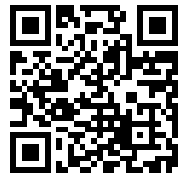

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Church-Communion
ENQUIRED INTO:
OR A
TREATISE
AGAINST
SEPARATION
FROM
This National Church
OF
SCOTLAND.

WHEREIN

- I. Some Truths confessed on all Hands, are held forth, which if Rightly considered would do much to End the present Controversie.
- II. Some Concessions are laid down, for clearing the present Debate.
- III. The Controversie is stated, and Truth vindicated.
- IV. The Objections are solidly and clearly answered.

Which was left in Manuscripts by the Reverend and Worthy Mr. Alexander Shields, Minister of the Gospel at St. Andrews, when he was sent by the Church of Scotland unto Caledonia.

Printed in the Year 1706.



EPISTLE to the Reader; But especially to these who Withdraw from this National Church.

I Think, there are few, who truly Fear God, and Love our Lord Jesus Christ, but they will acknowledge, that Christ hath sowed good Seed in his Church in this Land, since the late Happy Revolution; But it is as true, That the Enemy hath sowed Tares Mat. 13. 25. also, and that while Men Sleep; And the Enemy that hath done this, is waiting his opportunity to do this Poor Church all the Prejudice he can, by assaulting her on Right and Left Hand, while Prelatists, upon the one hand, are pressing Separation from this Church, and venting also Arminian Principles in their Publick Prints; And some on the other hand, who profess themselves Presbyterians, are continuing in a stated Schism from this Church, which yet is the Purest in the World for Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, even those People themselves being Judges. So that the Ministers of Christ have need of Spiritual Wisdom in all things to approve themselves to God, by the Armour of Righteousness, on the Right Hand and on the Left, that the Pernicious Effects of the present Schism, may be prevented so far as is possible. 2 Cor. 6. 4-7.

It will not be unfit to Inquire a little into the Original and Fountain of this present Schism, that it may appear, how this is a gross Abuse of the Faithful Contendings and Wrestlings of a Remnant both of Ministers and People, against Prelacy, Supremacy, and Arbitrary Power from the year 1660, until the late Happy Revolution, Anno 1688, whose Testimony was both against Right and Left Hand Corruptions and Errors, in a way suitable to these Circumstances of the Church.

At the Reintroduction of Prelacy, two third Parts of the then Ministry of this Church Complied with it, contrary to the frequently Renewed Oaths and Covenants, abjuring Prelacy, and the other Corruptions therein specified: And of these who Complied not so far as to receive the Prelates Collation, or to keep their Ecclesiastick Courts, some did Hear these Changelings and Intruders into the Labours of others, who went the whole length of Compliance; Others could not Joyn in Hearing of the Curates: Some again, because they were discharged by that Act (called by the People in these Times, The Drunken Act of Glasgow) to exercise any part of their Ministerial Function, did too tamely comply with the pretended Authority enjoining the same, and abstained from Preaching; Others thought it right to Hearken to God more than to Men, and to Preach as Occasion offered, conform to their Commission received from Christ, tho in the beginning, this was but privately, until the Prelats Tyranny did exceed all Bounds, and forced that Godly Handful to appear in Arms at Pentland-Hills, Anno 1666, for their own Defence, and to endeavour the Recovery of a destroyed Work of Reformation. These different Practices laid the Foundation for what followed. Act 14. 19. 20.

The Court perceiving, that their Cruelty Exercised Anno 1666, and some time after, did not effect what they designed, they fell upon another Project for destroying the Work of God, viz. the indulging some of the ousted Ministers, under sinful Limitations and Instructions (a full Account of which may be seen in the History of the Indulgence, written by Mr. John Brown, banished to Holland) which they were encouraged to venture upon.

pon, from the Consideration of the different Practices above narrated; For the Indulgence in the Design of it, was to be given only to such Ministers as have lived Peaceably, and Orderly in the Places where they have resided (See King Charles's Letter for the Indulgence, dated at Whitehall, 17 June, 1669. Hist. Indulg. pag. 5.) ; Which Peaceable Behaviour is explained, 3d. of September 1672, by the Council, to be a not giving Scandal to any by Withdrawing themselves from the publick Worship, in the Kirks of these Paroches where they reside, nor ensnare others to do the like by their Practice and Example. (See the Act, Hist. Indulg. pag. 39.) This Indulgence was received with the Limitations by some Ministers, and rejected by others, who were named to have the Benefit of the same; And a third sort were deprived of the Liberty granted by the Indulgence, to Preach, because they Preached against the King's Ecclesiastick Supremacy, or disowned the Limitations annexed to the Indulgence; As Mr. William Weir, Mr. Alexander Blair, and Mr. John Burnett. These things occasioned Disputes and Debates both among Ministers and People, which were managed for some years in private; But at length, the Usurpations of the Court being multiplied, and the Persecution increasing, many faithful Ministers had their Eyes opened, to see their Designs to be no less, than by these Methods to extirpat Presbyterian Ministers and People out of the Land, and began to Preach in Fields and Houses, as occasion offered (of which number were Mr. John Welsh, Mr. Samuel Arnot, Mr. John Watwood, Mr. John King, Mr. John Kid, Mr. John Dickson, Mr. Hugh Smith at Eastwood, who was the first (as I remember) who Wrote against the Indulgence, and many others, some whereof are alive unto this day) not regarding the Threatnings of the Prelats, or of the Court; And when Armed Men pursued these Meetings, the People thought it their Duty to defend themselves and their Ministers in Preaching the Gospel to them: Which Practice was condemned by some of these Ministers whom the Court looked upon as Peaceable Men, and by others was Justified openly in Preaching; The one alledging that Obedience was to be given to the Oppressors of these Times, as if they had been Magistrats exercising their Office for the Terror of Evil doers, and the Praise of them that do well; Others looking upon these Oppressors as meer Tyrants, and so that no Regard was to be had to their sinful Laws, discharging the publick Preaching of God's Word; except under such Limitations as they should think fit: And this occasioned another Controversie, about the Owning and Disowning of the Authority of Tyrants destroying the most valuable Interests of Religion and Liberty; Whether the Government of these Times was the Exercise of Lawful Magistracy, or pure Tyranny? Which last was maintained by many Faithful Ministers, at that time, and now verified by the late Happy Revolution.

The Case of the Church at that time was like that of the Israelites, Judg. 17. 6. That there was no King in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes: For some went a great length in compliance with the Defections of these Times, others durst not comply, and there being then no settled Church Judicatories, according to Christ's Institution, Ministers and People were obliged to withdraw from these Courses which they were convinced in their Conscience to be sinful; Seing they had no other clear and sufficient Method to testify their Abhorrence of the Courses of Defection of these Times, but by not saying a Confederacy to all these to whom the People then did say a Confederacy. But this was without any Design ever to own these things to be sufficient Grounds of Separation in a Constitute Church, or when with personal Safety Application could be made to settled Church Judicatories, who were not under the Tyrannical Influence of Enemies to the Work of God. It was upon this Ground, that the Reverend and worthy Mr. Donald Cargill, late Minister of the Barony of Glasgow, and Martyr for the Truth, often declared that his Soul hated Separation, and exhorted his Hearers to pray for Faithful Ministers;

thers, adding particularly this Reason (in a Preaching on a week day at Loudoun-hill) that People could not be long kept free of Schism or Hereſie, if they wanted Spiritual Guides, to which I was an Ear Witneſs: And the worthy Martyr Mr. Richard Cameron Miniſter of the Goſpel, is ſaid often to have had the like Expreſſions.

Alſo there are many alive to this day, who know, when the Informatory Vindication was to be Printed, that it was ſent to Holland to be ſhewed to ſome of us, who were then Abroad; and that we declared we could never own the Grounds of Separation laid down therein, to juſtify a Separation from a ſettled Church, in a peaceable State. And when our Animadverſions on the ſame came to Scotland, ſome of theſe who now ſeparat, were ſo convinced of the truth of this, that they condeſcended to own ſo much in the ſaid Informatory Vindication: And for this Cauſe, 'tis often added as a Qualification to the Grounds of Withdrawing, that they were to be underſtood in the Caſe of ſuch Differences, and ſo circumſtantiated. Inform. Vind. page 67. In this broken and declining State of the Church. ibid. page 73. 76. 78. 80. 82. 84. 86. 87. 88. To which alſo the worthy Martyr Mr. James Renwick Miniſter of the Goſpel, aſſented.

Moreover, I had occaſion to know the Sentiments, of the Reverend and worthy Author of this following Treatiſe, Mr. Alexander Shields, late Miniſter of the Goſpel at St. Andrews, upon this Point, in the Year 1687: For when he came to Utrecht, in Diſcourſe with me, among other things he poſitively owned, that none of theſe things which were in Controverſy betwixt us and ſome other Preſbyterian Miniſters, could be owned as ſufficient Grounds of Separation, if the Lord ſhould ſend deliverance to his Church, and give us acceſs to preſent our Grievances to Church-Judicatories, with perſonal Safety (which we could never have, until the late happy Revolution.) And this upon the Matter is owned by him in the following Sheets, where he expreſſly ſays, page 2. For tho my Sentiments are ſhallow and changeable as other Mens are, having the imperfection of Mutability, as well as Fallibility; Yet I know no change of Principles, that theſe Contentions need drive me to. From all which 'tis evident, that none of theſe who Witneſſed againſt the Indulgence, and the Popiſh Toleration in the time of King James the VII. or the other Courſes of Deſection in the late times, did ever deſign, that their Teſtimony againſt theſe things, ſhould be a Foundation for a Schiſm in a peaceable State of the Church, or when theſe Courſes of Deſection ſhould ceaſe to be in the Church of Chriſt.

All this will be yet more clear, if it be conſidered, that (in conſequence of what is ſaid before) no ſooner did King James the VII, his Army March from Scotland to England, but we did begin to Converſe with ſeveral Miniſters, both at Glaſgow and Edinburgh, about compoſing of Differences and removing Miſtakes; A full Account of which may be ſeen in a Print, Entituled, The Method and Motives of Union, &c. publiſhed Anno 1691, which I wiſh were more conſidered by ſuch, as now withdraw from this National Church.

As for ſuch who not only Withdraw from this Church, but alſo have diſowned the Civil Government always ſince the late happy Revolution, and yet take the Name of Preſbyterians to themſelves; It is to be feared, ſome of them may be under ſome bad influence of Jacobites, or elſe to be ſo weak, as not to diſcern the Abſurdity of ſuch a Practice. And it is moſt remarkable, that ſince King William came to the Throne, theſe People have neither had Miniſter nor Preacher under the Name of a Preſbyterian, to countenance them in their ſinful Courſes. And in the Year 1688, and 1689, we were ſo far from giving any Countenance to ſuch Courſes, that we encouraged the publiſhing the Prince of Orange's Declaration at Glaſgow, before it was publiſhed in any other place of the Kingdom; we prayed publicly for Succeſs to his Enterpriſe, even before his Landing in England, we

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swore (in the National Covenant, Renewed at Lesmahagow, March 3. 1689) that we should stand to the Defence of his Highness, his Person and Authority, when Lawfully chosen and established as King, or Supreme Magistrat over us. The People we preached to, in consequence of this, went to Edinburgh with others, and guarded the Convention of Estates; Anno 1689, and mustered in one day Eleven Hundred and forty Men as a Regiment, under the Command of the Right Honourable, the late Earl of Angus, to fight for Religion and Liberty, under the Authority of King William of Glorious Memory. All which make it evident, That our former Testimony against Tyranny, was from no disloyal Principle to Magistracy; and consequently that these People never had any Encouragement to live as they do. 'Tis true indeed they met with bad Treatment, both from the Assembly 1690, who neglected their Grievances, and from the Army who did not assist them at Dunkel, which occasioned the stumbling of many; But 'tis a Sin to stumble, as well as to give Occasion for it.

I need say very little in Commendation of the following Sheets, they will speak for themselves; but if the worthy Author had survived his Voyage to Caledonia, I doubt not but the Work had been better polished than it is. But rather than deprive the Publick of a sight of it, I have published it from his own Manuscripts, without any material Alteration, except in some words, to make the Sense run clear; And where the Manuscripts could not be well read, which I supplied with words as near the scope of the place as I could. The Reader will find therein, the Controversy with those who withdraw from this Church, clearly stated, Truth vindicated, and the Objections very fully answered.

