiles? What authority has the church of Holland and its elders over the church of Scotland, according to your own principles? Or, how could the church of Syria send up a question to be decided

decided by the elders of the church of Judea? Thus, when your synod is turned to the elders of the church of Judea, it brings you into the dependency of churches upon one another.

You say further, "And what is more, there is not the least innuendo, ver. 4. that the elders spoke of, were only these of Jerusalem, any more than that the apostles were only the apostles of that church, which is absurd." But there is the greatest innuendo, ver. 2. & 4. that these apostles were residing in Jerusalem in the church there; ver. 33. and that, as you own elders are related to the particular church whereof they are overseers, so these elders were the elders of that same church that received Paul and Barnabas, when they were come to Jerusalem. Ver. 2. *They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.* ver. 4. *And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders.* Thus, as the apostles that ordained the decrees are distinguished from Paul an Apostle, by their residence in Jerusalem, so the elders are distinguished from all other elders by their being in that church which received Paul and Barnabas when they came to Jerusalem, that is, the church in Jerusalem. Next, you tell me, "Nor is there the least insinuation, that the church mentioned in that verse, came together, with the apostles and elders, but the contrary, ver. 6." But does ver. 6. insinuate, that these elders came together, without the church whereof they were presidents, to determine that question? or can it insinuate a contradiction to ver. 22. 23. and 12.; from which it is evident, that, as ver. 6. says they came together, so they came together in the church. And so much for the first reason, and what you have said upon it: for you have not pretended to show, that, notwithstanding this reason, an inference may be drawn from what I say on Acts xv. for the jurisdiction of one church over another.

The second reason in my speech for the sending up of this question to the church in Jerusalem, and the deciding of it there, was, "the word of God came out (1 Cor. xiv. 36.) from this church to Antioch, and to all the world, and from hence they had their church-order, and all the ordinances of Christ, Acts xi. For this was peculiar to Jerusalem, that there the gospel should have a beginning." You cite the page here; but you ease your reader of the trouble of looking to it, by seeming to set down the words, and take care to conceal a considerable part of them, and so speak against what you are pleased to set down. So you say, "But, 1. Was it the worshipping assembly of Jerusalem, pastors and people, that planted the church at Antioch? This wants proof." All that I was here affirming wants no proof, as long as Acts xi. remains; namely that the word of God came out from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch, and that from hence they had their church-order, and all the ordinances of Christ. Neither shall it want proof, that the church in Jerusalem, the first church, where our Lord left his apostles when he ascended, had this pre-eminence above all other churches unto which the word came, that the word of God came first out from it; and that other churches had their order, and the ordinances of Christ from that church, as long as the prophecies, explained by our Lord to that purpose, and his commandment to his apostles before he left the earth, and the book of the Acts, remain.

It was prophesied, Isa. ii. 1.—4. and Micah iv. 1. 2. 3. *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 unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word*

word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. From this prophecy it appears, that from Jerusalem the word of the Lord and his law concerning the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles in one body, which is spoke of Eph. ii. should go forth among the nations, and that this peace should be the fruit of its going forth from thence, and of their receiving it from thence. Here was a question raised at Antioch, by them that pretended to bring the law of the Lord from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, and this question touched this peace very near. And where should they go for the decision of it, but to Jerusalem, from whence it behoved that law to proceed? And when the law on that point, or that part of the law of the Lord came from thence, was not this peace the effect of it? That it behoved the word and law of the Lord to go forth from Jerusalem is evident from our Lord's explication of this prophecy, and such like prophecies in the assembly of his apostles, and them that were with them, *i. e.* the hundred and twenty, the first church, Luke xxiv. 33. 36. 46. 47. *That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48. 49. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Hereby it is evident, that the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ, was, according to his explication of the prophecies, and his appointment, to have its beginning at Jerusalem, and to proceed out of that society wherewith the Lord himself assembled, and from which he was taken up, even the apostles and them that were with them, Luke xxiv. or the hundred and twenty, Acts i. even that society on which the Holy Ghost was first poured down, Acts ii. and to which Peter speaks,
Acts

Acts xv. 7. 8. 9. compare Acts ii. Acts xi. 15. Now, here was a question raised by the teachers that came down from Jerusalem, concerning repentance and remission of sins, ordained to be preached among all nations in the name of Christ: for these teachers pretended to bring this from Jerusalem, as a necessary part of the doctrine of repentance, that the Gentiles should turn to Moses's law, and that there was no remission of sins for them in the name of Jesus without that. And when the believing Gentiles were troubled with this question, Whether this was a part of the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins to be preached to the Gentiles in Christ's name, beginning at Jerusalem? where were they to seek the decision of it but there, where it was the Lord's will, that the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins in his name should begin, and from thence go forth unto all nations? And what society should determine this question, but that society wherein he gave orders about it, and from which he would have that doctrine to proceed, and go forth to the nations?