There is an Objection, not handled in the following Work, which was only started by some, at the Meeting with these People in February 1705, in the Town of Sanguhar, which for the satisfaction of some, I shall take notice of. The Objection was to this Purpose, That their joining with the Church, would be a burying of the forementioned Testimony against Defection in the Church, and Tyranny in the State, even tho they should be allowed to give in their Grievances to Church Judicatories; Seing they could expect no better Treatment in the Matter of their Grievances, than the worthy Author of the following Work, and these that join with him Anno 1690, did meet with in giving in their Grievances to the General Assembly, which was to be condemned. In answer to this, consider, 1st. That any Condemnation of a larger Paper then given in, was only by the Committee of Overtures, and not by the Assembly it self. 2. That tho the Assembly approved the Overture of the Committee; yet it was but in so far as to satisfy the Assembly, that they thought it not Prudence to consider all the Particulars therein contained, for fear of Division amongst themselves, as to the Grievances contained in the said larger Paper; but not that ever the Assembly did enter upon the Consideration of the Paper it self; So as either to condemn or approve it, or any Article therein; for it was never read in open Assembly; And to say they did condemn it, tho they never heard it, would be an Injurious Reflection on that Assembly, and make them Guilty of Couper Justice, and Jedburgh Law, as the Proverb is. 3. The blame, then, why that Affair is so printed in the Acts of the Assembly, is to be laid upon the Revisers of the Minutes, who printed more than was in the Extract given out under the Clerks band of that Assembly, a considerable time before the Acts of that Assembly were printed, which Authentick Paper I have so this day ready to produce, if need be, wherein there is not one word of the particular Reasons, moving that Assembly not to read that larger Paper. Neither is it ordinary to Print Opinions of the Committee of Overtures among the printed Acts of the Assembly, except they be examined fully, and approved, which could not be in the present Case, seing the Acts of that Assembly bare expressly, that that larger Paper was never read by the Assembly it self;

And

And so the Assembly could not know, whether the Characters given to that larger Paper were True or False, and consequently could not condemn it. 4. That wrong Step in the Publishers of the Acts of the Assembly 1690, obliged us to Print that larger Paper, that the World might see whether it deserved such Characters or not, as were given to it by the ~~Committee~~ of Overtures, and Moderator of that Assembly; (see the Method and Motives of Union, &c. Printed Anno 1691) And if the Print be not at hand, any who desire a sight of that Paper, may have it from me; For I have kept hitherto a true Double of the same; 5. Yet the Church of Scotland since the Revolution, hath never approv'd the Indulgence, or the Accepting of, and Addressing for the late Toleration (in King James the 7th. his Reign,) without a Testimony against the extent of it to Papists and Hereticks; Nor do they approve, but condemn (in their Causes of Fastings) the Tyranny of the late Reign of King Charles II. and King James VII. Neither are such as withdraw from this Church required, as a Condition of their Communion, to Condemn any part of the former Testimony, against Desertion in the Church, or Tyranny in the State, but will be allowed to declare under their Hands, that their present joining, shall not infer a Condemning of any part of the former Testimony against Desertion from the Covenanted Work of Reformation; and may have this their Declaration Registered in the Records of the Presbyteries or Synods of the Bounds where they live, and Extracts of the same given unto them in due form, for the Exoneration of their Consciences. And if this be a Burial of the Testimony, I must say, it is a very Honourable Burial, in the Records of the Church, which After-Generations may have occasion to peruse; But surely this way of Separation from this National Church, is an evident Burying of it, as will be clear to any who shall impartially consider the following Sheets.

I fear, I have transgressed the Bounds of an Entry to such a Work, and that it will bear no Proportion to the Edifice; And lest I should darken Counsel by Words without Knowledge, I shall supersede. Only if this Work be well Entertained, any other Papers, which are in my hand, left by the Worthy Mr. Alexander Shields, for the use of the publick, shall not be concealed, when it shall be thought needful that they see the Light. My Prayer to God is, That what is now published may send to the Glory of God, the healing of the Breaches of this Church, and the Edification of such as shall peruse the same, which is all at present from him

Lefmahagow the 2d
of April, 1706.

Who desires to see Peace and Truth
flourish in the Church of Christ,
while I am

THOMAS LINING.

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26 JUL 57

Church Communion Consider'd, &c.

IN such a Day of Trouble and Perplexity in the Valley of Vision, they must be blind that do not see, and very brutish that have not the sense of the Wrath of an Holy GOD, so many ways evident'd and threatned against this Sinful Church and Nation; While, notwithstanding of the Mercies of the never sufficiently priz'd Gospel-Ordinances dispensed in Peace, Plenty and Purity, and of the indulgent Favours of Providence, lengthning out our Liberty under the Patrocinny of a comfortable Civil Government, after a long Tract of Tyrannical Oppressions, yet the Lord's Anger is not turned away; but his Hand is stretched out still, in the Withdrawings of the Shinnings of his Power and Glory, that used to be seen and felt in his Sanctuary Solemnities; and withholding these Glorious Influences of his Spirit, that made, in former times, our Wilderness a Fruitful Field, and our Church Beautiful as *Tirzah*, &c. and in Plaguing this Land more sensibly than any other; with pinching Penury and Want, and the Hearts of the Generality with more fearful Judicial Stroaks; Whereby tho' the Lord be pouring out upon us the Fury of his Anger, and it hath set us on fire round about, yet we know not it burns us, yet we lay it not to Heart: But in the midst of these Flames, One part is raging in all excess of Riot, Another running upon Precipices of Errors and Delusions, a Third rotting in Lukewarmness and detestable Indifferency, and the most part perishing in dangerous and deadly Distempers, threatning destruction unavoidable, if speedy Mercy prevent it not. But the most affecting Symptom, and most astonishing Prognostick of Wrath imminent, is this woful Division and Schism still continuing, not only between the old competing Parties, known by the Names of *Prelatical* and *Presbyterian*, which were the only Contending Parties that our Fathers knew; but now found among them that were United before, in Adhering to, and Contending for the first established and Covenanted Work of Reformation; that sometimes took sweet Counsel together, and walked unto the House of God in Company: But now, thro' the Wrath of the Lord of Hosts, they eat every Man the flesh of his own Arm, *Manasseh Ephraim*, and *Ephraim Manasseh*, and both together against *Judah*; For all this, his Anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still. The Lord hath mingled a perverse Spirit in the midst of those that profess Godliness in *Scotland*; The Anger of the Lord hath Divided them, and if it be not Appeas'd, he threatens

no more to Regard them. If ever there was a Time when such Divisions and Separations were Unseasonable, and Essays for their Remedy might be Hopeful, This is the time, when the wicked Contrivances of Enemies to Divide and destroy the Church, and hinder its Reformation; And the abounding Errors of the Times, and the great Ignorance of People, should make all the Lovers of the Church fear Division, as that which will make it a Prey to them: When the Providences of this Day have so far altered the Object of our Contendings, that they call and encourage all dissentient Parties among Presbyterians, to Contend together, for Redintegrating the common Reformation against the common Adversaries: When things are come to such a Shock and Crisis, that if there be not present Endeavours used for Union, the Breach, in all probability, will grow Wider and more Incurable: When Occasions and Grounds of our former Divisions in times of Defection, the Prelatick Erastian Antichristian Usurpations on the Churches Rights are removed, and the Defections and Corruptions flowing therefrom, and introduc'd thereby, which gave the rise to our Dis-unions, are so far antiquated, that they are neither in the Constitution of the Church, nor do they continue to be stumbling Blocks and Tentations to us, either to involve us in the guilt of them, or to keep us still jangling about them: When also the Churches Intrinsic Power and Capacity to remede these Evils, is so far Restored, that we have now a Nail granted to us in the Holy Place, to set up the House of our God, and to repair the Desolations thereof, in having access to apply our selves to Ecclesiastick Judicatories, Fenced in the Name of the Only Head and King of the Church Jesus Christ, without any Dependence upon Exotick Usurped Powers. If we consider either the Mercies of the Times, and Matters of Praise, bringing forth so many considerable Advantages to our selves and to the Cause, they do certainly call for some other and better Improvement of them, than breaking our selves into pieces by occasion of these Changes: Or, if we consider the Miseries of the Times, and Matters of Mourning, the past and present Causes and Effects of the Lord's Anger burning up, and like to consume this Church and Kingdom; we will find some more suitable Work shapen out to us, than this biting and devouring one another, while the Lord in his holy Judgments, and Men in their wicked Designs, threaten our **Destruction.**

I acknowledge it to be very difficult to essay the Healing of such a judicial-like Division; For in such a Case the Vision of all, and Directions in reference to Healing, are as the words of a Book that is Sealed; which neither the Learn'd nor the Unlearn'd can read: The Impression of which made me shrink at the Thoughts of moving in this Debate, in the sense of my own Insufficiency for such an Undertaking, and to withdraw my self for a time from the Place where these Contentions were hottest; Not in any fear of shame, lest I be suspected of Inconstancy and change of Principles, (for tho' my Sentiments are shallow and changeable, as other Mens are, having the imperfection of Mutability as well as Fallibility; yet I know no change of Principles that these Contentions need drive me to) but in the fear that my moving,

in them might make them worse; and in the hope that forbearance for a while might contribute to the sooner cooling and quenching the heat of them. But now, considering this Evil, as it is Noxious in it self, Dishonourable to GOD, Scandalous to the Gospel and Cause of Christ, Stumbling to all sorts of Men, productive of very hurtful Effects, and very ordinarily of some pernicious Errors; which now may be feared as much as ever in these broken and breaking times, so it is Spreading and Growing; And therefore, being convinc'd of the Necessity of saying somewhat to it, and being under the bond of a Promise, extorted from me some years ago at a Meeting at *Douglas*, so here I shall essay to give my poor Thoughts upon this Subject, which also will meet with all these Scruples proposed by these who have not hitherto subjected themselves to the present Ministry of this National Church, as now Establish'd by Law.

In prosecuting of this Head, I shall *first* premit some general Truths, granted on all hands, the solid and practical impresson whereof would soon and easily put a happy close unto this Debate. *Secondly*, I shall lay down some Concessions and concessory Distinctions that may serve for Cautions, for the better understanding of this Matter. *Thirdly*, I shall state the Question and vindicate the same. *Fourthly*, I shall answer the Objections against Union with, and Subjection to the present Ministry of the Church of *Scotland*.

For the First, *scil.* The general Truths granted on all hands. Consider, I. That Endeavours for Union and Concord among the Lovers of Truth, are Duties absolutely necessary, so that it cannot fall under Debate, whether Union should be endeavoured; No more than it can be disputed, whether there should be Preaching, Praying, or keeping of the Sabbath, seeing it is so much commanded, commended and pressed in the Scripture, as none can be found that is more clearly and frequently urged. 1. In inculcating these Duties which necessarily infer it, and which, if conscientiously observed, could not miss speedily to produce it; As (1) Love: It is the great Command, to Love our Neighbour as our self, it is the Fulfilling of the Law, *Rom. 13. 10.* It is a new Commandment, *Joh. 13. 34.* that ye love one another (saith our Lord Jesus) *as I have loved you, that ye also love one another, by this shall all know that ye are my Disciples, if you love one another.* Alas! the Contentions and Dissentions of this time look not like the badge of Christ's Disciples; nor are his Children in our Land and Day known by that livery. And very deservedly is it so commended as a badge of his Disciples, because it is a fruit of the Spirit of Grace joined with Faith, *Gal. 5: 22.* producing Peace as another Fruit of it, *against which there is no Law.* As Faith worketh by Love, so Faith in Christ Jesus, and Love to all the Saints, are inseparably connected, *Col. 1: 4.* And saith the Apostle, *1 Joh. 3: 14.* *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the Brethren.* It is also inferred and inculcated as a certain Evidence of Faith by *Peter, 1 Pet. 1: 22.* *By him you believe in God ----- seeing you have purified your Souls*

in obeying the Truth, through the Spirit into unfeigned love of the Brethren. They that obey the Truth will love the Brethren; Therefore he infers and exhorts, See that you love one another with a pure heart fervently. As touching brotherly love (saith Paul, 1 Thess. 4: 9.) You need not that I write unto you, for you your selves are taught of God to love one another. Yet he thought it so necessary to inculcate it, that he writes again and again of it, Rom. 12: 9, 10. Let Love be without dissimulation: Be kindly affectionat one to another with brotherly Love, in honour preferring one another. Follows verse 16. as a Duty consequent upon this, Be of the same mind. Yet there were several Debates and Offences in that Church of the Romans, as we see Chap. 14 and 15. Heb. 13: 1. Let Brotherly love continue. Yet the Hebrews were very much divided about the observation of the Ceremonial Law; and it seems some did separat from Societies and Meetings one with another. But as to that he says, Heb. 10: 24, 25. Let us consider one another to provoke into love and good works, not forsaking the Assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is. Hence we see, if there were more Love, there would be more Union and Communion, notwithstanding of Differences. (2) Reconciliation, Agreement and receiving one another, is much pressed and inculcated in Scripture, as Matth. 5: 24. Leave thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift. As long as there are differences and distances between us and our Brethren not removed by Reconciliation, our Acceptance, Profit and Edification is marred: And if this Reconciliation cannot be obtained any other way, there must be mutual Forgiveness; Not Judiciary, to take away the Guilt, that is GOD's Prerogative; But Charitative, which must be extended to many more Offences and Trespases than are confessed and acknowledged to us; For we are taught to pray in the Lord's Prayer, *Matthew 6: 12. Forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors.* And the Lord adds, *v. 14, 15. For if you forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.* But if the Lord did forgive no other Trespases to us, but what we Explicitly and Expressly confess and acknowledge, there would be many unforgiven in the best: For who can understand his Errors, and all his secret Faults, *Psal. 19: 12.* The Lord forgives us if we confess all that we are convinced of, and mourn implicitly over the rest. So Love and Charity obliges us to think our Godly Brethren that have offended us, do mourn over all their Trespases implicitly, and even those wherein they have offended us, tho' they cannot confess them to us till they be convinced they are Trespases. When Peter asked the Question, *Matth. 18: 21. Lord how often shall my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?* He thought that very much, as we think once too much. But Jesus saith, *I say not until seven times, but until seventy times seven.* This is not to be restricted unto personal Injuries, but even to Spiritual Offences and Scandals, until they be brought to the Churches Cognizance; For upon occasion of our Lord's