That this was peculiar to the church in Jerusalem is manifest, in that there is no other church from which our Lord appointed the law, in the first revelation of it, to come out unto all the world; so that unto every other church but that in Jerusalem, the same question may be put that the Apostle puts to the church in Corinth, 1 Cor. xiv. 36. What? came the word of God out from you? But the church that was in Jerusalem had not this pre-eminence, after the law of the Lord to the Gentiles had gone fully forth from it, and after the apostles, by whom the Lord appointed the revelation of his law to be made, had left that church; which seems to have been the case when the epistle to the Hebrews was written, wherein the revelation of the Lord's will to the Jews, with respect to the law of Moses, calling them wholly off from it, is most clear and full. Now, it will be every way as difficult for you to draw an
inference,

inference, shewing the dependence of one church upon another, from the subjection of the first Christians in all nations, unto the church in Jerusalem at that time, in that which was peculiar to that church; as, you will own, it is not easy to infer the subjection of elders to superior officers, after the New-Testament revelation is completed, from the subjection of the elders of the first churches to the apostles, prophets, and evangelists. But you tell me, 2. "What is the inference from thence? Does it thence follow, that Antioch was not a free church, but subject to the determinations of the elders and people in Jerusalem? If the church of Antioch and its presbytery was subject to no jurisdiction under heaven in its discipline, then, contrary to your own principle, one Independent was subject to another."

You may see, by what I have been saying in the explication of this part of my speech, that the consequence of it is, that no inference can be drawn from the sending of this question to the church in Jerusalem at that time, and its being decided there, to shew the jurisdiction of one church over another; and it was your business to shew, that, notwithstanding what was said in my speech, the inference, shewing the subjection of one church to another, was good. But how you come to speak of jurisdiction in discipline here, I cannot understand: for you cannot say, that there was any discipline exercised upon the church in Antioch or its members, by them that sent the epistle to Antioch, unless you also affirm, that in all epistles that the apostles wrote to the churches, they, and these that were with them, in writing these epistles, were exercising discipline upon them. No doubt, the Christian law is the rule of discipline: and there is that same jurisdiction, in the epistle that was sent to Antioch from Jerusalem, as there is in all the other parts of the New-Testament revelation, or in the Christian law, whereof this is a very considerable part. But how you come to imagine, that
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the elders and people of the church in Jerusalem could make this part of the New-Testament revelation, or at first give forth this part of the law of Christ to the Gentiles, without the apostles, I cannot understand.

3. I said in my speech, "The apostles were in this church, and with the elders of this church, where they began their ministry, and settled all matters of importance; and this was an important point to be fixed in this church, while they were in it: therefore we see the church at Antioch had a special eye to the apostles their being in the presbytery of Jerusalem, when they sent up this question to be determined there, ver. 2."

Against this you say, 1. "It must be proven, that the apostles in this matter acted by an extraordinary and immediate influence, as in the penning of the scripture. The contrary of this I made appear; but it is overlooked by you."

But, 1. The contrary will never appear from the discourses of Peter and James, upon this question in the church in Jerusalem, in which discourses they infer one truth from another, and explain Old-Testament prophecies in like manner as is done in all the New-Testament epistles to the churches; unless you will make it good that these epistles were not written under an infallible influence. Nor will it appear from the apostles their agreeing in the writing of this epistle, unless you prove, that when a single apostle wrote an epistle, he was under an extraordinary and immediate influence, but when a company of them agreed, then they were only under an ordinary influence. Nor will it appear, from their taking the concurrence of that church, and its presidents, where they at first received their commission, and from whence it behoved the law of Christ, and this remarkable part of it, to go forth to the Gentiles. And you may as well say, that when the epistle to the Galatians is written in the name of all the brethren that were with Paul,

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in the writing of it he was not under an extraordinary and immediate influence, as an apostle, in that epistle. I must say, that after all I have heard brought to shew; that the apostles were not here under an extraordinary and immediate influence, it appears to me, from the whole; that this very remarkable part of the New-Testament revelation, and about which the first Christians had the greatest difficulty, was given forth by the inspired apostles with the greatest solemnity, from that church from which the law of Christ was to go forth to the Gentiles.

2. As the apostles are distinguished from the elders or presidents of the church in Jerusalem, in the commission from Antioch, and likewise expressly distinguished from them in the decision of the question; and in the epistle; let me inquire, if the apostles did not act in that matter in the capacity of apostles, as distinguished from elders; even as the elders acted in the capacity of elders, as distinguished from apostles and brethren? And if they did so, then did not the apostles act under an extraordinary and immediate influence? Thus when I read of the apostles, and elders; and brethren, acting in this matter, I must understand, that every one of these did the part that was proper to them. The apostles brought forth; and infallibly declared the mind and will of the Lord Christ on this subject; in an agreeableness to the former parts of the New-Testament revelation, already made by them, and in an agreeableness to the prophecies of the Old Testament, which they infallibly explained, under the immediate influence of the same Spirit that indited them, and in opposition to the Judaisers. The presidents of the church in Jerusalem went before the brethren, as ensamples of subjection unto the revelation of the mind and will of the Lord by the apostles, and were their leaders in this matter: And the brethren obeyed and submitted themselves to their presidents and guides, who agreed in judging according to the mind and will of

Christ brought forth by the apostles; and this they did in consenting to the judgement of the elders, according to the revelation made by the apostles. Thus when the whole company was made of one accord, every member acting his proper part, the deed was done, and the epistle was written, in name of the whole.

3. And would you have me to believe, that we Gentiles have no more, in that solemn passage touching the yoke of Moses's law, for our liberty from that yoke, but the canon of an ordinary council, such as may be held to the end of the world? By no means; while it is so manifest, this thing seemed good to the Holy Ghost, in his coming at first upon the uncircumcised Gentiles, as the highest evidence they could receive of their being the peculiar people of God, without the law of Moses, and in the Old-Testament prophecies of which he is author, and which are not of any private interpretation, but must be explained by men inspired by him; and seemed good to the apostles, by whom the New-Testament revelation was made, and this part of it under his infallible conduct; and seemed good to the church in Jerusalem, from whence it behoved this part of the New-Testament revelation especially to go forth to the Gentiles. And while it goes forth from this church, we have in it a copy cast to all the churches for their method of procedure in their affairs, and manner of judging, in any matter wherein they are called to judge; but no pattern for the subjection of one church to another; as is manifest from what is above said.

You tell me, 2. "Will the apostles their being in this church make any man infer, that the church of Antioch, in which there were apostles also, was subject unto the church in Jerusalem?" As to Paul the Apostle his being in the church at Antioch when this question was raised there, if you had considered the first reason I gave in my speech for the sending up of
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the question to Jerufalem, and what I have faid there on that point, you might have faid that clause in your query, about apoftles at Antioch; and I need not here add any thing to what I have above faid in the explication of that reafon. And as to the fubjection of the church of Antioch to Jerufalem, I need not repeat what I have been faying clearly enough already. Yea, I do not infer from Col. iv. 16. that the church of the Laodiceans was fubject to the church of the Coloffians, nor that the church in Colofis was fubject to the church in Laodicea. But was I inferring the fubjection of the churches to one another, from thefe things in my fpeech, or was I fhewing the contrary? And was it not your bufinefs to fhew, that, notwithstanding thefe things, the fubjection of churches to one another might be inferred from my fense of Acts xv.? When you could not do this, as good fay nothing, as nothing to the purpofe.

Then you tell me you are wearied with fuch trifling, and you are refolved to be no more with it; and then you are pleased to fignify, in your own way, what kind of writing mine will be, after you have given over, and warn me of the danger of it. Truly, Sir, the controverfy wherein you have boldly engaged is laborious; and now you may fee it will weary you before you get near the end of it. The caufe you are oppofing is a burdensome caufe, and you do well for yourfelf to let it alone before you proceed further in it. But, notwithstanding your big words, you appear here like a man throwing down his arms, and begging quarter; only, as the proverb is, "You will not lofe your manly look." Yet compaffion is due to you; but there is no fmall danger in giving quarter to your caufe. You warn me of danger in the event: but I know no everlafting danger in cleaving to the word of God, and it can comfort in all temporal affliction. And the only danger that is any way in your power to bring me in, is that which has attended difputers for the truth in all ages, when

their adversaries would dispute no more with them; and with this danger I am bound to lay my account. Only I think I can declare this for your satisfaction, that till I see something of more weight than I have seen in your writings, or in any other writings against the principles for which I contend, and something new advanced by you, or any other, that may give occasion to explain them further, it will be altogether superfluous for me to write further on the subject. And therefore, except you say something to the purpose from the word of God, beyond what you have said, expect no more of my writings to you upon the dispute.