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discouraging on the Procedure on Scandal, Peter brings in this Question: Whence, by the way, we may learn, That when our Brother offends us once or twice, or seven times, we are not the first instant to withdraw from Church Communion with him, until we first tell him his Fault secretly, and then take one or two more, after we can proceed no further privately, then we may tell the Church, but not withdraw, till he be sentenced by them when there are Church Judicatories to be applied to. We are commanded Eph. 4. ult. *to be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ hath forgiven us: Which must not be restricted to personal Injuries; For God, for Christ's sake, forgives us other Offences than these: Nor only to such Offences as are confessed and acknowledged; For God, for Christ's sake, forgives other Offences than these too, as I shewed above. It is commended as a part or proof of the new Man of Grace, Col. 3. 13. To forbear one another, and forgive one another, if any Man have a quarrel against any Man, even as Christ forgave us, so also should we do. Where also there is another way of Reconciliation commended, which is Forbearing; This is easier than Forgiving, a passing by some Matters in controversy, as doubtful Disputations, spoken of Rom. 14: 1. and consequently doubtful Practices are to be forborn, Rom. 13: 1. We then that are strong, ought to bear with the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves, but to please our Neighbour for his Good to Edification; for even Christ pleased not himself. Whence the Apostle prays, vers. 6. That they may with one mind and one mouth glorify God. How? No other way but by conring to the same Sentiments in these doubtful Disputations and Infirmities? No other way but by the weak confessing their Infirmities and the strong their Offences? No, But saith he, vers. 7. Receive you one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. How did Christ receive us? Never until we were perfectly informed and reformed? Did he never receive us till we confessed all our particular Sins, and such as we did ignorantly? No; Then we had never been received, except he had pleased to take us with many Faults and much ignorance. In many Cases then, the way to endeavour the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, Eph. 4: 2, 3. is with lowlynefs and meekness, and long suffering to forbear one another in love. (3) The Study of seeking, pursuing, entertaining Peace and Peaceableness is much pressed and praised: Rom. 12: 18. If it be possible as much as lyeth in you, live peaceably with all Men: Meaning so far as it is lawful without sin, and so far as it is Duty lying on us, without respect to the length of their Condescendings to us; and so far as it consists with Holiness. Heb. 12: 14. Follow peace with all Men, and holiness. Zech. 8: 19. Love the Truth and Peace. It is commanded especially in the Case of abounding Offences, when Christ's little ones are offended with many things. Mark. 9; ult. Have salt in your selves, and have peace one with another. The want of Peaceableness, as well as the want of Truth, will make our Salt to lose its favour. And in the Case of abounding Debates & Differences about Offences, Rom. 14: 19, Let us (saith the Apostle) follow after.*

after the things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. 1 Cor. 7: 15. God hath called us to peace. It is recommended in the Case of many Disorders in the Church, 1 Cor. 14: 33. For God is not the Author of confusion, but of Peace, as in all Churches of the Saints. This is the Bond of Unity, suitable to the Vocation wherewith we are called, Eph. 4: 3. Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is recommended to People with respect to Ministers, 1 Thess. 5: 13. Be at peace among your selves. And to Ministers with respect to People, 2 Tim. 2: 22. Follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, &c. And it is urged with Arguments, Jam. 3: 17, 18. The Wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated. -- And the fruit of Righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. And by many Promises, having the Promise of Life added to it, and seeing many good days, Psal. 34: 12, 14. What Man is he that desireth life and loveth many days, that he many see good? Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it. It must be pursued and followed even when it seems to flee away, and difficult to be obtained. The Promise of Prosperity to them that pray for it, Psal. 122: 6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee. Prov. 12: 20. To the Counsellors of peace is joy. Matth. 5: 9. Blessed are the Peace-makers, for they shall be called the Children of God. 2 Cor. 13: 11. Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you.

But 2. Union, Unity and Oneness in Interest, Affection, Judgment and Practice, Profession and Worship, is more expressly commanded and commended in Scripture. 1. Expressly it is commanded as a walking worthy of our Christian Vocation, to endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, Eph. 4. 3. by forbearing, v. 2. Even where there is not all the Condescension desired from the opposit Party; For then there would be no need of forbearing. Phil. 2. 1, 2. If there be therefore any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my joy that ye be like minded, having the same Love, being of one accord, of one mind. And ye see, some Preached Christ of contention at that time and in that Church, Chap. 1. 16. 1. Pet. 3. 8. Be all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. 1 Cor. 1. 10. I beseech you Brethren by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind and in the same Judgment: For it had been declared to him, that there were Contentions among them, v. 11. This is recommended even in the Case of many Differences in Judgment. Phil. 3. 16. Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. 2. It is inferred from the near and indissoluble Conjunction that is among the Lord's People; Having first one near and dear Relation of Brethren, both by Creation and by Profession; Under one Master Christ, Mar: 23. 8. And by Spiritual affinity having one Father, Mal: 2. 10. One Mother, Gal. 4. 26. and one Elder Brother, John 20. 17. Heb. 2. 11: Whence is inferred, Gen. 13. 8.

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There should be no strife among Brethren. Psal. 133. 1. *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity.* Next, having one so near an Incorporation together as being one Body. 1 Cor: 10. 17. *For we being many are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread.* As in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, not only Union and Communion with God in Christ, but Union and Communion with the Members of his Body, is represented, carried on, and sealed up, unto his second Coming. As Communion in false Worship makes the Communicants one in sin (as is clear from that place), so Communion in true Worship, where the Altar is sanctified according unto the Lord's Institution, makes the Communicants one in Duty, even where there are many Offences, many Corruptions and Disorders in the fellow Worshipers, as was in that Church of *Corinth*. And finally, having one common Happiness in regard of the Object, Rule, Graces, and Privileges of Worship, it is strongly inferred by the Apostle, they should endeavour to keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*: Because, *Eph: 4. 4. There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* In that Chapter also it is inferred from the end of all Gospel Ministry and Ordinances, which is to make all the Members of Christ one Body and one Man in him. Verse 12. 13. *They are all given for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, &c.* It may be inferred also from this, that as the Church Triumphant is but one in Heaven, so the Church Militant is but one in Earth; Therefore all the true Members thereof should study Unity; This Truth of the Oneness of the Catholick Visible Church, being the Ground of all the Union and Communion in the Ordinances thereof. *Cant. 6. 9. My Dove, my Undeiled is but One, She is the only One of Her Mother.* If the Church be One, Divisions and divided Communion in her must either infer that this one Church is many, made up of Heterogeneous parts, or that the Church divided from is not a part of that one Church, and hath broken off from that which compacts the Body together. 3. It is promised as a choice Blessing of the well ordered Covenant. *Jer. 32. 39. I will give them one Heart and one Way, that they may fear me for ever.* It is joined in the Promise with the new heart. *Ezek: 11. 19. I will give them one Heart: and I will put a new Spirit within you, &c, Ezek: 37. 17. It is promised concerning divided Ephraim and Judah: Join them one to another into one Stick, and they shall become one in thine hand.* 4. As it is promised, so it is prayed for by the Apostle, *Rom. 15. 5, 7. Now the God of Patience and Consolation, grant you to be like minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God.* And upon this he subjoins the Exhortation, *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us.* Yea it is prayed for by our Lord Jesus in his Intercessory Prayer, which is a Specimen of his continued Intercession to this day, *John 17. 11, 21, 23. Holy Father, keep through thine own Name those whom thou hast given*

me, that they may be one as we are; 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: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, &c. Which shews, that Union with the Lord is his great desire, as it was his design in coming into the World and shedding his Blood, to Reconcile Jews and Gentiles not only to God, but to Unite them in one Body among themselves. Eph. 2. 14, 16. He made both one, and broke down the middle Wall of Partition between us, to make himself of twain one new Man, so making Peace, and that he might reconcile both unto God, in one Body by the Cross, &c. If all these Scriptures were considered, pressing Union as much as any Duty, the Endeavours of Establishing it would be very easy and pleasant, and Debates would soon be composed.

Consid: 2. It is a general Truth also, the Consideration whereof would contribute much to put a close to these Contentions, on the other hand, That Division, Contention, and Schism in the Church are great Evils, concerning which the Scriptures clearly hold forth, (1.) That they are exceedingly sinful, Prov. 17. 19. He loveth Transgression that loveth Strife. Debate is placed among the Fruits and Effects of the judicial Plague of a reprobate Mind, given up to do things that are not convenient, Rom. 1. 28, 29. Strife, it is placed among the Works of Darknes, Rom. 13. 12, 13. Vainness and Strife are found among the Works of the Flesh, Gal. 5. 19, 20. It is named by the Apostle vain jangling, as the consequent of twerving from Faith and a good Conscience, 1 Tim. 1. 6. Wherefore the Apostle is so earnest in beseeching by the Name of our Lord Jesus, that there be no Divisions or Schisms, 1 Cor. 1. 10. That there be no Schisms in the Body, 1 Cor. 12. 25. And to beware of Dividers, especially under the Name of Dogs, Evil-workers, the Concision, Phil. 3. 2. by whom he understands the Jews, that made such a stickle and schism about the Circumcision and Ceremonies of Moses. Dividers and sowers of Discord are represented among the most hateful of Sinners. They are among the Six Things that the Lord hates, and the seven that are abomination unto him, Prov. 6. 16, 19. Concerning whom the Apostle warns, Rom. 16. 17. I beseech you Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. (2) That they are foolish, Prov. 18: 6. A Fools lips enter into Contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. On the contrary, Prov. 20: 3. It is a honour for a Man to cease from strife, but every Fool will be meddling. This is not to be restricted unto Secular or Wordly strifes, but holds true also of Church Divisions. (3) That it is an Effect and Evidence, and also the Cause of the Anger of the Lord. It is an Effect; Lam. 4: 16. The Anger of the Lord hath divided them, he will no more regard them. It is also a provoking Cause of Wrath, because a great Sin, as is shewed above. Rom. 2: 8. The Lord will render to every one according to his works, unto them that are Contentious, Indignation and Wrath. We should endeavour to be affected and afflicted with the impression of this as a Plague, as much as if we were labouring under the Sword,

Famine or Pestilence. And if we were Considering how much of the Anger of the Lord appears in it, that we have not only Men in Opposition to us, but an Angry God Dividing us, then all of us, even the most Innocent, as to the immediat rise of it, would find our selves obliged to humble our selves under his Hand, and seek to remove the Strokes as much as other Plagues. (4.) That it is an Evil which produceth the saddest Effects, as in its own Nature it is apt to produce no good Effects, however Men improve it, being not a Mean of Edification of the Lord's Appointment, and therefore cannot be used in Faith and Expectation of the Lord's Blessing, which the Lord Commands and Confers as the *Dew of Hermon, and as the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion*, upon them that are in Unity, *Psal. 133. ult.* Upon the account of the sad Effects of Division, it is described to be very hateful and hurtful by the Apostle, *James 3. 15, 16. This Wisdom doth descendeth not from above, but is Earthly, Sensual, Devilish: For where Envyng and Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work.* For, in Experience it is alwise found, and in our Day sadly felt, to have produced many Disorders, spoiling the Church of its Purity and Peace, Government, Order and Beauty of Ordinances, marring the Gospel's Success, bringing the Ministry into Contempt, jumbling, torturing, and racking the Minds and Consciences of those that are engaged in the Contest, obstructing the Power, diverting the Practice and Spiritual Exercise, and wearing out the Life of Religion, making Christians Carnal. *1. Cor. 3. 3. Whereas there is among you Strife and Divisions: Are ye not Carnal and Walk as Men.* Hence *Jude v. 19.* These that promote a Schism are said to be *Sensual, not having the Spirit.* It is very Grieving to the Spirit of God, *Eph. 4. 30.* being a Spirit of Love and Peace; And therefore no wonder he withdraw his gracious Presence and Countenance from Ordinances, when a People are still promoting Division: And that they should Complain, *Wherefore Fast we and thou seest not, wherefore have we afflicted our Soul, and thou takest no knowledge?* The Reason is plain, *Isa. 58. 4. Behold ye Fast for Strife and Debate.* It is inconsistent with the Thriving, yea or Standing of the Church or Kingdom, where it continues long. *Mark 3. 24. If a Kingdom be Divided against it self, that Kingdom cannot stand.* Yea, 'tis obstructive to any Generation Work; for the good or standing of a Church or Kingdom. The Division of *Reuben*, (for which there were great Thoughts and Searchings of Heart) did hinder their coming out with *Barak* to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the Mighty, *Judg. 5.* It produces many Offences, which, with other Woes threatened, are connected with Contentions, *Matth. 28. 6, 7, 10.* and are reciprocally productive of one another; Divisions producing Offences and Defections on the Left Hand, and Extravagancies on the Right Hand; And these again producing Divisions: And through Heart Alienation and Jealousy which it breeds, and Mens Fervour, in following different Humours and Interests, both sides become worse; The one more Lax and Lukewarm, the other more hot and heady in Zeal, not according to Knowledge. To all which,

they have many strong Tentations in Division, which the longer it continues the farther it is from stinging or sitting; and the worse to be composed and closed. Therefore saith *Wisdom, Prov. 17. 14. The beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water; Therefore leave off Contention before it be meddled with.* And *Prov. 18. 19. A Brother offended is harder to be won than a strong City, and their Contentions are like the Bars of a Castle.* Hereby also the Ungodly are Offended and Scandalized, being encouraged to applaud themselves in their own Way, and to reproach the Way of God. Finally, at length, when it is of any Permanency, it is productive of Errors: These are knit together, *1 Cor. 11. 18, 19. I hear that there be Divisions among you, there must be also Heresies among you.* It is rare to find, wherever Division continued long, but it hath brought forth Error, Divided Practises alwise leading Men to lay down and maintain such Principles as may Defend them. And thus the World comes to be Plagued with Atheism, being tempted to think Religion but a Fancy. Therefore the Lord Jesus Prayeth for Unity among his Disciples, *John 17. 21, 23. That the World might believe that Christ was sent.* If these Evils of Division were believed and considered, it would not be difficult to perswade to Union.