Before you part with me, you offer some exceptions against the scriptural evidence I brought for the consent of the people to the sentences or decisions of elders. As to Acts xv. 22. you do not meddle with it, nor except against the clear evidence I brought from thence, further than to tell me, that I must once answer what you have said about the whole church, before I take it for the private Christians or worshipping assembly; and till then, Cyprian's sentiment is of no weight with you. But I have overthrown all that you said about the whole church, and demonstrated, from the text and context, that the *whole church* must be taken for the worshipping assembly in Jerusalem, and for no other society. Only I do not remember that I adverted to this assertion in your book, Original constitution, p. 389. "Before the apostles left and finally departed from Jerusalem, we find that they, and the elders of that church, assembled together in a judicative capacity, with the commissioners from Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, and very probably from the churches of Asia, and in one body enacted several decrees, for the good and welfare of the several churches concerned therein." I shall not demand express scriptures for your asserting this proposition, *viz.* the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem: nor shall I
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trouble you to reconcile the first part of this your assertion with your criticism on Acts xvi. 4. and your syllogism. But I observe that, by the *whole church*, you here understand the commissioners from Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia; and so Paul and Barnabas, and certain others that came with them from Antioch in Syria, are a part of your *whole church*, there distinguished from the apostles and elders. And, as I have sufficiently demonstrated already, that no commissioners from these parts can be understood by the *whole church*, Acts xv. 22. so you must excuse me, that I did not labour in the confutation of that part of your assertion, That apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem very probably assembled in a judicative capacity with the commissioners from the churches of Asia; because I did not dream of any commissioners coming from these churches that the scripture calls the *churches of Asia*, before these churches had any being.

Although you do not pretend to confute what I have said on Acts xv. 22. for the consent of the people; yet you take notice of some scriptures I noted down as agreeing thereto, and offer some exceptions.

And, 1. as to Acts i. and vi. you tell me, "Consider, and give a plain answer to what I have said on these texts, p. 230. 386. before you take it for granted they are subservient to your purpose." But my purpose on the texts was thus expressed, "They (the apostles) determined all things with the consent of the people," and I brought Acts i. and vi. as very considerable instances to this purpose. Now I look to that page of your book to which you remit me on Acts. i. p. 386. I find you there saying, "That the body of the people there present were consenters I shall not question." And this makes it superfluous for me to labour in exposing the weakness of your criticism on these words of Peter's discourse, *Men, brethren*, which I think will be manifest enough to any that will be at pains to read it. And when I consider your p. 230.
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to which I am referred on Acts vi. I can find nothing there against my purpose, nor in the following page; unless you think your criticism on *πεν το πληθος* sufficiently exposed in my first letter, is against it.

2. As to Acts xi. 1.4. which I cited for this purpose, plainly expressed thus, "And did not disdain to satisfy them as to all their conduct," you are pleased to tell me, "But for what good purpose I know not, if it be not to put me in mind that Peter endeavoured to satisfy the Jews at Jerusalem of the justness of his going unto the Gentiles, which no doubt was his duty." That they were the believing Jews is manifest from ver. 18. and that they had the liberty to require satisfaction from that apostle, even as to that part of his conduct, and that it was doubtless his duty to endeavour to satisfy them, is acknowledged by yourself. And therefore, I hope you that pretend to be no more but an elder, will not reckon your people indiscreet if they treat you after the same manner in your assembly; nor will you question that it is your duty to endeavour to satisfy them of the justness of any such part of your conduct. As to what you speak of a consequence from this, about Judicatures and their jurisdiction, there is no consequence can be drawn from any scripture for the judicatures you intend, nor for their jurisdiction. Next, you tell me, "To support the same thing you set down Matth. xviii, but take care all along to shift any direct answer to what I have said on that text." But as I am not sensible of any care of mine on that head, so I am of the mind, that, by what I have said first and last on that text, I have not left you much to say against the purpose for which I set it down there.