Confid. 3. It would be exceeding helpful to make Endeavours of Union Easy, and is in it self a very necessary Duty, to Search and Enquire into the Causes of Division, and remove them in the first place; then the Effects will cease. (1) The Holy Cause is, first, the Lord's Sovereignty overruling it, for the Triall of his People, *1 Cor. 11. 19.* There is the same Cause for Division, as for Heresy, that they which are Approved may be made Manifest. Secondly, His Holy Anger punishing Defection and the Misimprovement of Peace and Union, for which the Anger of the Lord hath divided us, *Isa. 4. 16.* This would be first sought to be removed, by Searching and Trying our Ways, and Turning again to the Lord; Examining our selves about our State, whether we have Union and have kept Communion with the Lord or not; And about our Ways, whether we have had any Accession either formally to the bringing in of this Evil, or virtually to the procuring it, by provoking the Lord to Anger. 'Tis a Fault in too many, that they charge others as only blamable in such Cases, as if they were altogether Innocent; It were far better, that every one were saying, Is it I? Is it I? that have been accessory to this Evil. Few will be found free, but one way or other have had a Hand in this Provocation. This would be removed by Repentance, Mourning, and Wrestling with the Lord for Pardon, and for Healing our Breaches. We should have solemn Days of Prayer and Humiliation, for Addressing the God of Peace, that he may settle Truth and Pence in our Days, *Psal. 122. 6. Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem.* If this Duty were Conscientiously gone about and followed, it would be easy to Unite: Union with God would soon bring forth Unity among his People. (2) The sinful Cause is Defection from the right Ways of the Lord, to the Right hand or to the Left, which is alwise the Mother of Division: As Progress in Defection is also the Effect of a growing Division.

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When there is a Variance between the Lord and his Spouse, playing the Harlot with many Lovers, there must needs then be a Division among the Children of the Family; Some taking the Mothers part abetting her in her Defection; And other some taking the Fathers part, pleading with their Mother to put away her Whoredoms, and her Adulteries from between her Breasts. This on the one side is Duty, if due Methods and Measures be observed; But the most difficult of all Duties to be managed, by reason of Mens Corruptions, and the obvious easiness of degenerating unto Extremes. This hath been the wretched Spring of all our woful Divisions in our Land and Day. This Church was once as Famous for Union, as now she is Infamous for Division. And now in our unhappy Days, since the Lord was provoked to give up House with his Spouse, there hath been nothing but Division and Confusion among the Children. The Enemies came in by force and fraud, and by the Yieldings of these that should have stood in the Gap, whereby they were enabled and encouraged with their own leisure and pleasure, without controul to break down the Cared Work of our Reformation with the Ax of an Act Rescissory, and to set up their Ensigns of Accursed, Abjured Prelacy, and Blasphemous Supremacy, for Signs of Victory obtained over the Followers of the Lamb. And after they had drunk their fill of the Blood of such as did Resist, they began at length to offer some Terms whereupon they would suffer Christ's Servants to live in Subjection to the Usurpers, painted with a pretence of favour under the notion of an Indulgence, but such as, flowing from, standing upon, and in all respects Modified by the Supremacy, did really require a Recognizance of that Usurpation, and a leaving off to oppose the peaceable Possession of that Robbery of Christ's Prerogatives and the Churches Liberties; Which was embrac'd and Compli'd with by some Ministers, and conniv'd at by many more, who formerly had fallen from their Stedfastness and Faithfulness, in Countenancing of, in stead of Contending against the Intrusion of Prelats and their Curats: At last, when by wicked Oaths and Bonds, imposed to debauch Consciences (some of which some Ministers took themselves, or perswaded others to take them), a passage was prepared for the Introduction of Popery, and a Gap was opened for it by the late Popish Toleration, some Ministers address'd for it, others embrac'd it to the Prejudice of Reformation, and without a Witness for it. These and the like Defections, on the one hand, and many Extravagancies, on the other, have been the Causes producing all the sad Effects of Divisions among us. Now, the best and easiest way, most acceptable to God and Man, of Removing these, were by a mutual Confession and Acknowledgment: And these that refuse to do so, as far as they can be convinced from searching the Scriptures and their own Consciences, shew themselves no Friends to the Churches Peace. If Ministers guilty on the one side would confess their Defections in such a measure and in the like manner as we that Dissented from them did confess our Extravagancies at the Renewing of the Covenants at *Lesmahagow*, which is printed to the World, I suppose, all Parties would be satisfied. O that

the Lord would pour forth his Spirit, and enforce a Conviction of these Defections, and extract a Confession of them; Then there would be hope in Israel concerning this. Sure none will deny, but this is a necessary Duty, to make publick Confession of publick Sins, even when Epidemical, that will but consider the Practice of the Levites in *Hezekiah's* time. *2 Chron. 30: 22.* The Practice of the Levites and of all Israel in *Ezra's* time, *Ezra 10: 1, 11.* and in *Nehemiah's* time, *Neh. 9: 2.* The Divine Precepts, *Prov. 28: 13. Jer. 3: 13.* And the Divine Promise, *Jer. 50: 4, 5.* *In those days the Children of Israel shall come, they and the Children of Judah, weeping and going, they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten.* From which Mr. *Durham*, in his Sermons, from this place observes, That Heart-melting towards God, and Seriousness to make up the breach of a broken Covenant betwixt a People and Him; conduce natively to make the Hearts of those that have been divided and set at variance from one another, in much warmth of Love to unite and sweetly to join together. It is from this, that Israel and Judah became One stick in the Lord's hand. *Ezek. 37:* This makes them as melted Metall to run close together, as it were into one lump; Tho' it was a long continu'd Schisme, and had much bitterness attending it, yet when their Hearts are touched with a sense of sin and of a broken Covenant, their former Differences and Animosities evanish. Softness of heart in the bygone Sense of Sin would silence many things among us, that all Disputings, Writings and Printings will not be able to do. Pray for this to the Land, as the most effectual mean and way of curing our Divisions, and of Uniting us in the Lord. It joins Israel and Judah together, whose Breach was much greater, and of far longer continuance than ours. 3. The fomenting Causes that protract, promote and strengthen Division are many and manifold. (1) Darknes of Mind and Ignorance, incident to all men, who see but in part, breeds Differences of Judgment, and Differences breed Divisions, and Divisions Separations; While one Party will not confess their Offences, because they are not convinced through Darknes of Mind; And the other Party think, they must partake of their Sins, if they join with them without Confession, not knowing to distinguish things, times and cases that differ. The best Remedy of this were to exercise our selves more in the Practice and Power of Religion. When the Apostle is dehorting and disswading from foolish Janglings, he premits or subjoins this Remedy, *2 Tim. 2: 22. Follow-Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.* This would draw off Mens minds from Questions and Strifes about Extrinsical Things. *Tir. 3: 8, 9.* *This is a faithful saying, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works, these things are good and profitable unto Men, but avoid foolish questions and strivings about the Law, for they are unprofitable.* (2) Faction, or Factionness in pleading for points; Not only imposing on others the same length of light with themselves too vehemently, but pressing

it more to abet a Party than to advantage Truth; Some for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Cephas, some even for Christ factiously, 1 Cor. 1: 12. Under that pretext rather setting forward a Party and Side than Christ's Honour. *Prov. 26: 21. As coals are to burning coals and wood to fire, so is a contentious Man to kindle strife.* Especially when the People are engaged in the Debate, then 'tis more difficult to compose it, for fear of displeasing them. The Remedy for this were to be single in our ends, proposing to our selves the Glory of God, the Good of the Church in general, the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom, and the Advantage of Truth, more than any Party among Creatures. (3) Self, or Selfishness, may have Influence upon this several ways, as respect to Credit and Honour, under the Appearance of respect to the Cause, which tempts Men, especially Ministers, to be tenacious; Sometimes for fear of being Censured for former Faults, which makes them stand up so much for Extenuating or Excusing them; Sometimes for fear of losing Credit, by relenting from former Eagerness. And yet there may be not only Confidence of the Equity of the Cause they contend for, on both hands, but an apprehended Testimony of their own singleness in following it, and that on both hands too. Yea both Parties may have Access to God, and have Liberty to Pray even in referrence to the things they are striving about, as is known by frequent Experience. The Remedy for this were Self denial, Sobriety, and Tenderness. *Rom. 15: 2, 3.* In bearing Infirmities of Weak, and not pleasing our selves, for Christ pleased not himself. (4) Pride, grudging to be slighted, Scorning to condescend, Envyng others Reputation, incident even to an Aaron and Miriam against Moses, and to the Disciples; contending who should be greatest. *Prov. 13: 10. Only by Pride cometh Contention. Prov. 28: 25. He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife.* Humility would soon bring Unity. (5) Passion, on both hands too much practised, vented in Personal Reflections and upcasting of things, to make one another odious, and mutual resenting of the same. *Prov. 15: 8. A wrathful Man stirreth up strife, but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. Prov. 30: 33. Surely the churning of Milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood, so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.* Meekness is the Cure for this. (6) Jealousie, Suspecting one anothers Integrity, aggreging and putting the worst constructions on one anothers Words and Actions, as we find in Job's Friends. This Prejudice is promoted too much by intertaining of Tale-bearers on every side, and too Credulous and Sedulous taking up, and spreading Reports and Reproaches one of another. *Prov. 26: 20. Where no wood is there the fire goeth out, so where there is no Tale-bearer the strife ceaseth.* All this is the Effect of the Want of Love, which grows cold when Iniquity abounds. *Matth. 24: 12.* The Remedy of this would be Love. *Prov. 10: 12. Hatred stirreth up strife, but Love covereth all Sins. Charity thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, 1 Cor. 13: 5, 7.* There would be no Schisme of the Members of the Body,

had.

had they the same Love to, and the same Care one for another, 1 Cor. 12
 25. **(7) Peremptoriness** without condescending on either hand in things that
 might be condescended unto, that hath a great hand in keeping up Divisions,
 The Remedy of this, and a great help to make Union Easy, were mutual Con-
 descending. It cannot be denied but this is lawful and Expedient in many
 things, since all the Commands of Forbearance formerly hinted do import
 this. The Apostle saith exprelly Rom. 15: 1. *We then that are strong ought to
 bear with the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves. Let every
 one of us please his Neighbour, for his good to Edification* : To wit, by Con-
 descension: And proposeth his own Example for a Pattern, 1 Cor. 9: 19, 20,
 21, 22. *For tho I be free from all Men, yet have I made my self Servant unto all,
 that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became a Jew, that I might
 gain the Jews; To them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might
 gain them that are under the Law; To them that are without Law, as without
 Law (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ) that I
 might gain them that are without Law. To the weak became I as weak, that I
 might gain the weak: I am made all things to all Men, that I might by all means
 save some.* We must not indeed condescend to any thing that may involve
 us in Sin any manner of way, in Approving of, Conmiving at, or Complay-
 ing with the Sin of others: Nor must we condescend to forbear what is ne-
 cessary Duty: But so far as to insinuat by all means that we intend to gain,
 not only the Edification, but the Affection of the dissentient Party; So far as
 to abstain from what may offend them, and from all unnecessary and perem-
 ptory pressing beyond their Light to come our length: Yea so far as no-
 thing should be a stop to it but this, I cannot do and sin against God. This
 Condescending should be mutual, so that one Party would not require or
 expect full Submission or coming over to the other; For that's not Union but
 Dominion: Nor should it on any side be levelled according to the length
 that the other goeth; But albeit Condescension fall upon one side, yet the other
 ought to condescend as far as is possible, lawful or expedient, Rom. 12: 18.
 In Obedience to God, and with respect to the Edification of the Church,
 which we should alwise seek, the others be Defective. Yea, that Party that
 seemeth rightest in the Matter, and hath most Advantages, ought to be most
 Condescending, because they are the Strong that should bear with the Wea-
 ker: And it's more just and safe, that the Strong should Condescend to the
 Weak, because that's within their Reach, than that the Weaker should be
 driven up to the Strong, which were to over-drive them. These who have
 Condescended most, have ever been thought the greatest Friends to the
 Church, and most tender of her Interest, which Mr. Durham proves, and presses
 at length, on Scandal, part 1. and part 4. page 40, 264, 298, 299, &c. 326,
 and elsewhere. If all these things were seriously laid to Heart, much more
 needed not to be said, to make Union in our present Circumstances attain-
 able, and easily accessible.

But,

But, in the Second place, to come to the purpose more closely, I shall lay down some *Concessions* and *Concessory Distinctions*, that may serve both for Cautions for the better understanding of what is said already, and for Condescensions preparatory to what remains to be said: Whereby it will appear, our present Plea will not infer such a Change of Principles, nor such a Contradiction to our former Pleadings in our Vindications and Testimonies, as is alledg'd; Tho, if there were really such a Change, it should not invalidate what is now offered to Consideration, but would only infer, our Judgment is liable to the Imperfection of Mutability and Fallibility, which is common to all on this side of time. But if I have, or ever had any understanding of the Sense of what was formerly declared to the World to be our Judgment, (as I know none alive this day, that can pretend to have had more Opportunities of being informed of it, or to have more Right to Explain it, than my self) I know no irreconcilable Contradiction betwixt what we plead for now and then, considering the Diversity of the Subject and of the Times.

1. Notwithstanding of all that is said for the Commendation of Union from Scripture, it is not every Union in any Terms that is pleaded for. Not an Union in Confederacy, with them that say a Confederacy in Compliance with Wicked Usurpations, *Isa. 8. 23.* Not an Union of Conspiracy with Defectors, *2 K. 22. 25.* Nor Union that may obstruct us from any Duty, or obstruct the maintaining of the Testimony, or involve us in Sin, or oblige us to palliate Sin, or to approve Condemned Sins, or condemn Approved Duties: No Union in any Terms, that may make us partakers with the Sins we have Contended against: No Union that may make us quite any Truth, or force us from any Duty: But that Union which is rightly Qualified and Seasoned with *Salt*, *Mark 9. 47.* in the Lord and for him: That Union that may make us both *Peaceable and Faithful* in Israel, *2 Sam. 20. 19.* Such a Peace only, as consists with *departing from Evil and doing Good*, *Psal. 34. 14.* Such a Peace only as Consists with *Truth*, *Zech. 8. 9.* Only so far as is Possible or Lawful, *Rom. 12. 18.* So far only as it Consists with *Holiness*, *Heb. 12. 14.* That which is *first Pure* and then *Peaceable*, *Jam. 3. 17.* Which are all Scriptural Qualifications, and therein required. We are not pleading for an Union in Deformation, but in Reformation: Not for Union in Courses of Conformity with Prelacy, or Compliances with Erastian Supremacy, or Absolute Popish Tyranny: Not an Union with Indulgence or Toleration, &c. Not with Sin, but with Sinners now returned to their Duty. Only we plead for Union with Presbyterian Ministers, promoting Reformation in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, and opposing Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, and whatsoever is contrary to Sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness, according to the Word of God, Confession of Faith, and Covenants, &c. That however any of them may be charged formerly, with many Defects, in these Qualifications required of these that we declared, we would only Countenance and Imbrace, in times of Defection and Persecution, *Inform. Windic. Fledd. 4. page 88, 89, 90, 91.* Yet now

can

cannot be charged with such Defects, nor Separated from upon that account; To wit, these Ministers that are clothed with Christ's Commission in his Orderly and Appointed Way,— free of Scandal as to their Ministerial and Personal Walk, and of a blameless Life and Conversation, according as Paul describes it, 1 Tim. 3. 2, 3, &c. And tho' they were involved before in times of Tentation, yet now do not persist in Palpable and Manifest Defection, nor in any of these things that are mentioned as Grounds sufficient for Withdrawing, but standing upon other Grounds, and having the Exercise of their Ministry free of Dependencies on Exotick Encroaching Powers, do now discharge what they have in Commission from Christ Faithfully, and take up the Right State of the Lord's Cause, against both Right and Left Hand Opposites, and do Maintain the present Testimony (To wit, now stated against Popery, Prelacy, Supremacy, and Tyranny,) and propagate the Reformed Principles of the Church of Scotland, according to the Word of God, our Confession of Faith, the Constitutions of our Church, and the Oath of our Holy Covenants. And therefore, as it is there Declared and Offered, page 91. *Whatever we can find any Minister so Qualified, or if any will come forth, and clear himself of the former Exceptions, (which now is done, because these cannot be now charged upon many, chargeable before) We should Call them, Hear them, Own, Countenance, and Imbrace them, Obey and submit our selves to them in the Lord.* It is true, it is there required, *That they should clear themselves, by a declared Confession and forsaking of their Offences, which have stumbled the Godly in the Land.* And pag. 89. *We think it necessary, before we can join with them, that they duly resent, confess, and forsake the same.* Therefore, 2. I concede, Confession is the best way of removing Offences, and at that time, in these Circumstances, it was very necessary before we could join with them. For then these Offences were standing as Snares and stumbling Blocks, and Sins inseparable from the very Exercise of their Ministry, and so could not but involve the Godly that countenanced them so circumstantiated, in a Participation with them in their Offences: And without Confessing and Forsaking they could not be removed, nor could there be Access to a Protestation against them, while these wicked Establishments stood: And yet it were very desirable, and necessary Duty in their part, to consider their Defections and Offences: We are not for an Act of Oblivion, to pass these things in silence: We pleaded the Necessity of Confession, and for the Synodical Condemnation of these things, both in our Overtures to the Ministers for Union, and in the Renovation of the Covenants at *Lesmahagow*: We told at a Meeting at *Douglas*, we had no mind to cease from Pleading this, by protesting and testifying against these things; And accordingly we did plead for it in our Papers given in to the Assembly. But (1.) I deny, that this is the only way of removing Offences, which some times may cease when they are forsaken, tho' not confessed by Offenders before they be convinced of them, whether the Offenders first forsake their Offences, or their Offences forsake them, they may be removed so, as to cease to be Snares and Grounds of Separation.

(2.) As they may be confessed afterwards, and there is more Access to engage them into a Confession of them in an United Way, than in a Divided Way; So I deny, when now they cease to be Snares and Stumbling-blocks, and we are not required to justify them; that the necessity of Confessing all past Offences is imposed in the Scriptures as a necessary Condition of Communion at all Times, and in all Cases, before Joining. Yea, I deny, that in the forementioned Place of *Inform. Vindic.* it is so to be understood, That we would never, in no Case, join with them before they did Confess their Offences; But only, at that time in these Circumstances, *We could not lawfully embrace them as our Ministers, and concur with them in the Publick Work, as they and we were circumstantiated.* As is expressed in following Cautions, *Caut. §. 1. & §. 2. pag. 92.* And in the Close of the third Caution, *We reckon it not so much the giving the Offence, as Defending of, and Continuing in it, that doth warrant our Withdrawing.* *Pag. 93.* To wit, In these Circumstances, when they continued in the Offence, as now they do not. Not only this, but all that is said in that Book, must be understood with this Caution, which is every where added as a Restriction of all its Pleadings for Withdrawing to the then Circumstances. Hence we have so often these Expressions again and again repeated, *In a broken State of the Church, in a Declining, Backsliding and Troubled State of the Church.* *pag. 36.* *While they persist in their offensive Courses.* *pag. 61.* *Persisting in their Courses,* *Pag. 62.* *Dist. 5. In this Broken and declining State of the Church,* *Pag. 73, 76, 78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 87, 88.* Which is added to every Ground of Withdrawing.

3. I concede, there are some solid and sufficient Grounds necessitating Conscientious People to Withdraw from some Church Communion at all Times. And there are others which only will justify Withdrawing at some times. I approve of these *Hypotheses* in general, as Grounds of Withdrawing at all times, laid down by way of Premission in *Inform. Vindic. Head. 4. pag. 68, 69, 70.* (1.) *We can join with none but such as we must acknowledge Ministers of Christ set over us by the Holy Ghost, and Faithful Stewards of the Mysteries of God, then and there, when and where we join with them,* 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. And so we cannot acknowledge these as *Christ's Ambassadors, by bearing or receiving Ordinances from them who either never had a Call to preach, or never were clothed with Christ's Commission in his orderly appointed way.* Rom. 10. 15. Jer. 23. 21, 22. Joh. 10. 13. as is said *Ground 1. Pag. 71.* But this cannot hinder from Owning and Uniting with Presbyterian Ministers who have a Commission from Christ, and an orderly Call, by Ordination from the Presbytrie, and the Election of the People, which now they hold in Dependence upon, and Subordination unto Christ as King, only in the Time when, and in the Place where they exercise their Ministry. (2.) *We can join with none but such as we must own Church Communion with, in all the Ordinances, both as to Matter and Manner, and Right of Administration then and there——— And can approve in the circumstantiated Way of his dispensing Ordinances, as it must be regulated by the Word.* So that if either of these be wrong, we become Partakers of the Iniquity; They that

eat of the Sacrifice being partakers of the Altar, 2 Cor. 10. 17— 21. This is consonant to the four General Grounds of Separation commonly allowed by all. *Herese in Doctrine, Idolatry, or Breach of the second Command in the Matter and Manner of Worship; Intrusion, or Tyranny of Government (encroaching upon the Right of Administration, and the Exercise of it then and there;)* And Schism, or a divided Government; in which Case there can be no Communion in Ordinances either of Word, Sacraments or Government, as Mr. *Durham* shows on Scandal, *Part. 4. Chap. 13. Pag 341.* But neither can this obstruct nor impede our Communion with the Ministers with whom we are pleading for Union: For, as none can doubt their Right to administrat all Ordinances, so there is none of these Ordinances perverted by them, either in *Matter or Manner*, since they are not Erroneous in Doctrine, nor do break the second Commandment in Worship, nor Intruders or Tyrannical, nor Schismatical in Discipline or Government. (3.) *We can join with none with whom we must, in our Countenancing of them, partake of their evil Deeds, Eph. 5. 7. II. And make our selves in the Righteous Judgment of God obnoxious to their Punishments, Rev. 28. 4.* Which is the fourth and fifth Argument against joining with the Toleration. *Test. Pag. 31.* It is granted by all, there must be then Separation, when there can be no Communion without Sin. And it is a certain Principle, Whensoever it is a Minister's Sin to Preach, and he cannot Preach without Sin, preach as he will, when his very Preaching in such and such Circumstances is his Sin, then it is People's Sin to Hear in such Circumstances. But this is not the Case of Presbyterian Ministers now, who in the present Circumstances may very well Preach without Sin, and consequently may be very well Heard without partaking of their Sin: For, our joining with them in present Duty (as their Preaching now is) cannot be a Partaking of their former Sin; For that sin of theirs does not now affect the Exercise of their Ministry, but is only Personal, which is not a Ground of Withdrawing. (4.) *We can join with none whose Sin we may be interpreted to homologat, either in their Entry to, or Discharge of their Office, or which may be so looked upon as a Test of our Submission to them, or Badge of our Compliance with them, or Sign of our Approbation of them in their Sin, directly or indirectly: For we must advert to what it may be interpreted either in Law, or in our own and others Consciences* 1 Cor. 10. 28, 29. This were a Scandal carrying Offence along with it, strengthening and confirming to the Party joined with, and stumbling to others; Which is the 6th. Argument against joining under the Toleration. *Testim. Pag. 32.* But now the Case is altered with Presbyterian Ministers: The Scandal lies not in joining with them now; For that cannot be interpreted, either in Law, or in any Conscience, an Homologating of the Indulgence or Toleration, being now in the Exercise of their Ministry under none of these: Nor is our Hearing of them, a submitting to, or complying with, or approving of any Sin of theirs directly or indirectly; But the Offence lyes in Withdrawing now; For hereby they may be strengthened and confirmed in their Sin, being tempted to think the former Contendings and Testimonies against it of no

Value,

Value, since now they see them degenerate to Schism and unwarrantable Separation. (5.) *We can join with none from whom a Church duely constituted, invested with the orderly Power of Christ, and Capacity to exercise and improve it, would enjoin us to withdraw by their Censures; Which is allowed in some Case also by the Author of Rectius Instruendum, Dial. 3. pag. 85. But sure this will not oblige us to withdraw from all that offended us in a time of Tentation. No Church in the World, tho never so duely constituted would censure disciplinarily all guilty of Epidemick Backslidings. Or if it should draw forth its disciplinary Censure against all, yet certainly she would not extend it equally; But some would be censured by Deposition (as may be the Addressers for the late Toleration, Perswaders to Conformity with Prelacy, Subscribers of Horrid Oaths, Engagers not to Preach during the Council's Pleasure; I think these may be withdrawn from, if they justify these Courses;) Others would receive a lesser Censure: But Withdrawing is equivalent to the highest Censure, and therefore not to be used with respect to these Offences, especially when past; which would only receive a lesser Degree of Censure. Are there Degrees of Ministerial Authoritative Censure, and no Degrees of our private signifying our Dislike?*