3. As to Acts xi. 22. you grant, that the church which is said to be informed about the success of the gospel at Antioch was the church at Jerusalem; but the consequence which you draw from thence you refuse, *viz.* That they who sent forth Barnabas were the whole members of that church. I had said no

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more upon this text, but that what was done by the apostles was said to be done by the church, because they did it with the church's consent; and as this was modest enough; so it is no way contradicted by what you assert about what you call the authoritative mission, nor by what you alledge from Acts viii. 14. of the apostles sending Peter and John, when the church was all scattered abroad except the apostles. But you tell me," If this text prove any thing, it proves too much, *viz.* That the whole church were equally concerned, and acted the same part in this mission with the apostles; for they are said to send them forth conjunctly, without the least hint of one part's acting authoritatively, and another merely by consent." But the text will not prove, that the whole body acted the same part in this mission with the apostles who were a part of it; for, when such a body as a church is said to do any thing, I must of necessity conceive, that each part acts in the way proper to it; as when I am told the parliament of Britain made a law, I am not to imagine that there was no difference betwixt the King, the Lords, and the Commons, all acting in that matter.

You say further, "In a word, the Apostle indites his epistle to the church of Corinth, when he appoints the excommunication of the incestuous man:" Well, according to your own way of reasoning in other cases; it was to be done by those to whom the epistle was indited. But you tell me, "Yet it was only the deed of the rulers of that church." Thus, it seems, you are of the mind it was only the rulers that were called to mourn, that the incestuous man might be taken away from among them, and it was only among them that this incest was, and not among the people, 1 Cor. v. 1. 2. And the rulers only were that whole lump that was in danger of being leavened with this leaven, and not the whole body that partook of the Lord's supper, ver. 5. 6. 7. 8. And you think, it seems, that the rulers only were not to keep company, nor eat with
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any that was called a brother, and yet a fornicator; or the like; and they only were to judge these within, and put away evil from among them, ver. 11. 12. 13. But how do you prove that this was only the deed of the rulers acting without the consent of the people, or that the apostle is injoining them to do this thing by themselves, without the concurrence of the people? For if you be not saying this, you are saying nothing. All I have in the proof of an assertion so very bold, so cross to the text, is a criticism upon a word in 2 Cor. ii. 6. which our translators have rendered *many*, and you think it should have been translated *chief ones*: for you would have it believed, that, because $\pi\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu$, Matth. iv. 25. and 41. 42. signifies *more or greater*, where it is placed in a comparison as an adverb; therefore $\pi\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\nu\omega\nu$, 2 Cor. ii. 6. denotes the rulers of the church in Corinth. And it seems you are of opinion, that the forgiving and comforting of that person, or loosing him, was only the deed of these "chief ones" that bound him, and these only were to confirm their love towards him, and to give proof of their obedience to Christ, speaking in the Apostle, touching that matter. But I hope you will reconcile this opinion of yours with the text and context, 2 Cor. ii. 5.—10.

Then you signify, that Cyprian's sentiment is of no weight with you, till you understand, that the whole church, Acts xv. 22. is the worshipping assembly; but I think I have said enough to let you see that; and so Cyprian's saying must have some weight with you. You, say he speaks only of his private resolution for his practice; and this purpose and practice will not be an argument that the people had a negative on the presbytery, or that each in the church was to be personally present, and give their assent before any jurisdictional act could be passed. You know best what you mean by this negative, and you make a beautiful diversion from the question, when you speak of each in the church being personally present; but cer-
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tain it is, that Cyprian did nothing of that kind, of which he speaks, without the counsel of the Presbytery and the consent of his people. And I think a more laborious answer to what I have told you from the sacred oracles, together with an answer to what King brings from antiquity, *Inquiry into the constitution, &c. of the primitive church*, chap. vii. and your own Jamison, *Cypr. Isot.* chap. vi. § 5. & 16. toward the close, would have been very becoming, before this very bold assertion of yours: "As this was never the practice of the Christian church, so it is void of all foundation in the sacred oracles." Further, what you mean by concurrence in jurisdictional management, I know not; only I know that Jesus Christ is the only Lawgiver in the church, and his word the only law; but if you mean the concurrence of the people with their elders or bishops in binding and loosing according to his law, then I am of opinion, that every one that considers the things wherein elders rule, and the nature of binding and loosing, will see a flagrant contradiction in this sentence of yours. "I am very far from approving ministers their lording it over God's heritage; but at the same time, I know no right the people have to a joint concurrence in jurisdictional management."