4. I do willingly grant, there may be, at certain Times, in some Circumstances, some Grounds that may justify Withdrawing from Church Communion, which will not infer that Necessity at all times, when these Circumstances alter. I own that which is said in the *Inform. Vindic. In the Declarations of the then State of the Testimony*, pag. 36. *We hold that Schism is a very heinous, hateful, and hurtful Sin; yet this doth not hinder, but that it may be Duty in a Broken State of the Church (Mark this, for that is the special Circumstance of the Case) to withdraw from Ministers chargeable with Defection; seeing this Church had attained to such a high Degree of Reformation (which made Defection the more Heinous,) and seeing by Solemn Covenants, we bound our selves to maintain and defend the same; seeing by reason of the Enemies Subtilty and Cruelty (which both tempted Ministers to comply, and hindred People to have Access to Judicatories for the removing such Offences,) and the Fainting, Falling, and Failing of Ministers, so many dreadful Defections have been introduced, embraced and countenanced; Seeing in these times of Distemp'ring Confusions, we were deprived of the Remedy of settled Judicatories, whereunto we might recur for the rectifying of Disorders (In which Case we still held there should be no Withdrawing without previous Application to these Judicatories;) Therefore we hold it as our Duty, that when a Backsliding or Defection is embraced, avowed, and obstinately defended, (Especially such whereby the very Exercise of the Ministry is held in Dependence upon, Subordination unto, and Compliance with a Wicked Power encroaching upon Christ's Prerogative, and the Churches Priviledges, whereby it is modeled, modified and authorized) in a Declining, Backsliding, and Troubled State of the Church, to leave that part of the Church which hath made such Defection, whether Ministers or Professors, as to a joint Concurrence, in carrying on the publick Work, and to adhere unto the other*

part of the Church, Ministers and Professors, whether more or fewer, who are standing steadfastly to the Defence of the Reformation, witnessing against others who have turned aside, and declined therefrom, until the Defections of the Backsliding Party be confessed, mourned over, and forsaken.—— To wit, in these Circumstances in that Broken State of the Church, and in that Declining, Backsliding, and Troubled State of the Church, as it is there restricted: This is no Separation from the Church of Scotland, either in her Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, on Government, but only a Departing or Going forth from her Sins, Backslidings and Defections, as we are commanded by the Lord. And for a time only, from some Congregations, because of these. This is not a Positive or Active Separation from the Church, casting at it as no Church, or Defaming the Ministry thereof, or gathering new distinct Churches; Only a Negative and Passive Separation, refusing to follow the declining Part of the Church, holding on in their new Course, and choosing rather to stand still, and cleave to that Part, the smaller, endeavouring to retain and maintain the Covenanted Work of Reformation, against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism and Sectarianism, Schism and Defection, as is asserted *Head 4. Dist. 8. pag. 62.* Nor was it a fixed and stured Separation, or Resolution never to join with them in any Circumstances, but only Conditional, while they continued in these Circumstances, without Confessing or Forsaking their Sin. As it is Cautioned *Head 4. Cant. 3. pag. 92.* Hence, tho', I think the Circumstances are much altered, which should induce us to change our way; Yet I have not much changed my Mind about the Grounds laid down for Withdrawing from Ministers in the former Circumstances, *Head 4. from Pag. 71. to 88.* The (1.) I have granted already among the Grounds agreeing with all Times; I allow also of the following. (2.) We judge, these are not to be owned or countenanced in their Administration of Ordinances, who have subjected their Ministry to the Disposal of Strange Lords, by laying it aside, in Obedience to their Mandats, or taking new potestative Mission from them. Or if they pretend to keep their Old one which they had from Christ in his Legal and Appointed Way; yet they have consented to take a new Holding from, and upon a new Architectonic usurped Power and Headship in the Exercise of it, by accepting a new Grant, Licence and Warrant from the Usurpers of their Master's Crown. Upon which Ground, in that broken and declining State of the Church, the Curats, who were ordained Presbyters, were withdrawn from; And these who laid by, and never avouched publicly their Ministerial Exercise; And these who gave a Bond not to Exercise their Ministry for longer or shorter Time; And the Indulged, who imbraced any of the Christ dishonouring, and Church dismaying Indulgences. As also upon this Ground, we withdraw from those that preached under the Toleration, Because by that Bargain and Confederacy with the Tolerater, in the Acceptance of that his Antichristian Toleration, they became in the Exercise of their Ministry, the Servants of Men, and changed the Holding of the Freedom of their Ministry. And because they could not be submitted to without consenting to the great En-
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encroachments made upon both the Priviledges of this Church and Liberties of this Kingdom. Argum. 1. and 2. Testim. pag. 38. But that is expressly restricted to that Broken and Declining State of the Church. Vind. pag. 73. And tantum pro tempore, while they continued in that Course. Testim. pag. 30. Now the Ministry of these with whom we are pleading to unite, is not so circumstantiated; It is not subject to strange Lords, nor have they any Holding, New or Old, upon any Usurped Power; Nor are they by any Confederacy, Servants of Men: Nor is our hearing of them a Submitting unto any Encroachment made upon the Priviledges of this Church, or Liberties of this Kingdom. (3.) We judged, we had sufficient Ground to withdraw from all these who perverted and corrupted their Worship, by preaching and maintaining Errors either in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline or Government, contrary to the Scriptures and our Confessions and Principles of our Covenanted Reformation, and contradictory to our then Testimony. Hence we not only beoved to withdraw from these Ministers that Maintain Errors Fundamental, but in this broken and declining State of the Church, from all these also that oppugned and Withstood our Common Confession of Orthodox Truths received by the Church of Scotland, or maintained Errors condemned thereby, or condemned Truths maintained thereby, And then, in that Case circumstantiated, from all that did contradict, oppose or overturn the Matter of the Church of Scotland's Testimony, and did desert, deny, or pervert the Word of Christ's Patience given her, then to contend for. Upon which Ground, in that broken and declining State of the Church, we extended our Withdrawings to those Presbyterian Ministers who condemned the Martyr's Sufferings, who homologated the Supremacy, who condemned our Declarations against Tyranny, &c. As likewise upon this Ground, we discountenanced them that preached under the Toleration, because the People were in hazard of being perverted from some parts of our Covenanted Reformation. And because sometimes in the Application of their Doctrine, They condemned some essential Parts of the then Testimony, as were the known and received Principles of the Church of Scotland in her best and purest Times, Testim. pag. 31. But as that is restricted to the then broken and declining State in three several Repetitions. Vindic. pag. 74, and 76. So now it cannot be applied to the Generality of the present Ministers, who now neither condemn the then Testimony in their Preaching, nor if they did in some things differ from it, would it be a sufficient Ground of Withdrawing, when that now is not the Testimony, and they are faithful in the present Testimony against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism and Tyranny, &c. (4.) We judged, we had sufficient Ground to withdraw from Ministers guilty of Gross Compliance with the publick Enemies of this Covenanted and Reformed Church and Nation, who have broken the Covenant, destroyed the Reformation, and were still by all Means seeking the Extirpation of all the Owners of the House of GOD. Upon which Ground, in that broken and declining State of the Church, we withdrew from the Indulged and not Indulged that heard the Curats, that Compared before the Courts against the People of God, that subscribed Oaths and Bonds contrary to the Covenants, and that payed the Cess, im-

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posed by the Enemies of this Church and Kingdom; Or any other that complied to that degree, that deserved Deposition, pag. 79. But whatever might be said for justifying that then in that broken and declining State of the Church, pag. 78. when these Compliances were Snares and stumbling Blocks persisted in and defended, that cannot be an Argument now for Withdrawing from all these Compliers, when now the Church is not so declining but recovering her Freedom from Fetters, when now these cease to be Snares and stumbling Blocks, when they are not persisted in, seeing also all these Compliances are not alike, nor do they all deserve Deposition.

(5) We Judged we had sufficient Ground, to withdraw from such Ministers who took the Defence and Patronage of these Courses, and did so palliate and plaister them, and strengthen the Hands and harden the Hearts of those that were engaged in them, that none did turn from such wicked things. Upon which Ground we held our selves oblig'd, in that broken and declining State of the Church, to Withdraw from many Ministers, who had defended, and did then defend those Compliances, and did vindicat palpable and gross Defections, such as preached in favours of the Indulged, and pleaded for Union with them, and who defended the taking of Oaths and Bonds, and advised Prisoners and others thereunto. But this will hold only in a broken and declining State of the Church, pag. 80. When these things continue to be Snares, involving People in the Sin of them, and when their being defended and justified by Preaching and Perswading, does expose People to the hazard of being perverted from their Duty. But now it is not so: Some will not defend them; Some will in Discourse or Dispute, but not in Preaching; Some may Preach in defence of some of these, but not now to perswade People to, or put them in hazard of Joining with these things now removed; And therefore this cannot be a Ground of Separation in the present Circumstances.

(6) We Judged Unfaithfulness in the Exercise of the Ministerial Function, or a smooth Flattering way of Applying the Doctrine to the Times, was a sufficient Ground of Withdrawing, to wit, in the then Circumstances. Upon which Ground, in that broken and declining State of the Church, we Withdrew from many Ministers, and from these who took the Patronage of, and concurred with sinful Associations in War, whereby the State of the Lord's Cause was altered. Of which having said so much in another Paper about that (viz. in the Answer to Robert Hamilton's Protestation) I shall add no more, but that, as it is indeed Unfaithfulness not to declare the Sin of sinful Associations perverting the State of the Lord's Cause, (but all Associations with the Ungodly are not sinful, as I have in that Paper demonstrated) and not to declare the whole Counsel of God plainly and freely as the Time requires; So it is not at all times that every degree hereof is a Ground of Withdrawing, but only in a broken and declining State of the Church, such a degree of it as withholds needful and necessary Instruction at such a time, that yields the Testimony, that lays Men open to Sin, and the Countenancing whereof would be stumbling and offensive. But now many Ministers are

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more Faithful than they were then, in that Hour and Power of Darkneſs & Temptation. (7) *We Judged we had Ground to withdraw from Miniſters Guilty by lying by from their publick Work of Preaching the Goſpel, and deſerting their Miniſterial Duty, When the Peoples urgent Neceſſity and preſſing Call did make it Indispensable; When People were deſtitute of publick and Faithful Warning in the time when Snares were moſt abounding; Yea when the Poor Flock was in greateſt hazard to be turned aſide.* But this was only in that broken and declining State of the Church, pag. 84. Now they have mended that Fault. (8) *We Judged Schiſmatical and Pragmatical Dividers of the Church, and Wideners of the Breach thereof already Broken and Divided, who ſaw Diſcords among Brethren, and promoted their Contentions by invidious Reproaches, or otherwiſe, were to be withdrawn from.* But as this Reproaching, Miſ-informing againſt, Traducing and Condemning one another, was too frequent and mutual on all hands in that broken and declining State of the Church, being reckoned up and ſpoken to above among the fomenting Cauſes of Diviſion; So now it is much fallen, and more Charity would perfect the Cure; And if any thing is to be forgiven and forborn, ſurely it muſt be this. (9) *Finally, We Judged ſcandalous Diſorders and Miſcarriages in either the Miniſterial or Perſonal Walk, Carriage or Converſation of Miniſters, were a ſufficient Ground to withdraw from them,* in that broken and declining State of the Church, pag. 87. But as the Application hereof was not then intended, ſo now much leſs can it be extended to any who are free of ſuch ſcandalous Diſorders, pag. 88. We ſee from all this, that none of theſe former Grounds accommodated to the Circumſtances of the times paſt can juſtify our preſent Withdrawing from all theſe Miniſters, from whom we owned a Negative, Temporary and Conditional Separation before.

5. From what is ſaid above, it muſt be conceded on both hands, that the Diſtinctions of the ſeveral Caſes of the Church are to be conſider'd, whence it will follow that the Rules and Practices obſerved at ſome times, and in ſome caſes, are not to be underſtood as *General and Abſolute Rules laid down for all Times and Caſes of the Church, or for Church Fellowſhip and Communion of Saints in all its degrees.* As is granted expreſſly *Inſorm. Vindic. Head 7, pag. 108.* I adhere then to theſe Diſtinctions premitted *Head 4, from pag. 60, 61. and downward.* (1) *Between a Church in her Infancy and Growing up into Reformation, and an Adult Church, which hath arrived at a higher pitch of Reformation: In the former many things may be tolerated, which may not in the latter. And therefore our Fathers might have born with many things in Miniſters, which we cannot, becauſe we have been reformed from theſe things, which they were not.* But now in the preſent State, the Church is not to be looked upon as Adult, or in a manly Eſtate, as it was in the times of the pureſt Reformation, or in a decrepit Eſtate, as in the times of Deſection and Diviſion; But in an Infant State to be a-new ſettled over again, planted over again, and purged over again, contending, to recover what Reformation it loſt, and to preſerve what it can recover. As in all times

o Reformation and begun Deliverance, the Church is compared to *Children come to the Birth when there is no strength to bring forth*, 2 Kings 19: 3. *Isa. 37: 3.* As the Church of Scotland was not only at the first Reformation from Popery, but over again in an Infant State in the Year 1590. and over again in the Year 1638. and now again in the Year 1690. In which Case the Church cannot be settled all in one Day or one Year, but must crave time, as the building of *Solomon's Temple*, and of the second Temple after the *Babylonish Captivity*, which was not accomplish'd in several years. Nor can it be planted over again all at once, no more than it could be in *Jeshuas* days, or the *Judges*, or in the time of the *Reforming Kings of Judah*, until the *Canaanites* and other Enemies be subdued. Nor can it be purged totally altogether, but gradually, least it be in hazard of a Super-purgation.

(2) *We distinguished between a Church in a growing Case, coming forward out of Darkness, and advancing in Reformation, and a Church declining and going back again.* In the former many things may be born with, which in the latter are no ways to be yielded unto, as in the time of the former Prelacy many did hear *Prelatical Men, &c.* In times of Defection and Division the Church was declining and going back, and in that Case it was needful to be very peremptory in Tenaciousness: But now she is growing and coming forward out of Darkness, and advancing, tho' weakly, in Reformation; And therefore now, sure it must be born with to hear Presbyterian Ministers, tho' formerly guilty of Defections, as much as in former times to hear Prelatical Men.

(3) *We distinguished between a Church in a Reformed and Settled State, and a Church in a broken and disturbed State.* In times of Defection and Division, it was thought the most lawful Expedient and conducible Mean for maintaining the Attained unto Reformation, to abstract and withdraw from such Disorders in Ministers, which we could not otherwise get rectified. But now that is neither the lawful Expedient nor conducible Mean to maintain Reformation; but rather the way to obstruct it, to Withdraw from Ministers, whose former Disorders we would have rectified in a Case where the Church is Settled, so far as to have Liberty to keep General Assemblies to rectify them, and the Government thereof is confirmed with the Civil Sanction of Acts of Parliament.

(4) *We distinguished between a Reformed Church, enjoying her Priviledges and Judicatories, and a Reformed Church denuded of her Priviledges, and deprived of her Judicatories.* In times of Defection and Division, it might be allowed, when Ministers were duely Censurable, according to the Word of God and their own Churches Constitutions, and Censures could not be inflicted, through the want of Church Judicatories, and they still persisted in their Offensive Courses; People might then testify their Sense of the Justness of the Censure to be Inflicted, or Withdrawing from such Ministers, even without the Presbyterial Sentence. But now, when the Church is enjoying her Priviledges and Judicatories, People are to Address themselves unto Church Judicatories, and not to Withdraw from their Ministers, without making prior Application to these. As is granted, *Distinct. 4. Pag. 61.*

(5) *We distinguished between the Ministry in*

the Abstract, and the Ministers in the Concrete. In times of Defection and Division, such Ministers against whom there were solid and just Exceptions according to the Word of God, and the Acts of General Assemblies, striking against them (persisting in their Courses) even unto Deposition, might be Withdrawn from. But now when these Exceptions are not standing against them, and they do not persist in these Courses, their Ministry now in its Exercise separated from these Exceptions can by no means be disowned. (6) We distinguished between a Faithful and a Sinless Ministry. In times of Defection and Division, we might for the want of the former Qualification withdraw, that is, when they were not Faithful. But now when they are more Faithful, we cannot Withdraw, except we would Withdraw from them because they are not Sinless; Which in no Case can be a Ground. (7) We distinguished between Ministers Condemning Doctrinally and Confessing privately, by Conference with offended Brethren, or resenting to them, after some more publick manner, their Defections and Offences, and their Confessing these Ecclesiastically before Church Judicatories. In times of Defection and Division, we judged the former Sufficient, Even in the Then Circumstances. Therefore less might be sufficient now, at least, to justify our Communion with them, when this Communion is not in Defections and Offences, but in Duty and Truth, and when some of these are condemned Doctrinally, and others confessed privately, as might be made out by several Instances. (8) We distinguished between a Separation Negative and Passive, and a Separation Positive and Active. In times of Defection and Division, we owned a Separation Negative, passively considered, opposing only the Transgressions and Defections of this Church, while we choosed to stand still, and not to go all alongst with Others in declining and Offensive Courses. But even then, and much more now, we did deny and must disown a Separation from Communion with this Church in her Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, as she was in her best and purest days. From which we must now separate Positively, if we Withdraw from Ministers that are not going on in declining and offensive Courses, but maintaining the same Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government that the Church had in her best and purest days. I shall add a (9) from what is said *Head. 7. pag. 109, 110.* We distinguish betwixt a Joining, which we may call Catholick or Universal among Christians, considered as such, and an Ecclesiastical joining among Members of one particular Organical Church, considered as Members of that Church. In times of Defection and Division, we had reason to own a Communion qualified with the strictest Conditions amongst the Members of that particular Church, and in our selected Fellowships; Considering the present State of Affairs in that Broken Case of the Church, as it was then. But now, tho' still Organick Communion must be on stricter Terms than Catholick Communion with others that are not Members of the same Organick Church; Yet we cannot deny so much joining, at least, as is allowed with others in Communion Chatholick in its several degrees. If we were in *Africk* or *Asia*, we would join with all Christians holding the same Fundamental Testimony

against *Jews, Turks or Pagans*, tho' not with *Hereticks*. If we were in *Holland or Geneva*, we would join with all *Protestants* holding the same Protestant Testimony with us against *Papists, Arminians, Socinians, Lutherans*, and other *Hereticks or Sectarians or Schismaticks*. If we were in *England or Ireland*, we would join with all our *Covenanted Brethren*, providing they own the *Covenanted Testimony*, albeit they have not the same word of Testimony every way with us: And may we not allow the same with the *Ministers of Scotland*, holding the same *Presbyterian Testimony* against *Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, Tyranny and Malignancy*? At least so far as to hear them, tho' we should have little hand in *Calling of them* that complied grossly, or in *tying our selves fixedly to their Ministry*; Having *Liberty withall to Protest* against their former *Defections and Offences*, and to *Withdraw from them* again, if they shall be stated in the same *Circumstances* wherein they were before, when we maintained a *Separation from them*: Which does no way contradict (as may be objected by some) what is said in our *Engagements to Duties*, renewed at *Leshmahago*, according to *Art. 1. §. 2. If we cannot get these Corruptions Reformed and Removed, we shall study to keep our selves free of Communion and Participation with the same.* And according to *Art. 2. §. 3. We shall Refuse, Withstand and Witness against all such Encroachments on the Liberties of this Church in all time coming, and Withdraw our selves from Communion with all such Meetings and Congregations as hold their Freedom from, and are Modified by such Usurpations.* For now, these *Corruptions* being removed, tho' not *Confessed* as we would desire; tho' we have *Communion with them* in the *Reformed Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government*, at least, tho' we hear them *Preach*, we have no *Communion or Participation with these Corruptions*; But with *Ordinances* now *uncorrupted*. And we may well *Withstand and Witness* against all such *Encroachments*, yea and *Witness* against the not *confessing of Complying* with them; And yet join in their *Meetings*, that now do not hold their *Freedom from*, nor are *Modified by the Indulgence or Toleration*, or any such *Usurpations*. But if ever they be again so stated, we are bound to *Withdraw our selves from Communion with them*.

In the third place, I shall come to state the *Question*, *Removing what is not the State of it, and Proposing what is the true State of it.*

The *Question* is not, first, *Whether we shall own or entertain Union or Communion with Hereticks, Idolaters, or such Apostats* as oppose our *Common Confession of Orthodox Principles*, either in *Fundamental Truths*, or in the *Essential and necessary Substantial Parts of the Testimony of this Reformed Church*. E. G. with *Papists, Arminians, Socinians, Quakers, Sectarians, &c.* With these abiding such, without *Confession and Forsaking of their false Religions*, we own no *Union or Communion* either by way of *Syncretism, Amnestie or Toleration*. Not by *Syncretism*, admitting a mixture of *Opinions*; like the *Samaritans*, fearing the *Lord* and serving their own *Gods* after the manner of the *Nations*. *2 Kings 17. There must be no Union or Com-*

munion between Righteousness and Unrighteousness, Light and Darkeness, Christ and Belial. 2 Cor. 6. That were a deceitful Concision, Phil. 3. 2. Nor must we allow them an *Amnestie*, or Act of Oblivion, but keep in remembrance their *Amalekitish* Practices and Principles, and separate from them as from Strangers. *Neh. 9: 2. Neh. 13: 3.* And come out from among them, 2 Cor. 6: 17. Nor admit a *Toleracion* of them, but Reject them, *Tit. 3: 10.* Not receive them, nor bid them God speed, 2 *Joh. 10.* Nor suffer them, *Rev. 2: 20.* But the Question is, Whether we shall own Union and Communion with Presbyterian Ministers, *whom we love in the Lord, and acknowledge to be Ministers of this Church of Scotland, with whom we sometimes had sweet Fellowship; And with whom again we would desire to have Communion in Ordinances, if our Exceptions were removed.* Inform. Vindic. Head 4. pag. 68 and 92. Who differ from us in some Points, and yet in the present Circumstances that cannot be our Question, with respect to the greatest part of Presbyterian Ministers, who are now known to own and adhere unto the true received Principles of the Church of Scotland, founded upon the written Word of God, and whatsoever Declarations or Testimonies, former or later, particular or more general, are agreeable thereto. For we declared to the World we would Call and Hear all such. Inform. Vindic. Head 5. pag. 95. Which must not be understood of every part, *Pendite, or Clause, or Consequence of our latter Declarations; But if they own and avouch in Profession and Practice, every part of our Covenanted Reformation, and join with us in the Matter of all our Declarations, and Testimonies against Popery, Prelacy, Tyranny, Supremacy, Sectarianism, &c.* Which the greatest part of the Presbyterian Ministers in the present Case do, except that they do not approve of all our Testimonies, against the former Compliances, and Defections: About these is the Controversie.

2. The Question is not, whether we can hold Union or Communion with those Ministers, tho' sound in Principles, who yet are carrying on Courses of Compliances and Defections, Involving all in Sin, that have Communion with them, in a Broken and Declining State of the Church. I own the Lawfulness of Withdrawing in such a Case, when these are established, and stand as Snares: Nor have I yet seen Cause to change my Mind. But the Question is, Whether we can have Communion or Union with these that did indeed comply with the Wicked Establishments of the Time, and were Involved in the Defections of the Church, but now are carrying on Reformation in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government, according to the Institutions of Christ, and the Constitutions of this Church in former Times? And yet it is a Shame that this should be a Question, considering what we Engaged at the Renewing of the Covenant at *Leshmago.* In our Engagement to Duties, according to Article 2. § 4. To wit, *that we shall guard against all Schism or sinful Separation from any part of the Communion of the true Reformed Covenanted Church of Scotland, holding Purely, and Intirely the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the same, in Principles and Exercise; According to the Rules of Christ, and the standing Acts and Constitutions of this Church—*

Union and Communion in Truth and Duty, with all Ministers and Members of the said Church, that do, and in so far as they do follow the Institutions of Christ.

3. The Question is not, whether we shall join in Communion with Ministers, sound in Principles, and in their present Practice and Course, free of former Faults, upon Terms obliging us to Justifie these Defections or Compliances, or to Condemn our Testimonies against them, or to surcease from, or leave off testifying against them: That is not imposed or required; And if it were, I should be yet as much for Separation as ever. But the Question is, Whether we shall join in Union and Communion with these Ministers, that albeit they will not confess them to be Defections, or sinful Compliances, yet do allow us to keep our Opinion, and to Protest against them? Yet it is strange, that this should be Questioned among us, who did Agree in declaring to the World, this was one Reason why we could not seek Licence, or Ordination from the Presbyteries of *Scotland*, as formerly Circumstantiated, *Because of imposed Restrictions, which some before had been Troubled with.* Inform. Vindic. Head, 5. Pag. 100. §. 4. Now these being no more Imposed, that Reason of standing aloof ceases. And when it was objected against the Ordination of that faithful and worthy Minister, Mr. *James Renwick*, that he received it from the Classes of *Groningen*, that differed from *Scotland's* Reformation in several things. We published these among other Answers, *That the Classes did not then object against our Testimony. And That in the Act of Ordination, they did obtrude none of these Differences, but did take him Engaged to Teach, according to the Word of God, and the Confession of Faith of the Church of Scotland, and the Discipline thereof. And that these Differences were openly before them, and plainly and particularly protested against, which was sufficient in such Circumstances.* Inform. Vindic. Head 5. pag. 102. I say, it is strange, whatever different Considerations be betwixt that Church and this, that so much may not be allowed to the Ministers of this Church, that Condescend so far, as that tho there be Differences between us, and many of the Ministers of *Scotland*, yet they do not object against our Testimony, and do not obtrude any of these Differences, but would have us Engaged to the Word of God, and Confession of Faith, and allow us plainly and openly to Protest against their Defections: May not this be sufficient in these Circumstances, as well as in the other?

4. The Question is not, Whether we shall continue to Condemn and Testify against these Defections, for which we did formerly Separate from these Ministers: Herein we are agreed. But the Question is, Whether we shall continue to Condemn and Testify against them, by Communion with them, when we have no Communion with their Defections, or by Separation or Withdrawing from them?

5. The Question is not, Whether we must Join with all these Ministers guilty of former Defections in the grossest Degree, as Perfwaders to hear the Curats, these that were formally Indulged, and actual Addressers for the Toleration, or such as gave Bond not to Preach any more, without the then

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Magistrats express Consent had thereto; Or if there be any grosser than these? But the Question is, whether we may join in Union and Communion with others, besides these that either will not (because they cannot be Convinced of the Guilt of them) *Confess* and *Condemn* the sinfulness of the former Defections of the Times; Or will Confess and Condemn the sinfulness of them, but in an united way, not in a separat way, *not separating from the rest*, because they do not think it a Ground sufficient for withdrawing? This is the Hinge of the Controversie; And more summarily may be reduced to this Complex Question.

Whether or not may we have so much Respect to the Ordinances and Peace of the Church in the present Circumstances, as no longer to withdraw from, but join in Union and Communion with the Presbyterian Ministers of the Church of *Scotland*, that do own and adhere unto the true received Principles of the said Church, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, grounded upon, and consonant unto the Written Word of God; who being guilty of Defections in times of Tentation, will not now acknowledge the same, or acknowledging and Condemning them, will not separat themselves from the rest that will not Confess them, thinking this no Ground of Withdrawing at such a Time, and in such a Case, when these Defections and Corruptions are not in the Constitution of the Church, and do not continue to be Snares, when none are required to Justifie them, nor to Condemn any Testimonies against them; And Liberty is granted to Protest against them, and to continue to plead for Confessing and Condemning them; When also several Guilty of the grossest Degrees of Defections are excepted from being United with? I hold the Affirmative, That both these Ministers that cannot Confess, because not Convinced of the Sinfulness of these Defections; and those that do Confess and Condemn them, but will not come off from the rest, may be Joined with in Union and Communion, notwithstanding former Provocations not Confessed; And that their not Confessing of these Offences, is not a sufficient Ground of Withdrawing from Church Communion, before the decisive Sentence of the Church as now Constituted. This as it consists, and is qualified with the forgoing Concessions, I shall endeavour to make good by proposing and proving several Assertions.