I referred you, in the conclusion of my letter, to what I have written on John xviii. 36. 37. of which you have not been pleased to take any notice. But I find you, in excepting against what I alledged in my speech touching the difference betwixt your parishes and the first churches, advancing some things abundantly confuted in that book, as your notion of kings their being nursing fathers to the church, and of the identity of the covenant with the Jewish nation, and the covenant with the Christian church or kingdom of heaven, p. 5. & 6. of your letter. You also complain of me for want of charity to the commission, in saying, "That the commission will not affirm these parishes and their overseers are of the same kind with the first Christian churches or congregations and their presbyteries."

byteries." And the reason of your charge is, "Thus you must either imagine they were a set of men who subscribe one thing and believed another, than which there can be no more unchristian charge; or else, they did affirm, that these parishes are of the same kind and nature with the first Christian churches." Thus, it seems, they subscribed not the *Formula*, but your sense of it. And if they subscribed it in any other sense than this of yours, they are unto you bad men. But I am not satisfied about your own subscription, if this was it, That the churches planted by the apostles were parishes; for you have affirmed, that the churches and their presbyteries planted by the apostles were not congregations, as parishes are, and the presbytery of an apostolic church was not the presbytery of a parish.

As to what you say of kings being nursing fathers, if Constantine's becoming a nursing father, in your sense of that expression, made not the churches to alter in kind from the apostolic institution, or gave not the clergy an excellent opportunity for it, (for truly he was no way to be blamed as they), then I am mistaken as to the sense of 2 Thess. ii. 7. 8. and I once more desire you may read and confute what I have said on that subject in my book on the kingdom of Christ. You tell me, "It is not a person's living in the local bounds of a parish that constitutes him a member of that congregation." But I am sure this makes him subject, whether he will or not, to your parish-discipline, and he must pay you stipend, if he have a heritage there. And what is it that puts him in that parish, if he be not living in that local bounds? Is it his coming to the kirk under the influence of custom or superstition, or coming to the parish minister to get himself married, or to get a name to his child as neighbour and other does, and as his father did before him, that constitutes him a member of that congregation? I am sure men were not thus constituted members of the apostolic churches. But you tell me what does it, in the lat-

ter end of p. 6. Now, leaving you to explain handsomely what you say about binding their children to do as they do, if you leave all the rest of the parish out of the congregation, but those you there describe, I am sure the congregation will not be parochial, but a church gathered out of the parish, and not joining in the parish-worship. You likewise assert, that the kingdom or nation of Scotland was brought into church-order at first by the preaching of the gospel. And I marvel that no account of this influence of the gospel, far surpassing the influence it had on the people of any nation in the apostles days, has come down to us. I have a strong suspicion, there must have been something of your external cumulative power in the case of bringing the whole nation or kingdom into church-order. And that is not the power that makes the sort of Christians that are hated of all nations, and whose foes are those of their own house; nor the sort of churches, wherein the members stand fast in one mind and one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not terrified by their adversaries. Then you signify, that when a nation is thus brought in, their children are federally holy, as the children of the Jews, though their parents were not to be accounted visible saints. And this I am to imagine, that the posterity of the first Christians in the eastern parts of the world are holy to this day. Neither shall I doubt but they are better people than many in Scotland that have access to know more of Christianity than they have.

Thus, Sir, I have taken some notice of your letter, and given you occasion to reconsider your principles with the cause you are opposing. And I hold what I said in the conclusion of my last letter as here again repeated. But I cannot express the confidence in any performance of mine, nor in this, that you express, while you signify your satisfaction that our epistles are to be read before Christ's tribunal. As to which, I would desire to say something like what

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the Apostle says, 1 Cor. iv. 3. 4. 5. which I beseech you seriously to consider. Things will appear and persons too, in another shape before that tribunal, and we are to stand or fall there only by his word, especially his law of brotherly love to our brother whom we have seen, and there we shall not be run down by the world's cry, nor exalted by the esteem of the multitude, or by the things that procure the reputation of the world. Persons and things, now highly esteemed, will then be in abomination; and persons and things now set at nought, and had in abomination, will then be had in honour. So, wishing you may be helped so to act in this world, as may tend to your honour in that day, I rest,

S I R,

Dundee, Sept. 10.
1731.

Yours, as before,

J O H N G L A S S

END OF VOLUME FIRST.