1. There may be Union and Communion with Ministers or Professors, with whom we may differ in Judgment and Practice about many things, and they will not acknowledge their Mistake: I mean not, if their Differences be about Fundamentals; We are to have no Union or Communion with these that hold Errors, Pernicious and Damnable, Obvious and Evident, Scandalous and Hurtful to Edification: But if the Difference be consistent with the Foundation and Edification, Doubtful, and not of dangerous Consequence, and not Heretical or Schismatical, and rather Negative (both Partys endeavouring the Thriving of the Work of the Gospel) than Positive in Marring and Counteracting each other in it; There may be very well Union and Communion between Parties so differing, without Sin: Union in this case, is to be Endeavoured by all Expedient and Adapted Means;

Not by such Means as will undo the one side, and only set up the other; For that tends not to the Good of the Whole; Nor that by such means as may incapacitate any Minister or Member of either side, that is fit for Edifying the Church, from having access thereunto; Nor by such means as are simply Authoritative, Condemning and Censuring Judicially the dissentient Party; That is the way of Governing an United Church, but not of Uniting a Rent Church, that's a Remedy very apposite to a Church that is Healthy, but not for a sick Church. But it is to be Endeavoured, by Peaceable Conferences, managed with all Mutual Condescension possible, without Janglings, Re-criminations and Irritating Exprobrations or Reproaches, to the end one Party may be Convinced, and brought over to the other, or both agree in one Sentiment: Or, if that cannot be obtained, Union is to be Endeavoured, notwithstanding, by mutual forbearance in things Controverted, forbearing to engage Judicially in Sentences of Judicatories, abstaining from Pressing or Propogating Differences, or putting Restraint on others Light or Practices according to it. But if this Union cannot be obtained, there may be Communion, and must be no Separation or Withdrawing, upon the Account of such Differences. This I confirm by Scripture and Reason. (1.) There have been many Differences among the Godly, without either Division or Separation Maintained or Enjoyed; *Paul* and *Barnabas* had a sharp Contention, whether *John Mark* who was guilty of Lurking and lying by from the Work of the Gospel, and Deserting Ministerial Duty, should be taken alongst with them in Visiting the Church, as *Act: 15. 36. 39.* Here was a Negative Division, they Departed asunder the one from the other, but not Positive, because both of them did Endeavour the Thriving of the Gospel, without any Counteracting one another; Nor did the one of them ever refuse to hear the other, or reprove others for hearing either of them, upon the Account of that Difference; And yet neither of them would Confess their Error. (2.) We find Differences about considerable Points, referred to an Ecclesiastick Judicature, where the Decision was to forbear the pressing of these Differences, and to Condescend on both Hands; but not to Separat one from another, upon the Account of these Differences. In that same Chapter *Act: 15.* There was a great Diffension about Circumcision and Observance of Mosaical Ceremonies, Referred to the Apostles and Elders at *Jerusalem.* Tho' *Peter* did clearly enough Define who was in the wrong, yet he only Censures the Pressing and Imposing of these Ceremonies *Vers. 10.* *James* only pleads for Condescension, that the Gentiles might not be Troubled nor Imposed upon; and that on the other hand, they might condescend to the *Jews, to abstain from things strangled and from Blood, Vers. 19. 20.* which might offend the other Party: Here is no Division, nor Separation, or Withdrawing enjoined at all. (3.) We find there have been many Debates and Differences in Judgment and Practice in several Churches, where yet Union and Communion hath been Commanded. As (1) In the Church of *Rome*, in the Apostolick times, there were sundry differences of Judgment and Practice, about Eating Meats, and Observing

Days, wherein there was a Truth and an Error, a Right and a Wrong, Yet the Apostle Commands, *Rom. 14. 1. To receive one another, but not to doubtful Disputations.* And *Rom. 15. 1. 7. That the Strong should bear the Infirmities of the Weak: And not to please themselves in seeking to press their own Judgment, but to receive one another.* Where he rather Presses Forbearance, than dipping into Debates, and Respect to Unity and Charity, rather than in Resolving the Case, to astrict them to this side or that of the Controversie; but does not allow them to Withdraw one from another. (2) In the Church of *Corinth*, there were sundry Differences of Judgement and Practice about Parties, and the Heads of Parties, *1. Cor. 1. 10. 11.* Wherein they were very Carnal, *1. Cor. 3. 3.* about Eating things offered unto Idols, wherein there were many Offences, *1. Cor. 8. 1. 12. 13.* about the manner of Communicating, and the Persons with whom they might Communicate in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, *1. Cor. 11.* And some were very hot in these Differences, in so much that they Reproached the Apostle, as if he walked after the Flesh: Yet the Apostle Reproves their Devisions, Exhorts them to have no Schisme in the Body, and seeks rather to Heal their Breaches, and obtain mutual Forbearance in them, than peremptorily to decide the Controversies. And *2. Cor. 10. 6. 8.* We find him Reproving those that Reproached him, yet sparing the Rod for a time, with respect to the Edification of the Church, seeking first to Recover them, & then to Chastise them, for if he had done it before, it would have Widened the Breaches. (3) In the Church of *Galatia*, there were sundry differences of Judgement and Practice, about Beggarly Elements, of Ceremonies and Observing days, *Gal. 4. 9. 10.* about Circumcision. Yet the Apostle Commands, to restore them in Meekness, and to bear Burthens with them; *Gal. 6. 1. 2.* And tho he Wissheth some were cut off by Censure that troubled them, *Gal. 5. 12.* yet he does it not, but in his own Example, forbears, to commend Forbearance to them: Never a Word of Withdrawing there, except they should Confess their Mistakes. (4) In the Church of *Philippi* there were Differences, yet the Apostle commends Forbearance, *Phil. 3. 15. 16.* *If in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you; nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same thing.* No Withdrawing for Differences, until Mistakes be Confessed and Acknowledged. (5) In the Churches of the *Hebrews* there were many Differences, about the Meaning and Use of *Moses's* Ceremonial Law, which the Apostle takes so much pains to Explain, Unfold and Resolve in his Epistle to them, yet he Commands Joining, *Heb. 10. 25.* *Not forsaking the Assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is, but Exhorting one another.* Where he does not bid us Suspend our Meeting together, or Joining in Church Assemblies, until Differences be removed by Confessing. 4. There are also several Reasons for this, (1) That which does not fall under the Name of Scandal as such, cannot be a Ground of Withdrawing; But Differences of Judgment and Practice qualified as above, do not fall under the Charge of Scandal as such; Otherwise it would be a Scandal, not to have the same, or

equal Understanding of all things; For where that is imperfect or unequal; there must be Differences in Judgment about many things, and Consequently in Practice, Conscienciously following the Judgment. Yea, if a Scandal lay in these things, then it were Impossible ever to be without Scandals: For either we behoved to agree in all Things, or differ in some Things; If we differed, either we behoved to Confess our Mistakes, before we were Convinced, and that were a Sin, or not Confess, and that were a Scandal: And this Pleading might be mutual on both sides. (2) If Differences in Judgment and Practice were a Sufficient Ground of Withdrawing, then there shall never be Unity in the World in any Church; For it cannot be expected, that they shall be Unanimous in all such things, or that the greater part shall cede to the lesser, when there is Difference. And if there be Parties kept up upon such Differences, can it be expected that these Parties so divided, shall have no more Differences within each Party; And if they have. shall there be a new Division and Subdivision, until some Unity be found. And seing, that at length must be resolved upon amongst some, notwithstanding of Differences, it is as good to keep it at first, as to be necessitated to it afterwards. (3.) If Differences of Judgment about such things, cannot warrant a Breach where there is Union, then they cannot warrantably be the Ground of Separation; For no Party, by dividing upon an unjust Ground, can afterward be justified upon the same Ground. But Differences of Judgement or Practice, in things so-qualified as above, cannot warrant a Breach, where there is Union: For then there could never be Union kept: Therefore they cannot be a Ground of Separation. (4) Such Differences as do not make Communion in a Church and in its Ordinances sinful, cannot be a Ground of Separation; But such are these as hinder no Duty, press to no Sin, where no Obligation is required to Approve what they Condemned before, or Condemn what they Approved before: And there is no Involvement either in Personal Guilt or accession to the Guilt of others. These are the common Rules of Union approved of all, and confirmed at length by Mr. Durham on Scandal. Part. 4. Chap. 7, &c. But we need not take up time in proving this, which is Granted, *Inform. Vind. Head 4.* Among the insufficient Grounds of Separation, § 2. pag. 65. It is conceded, *Difference in Judgment is not sufficient to found a Withdrawing, if it be either in things indifferent in their own Nature, which may be done or not done, &c. Or if it be in things that are not Material; Or not the Word of Patience or Matter of Testimony, Rom: 14. 1. Nor that which follows upon the former, to wit, every Difference in Practice, according to the Judgment and Light of Conscience, in things that are not Disorderly, for though we could not allow such a thing in our selves, yet it ought not to hinder our Joining, Phil. 3. 15. 16. And §. 4. Pag. 66. Such Circumstantial and Controversial Points, which were never Ecclesiastically reformed by our Church in her Best and Purest times, nor Doctrinally Condemned and Witnessed against, by any of the faithful Ministers:— will not hinder our Joining with them. And § 5. Pag. 67. Nor any such Points of Controversie of lesser Moment, which may be incident among Christians, overturning no*

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part of the Churches Testimony against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, together with Defection, Schism and Error. And little less is granted in the Declaration of the State of the Testimony, Cant. 1. page 41. 42. We do not press every Part or Pendicle, Clause or Consequence of every one of our latter Declarations, as the Bond of our Communion, &c. From all this I argue, If Differences of Judgment and Practice as abovequalified, cannot found a Withdrawing from Ministers and Professors in Church Communion, then, notwithstanding of all our Differences with the Ministers of the Church of Scotland, with whom we are pleading for Union, we may have Communion with them in Ordinances: For the Debate being only about not confessing of former Defections, now not continued in the practice of them, it is a meer Difference of Judgment and Practice, while none are required to countenance these Defections, or approve of them; Only some will not acknowledge them; Some will, but cannot withdraw from them that will not. This is not about Error pernicious and damnable, obvious and evident, scandalous and hurtful to Edification; But a doubtful Disputation, Restraining no Duty, Constraining to no Sin, Imposing no Approbation of what was formerly Condemned, and a Condemning of what was formerly Approved. This is no matter of Testimony; For it was never declared in the best and purest Times of Reformation; Nor either Doctrinally or Judicially determined, that the not confessing of these Defections was a Ground of Separation. Nor can it overturn any part of the Churches Testimony against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, Defection, Schism or Error; to say, that the bearing of Curats, receiving of Indulgences or Toleration, be Defections; Yet the not confessing them as Defections, is not a Ground of Withdrawing. Therefore notwithstanding of these Differences, we may have Communion with them in Ordinances.

2. There may be Union and Communion with Ministers, or Professors that labour under, and are chargable with many Imperfections, Infirmities, and Faults personal, even not Confessed; as *Aaron* and *Miriam*. There may be much Dissatisfaction with many Ministers and Members of the Church, which will not be a Ground of Withdrawing: And certainly in all times of Divisions, there will be atwise on both sides, much Matter of mutual Upbraidings, objecting and upcasting Failings and Miscarriages. But in this Case Union should be endeavoured, and Reconciliation essayed; Not by putting the things objected to Proof, and so prosecuting long Debates about uncertain personal Faults, tho sometimes that is expedient to put Slanders to legal Trial: But it were better to endeavour Union, *quadam incerta Crimina pro certa Pace, Deo dimittendo*; That is, by leaving these doubtful Faults to God and their own Conscience; To obtain undoubted Peace in Meekness, Tenderness, Condescending and Forbearing; And by mutual forbearing one another their Faults and Offences, without Upbraidings. These Imperfections, Infirmities or Faults, are either, 1. *Natural* through weakness of Parts; As if a Minister through Ignorance, should mistake some Points

of Truth or Duty ; Or through Want of Information, should misconstrue us and our Testimony : We should not withdraw from him for that, nor suspend our joining till he be better instructed. *Apollos* knew only the Baptism of *John*, and needed the way of God to be more perfectly expounded unto him ; Yet *Aquila* and *Priscilla* heard him before he was instructed, *Acts* 18. 24, 26. There can be no Ground of withdrawing here, even albeit the Persons cannot confess their Weakness. Or 2. These Imperfections are *Spiritual*; as want of Zeal, Tenderness, Love, Sincerity, Faith and Fervour, or the like Graces : As suppose Ministers when we come to Consult them about a Case of Conscience, should offend us much in Resolving them, and hurt us and confound us more, rather than heal and comfort us ; We should not withdraw from them for that. The Spouse of Christ Complains, *Cant.* 5. 7. *The Watchmen that went about the City found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the Keepers of the Walls took away my Veil from me.* That is, they were very indexterous and untender in their Dealings with her, and no doubt offended her much : Yet when she enquired at her Beloved where *He Fed*, and whither she should go for Communion in Ordinances, He sends her to Feed besides the Shepherds Tents, *Cant.* 1. 7, 8. And bids her join with them ; Yet there is no word of their Confessing their Faults. Or suppose, Ministers should for fear in an hour of Tentation, prove unfaithful at a time, that is no Ground of Withdrawing. *Peter* and *Barnabas* drawn away with him into Dissimulation, proved unfaithful in their Way with the *Jews* ; *Paul* reproved them for that, and testified against them to their Face, *Gal.* 2. 11. 12, &c. But did not withdraw from them : Nor do we read, that he required Confession of them before he would have Communion with them again. Suppose again, which is undeniable, Ministers be Hypocrites and not sincere, yet it is no sin to join with them ; As with *Judas* in the College of the Apostles ; With the Ministers of the Church of *Sardin*, that had a Name they were living yet were dead ; And of *Laodicea*, that were neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm and indifferent, *Rev.* 3. 1, 15, 16. Yea tho there be evident Tokens, of their selfish and sinister Ends in Preaching ; Yet it is no sin to join with them. Among the *Philippians* Some preached Christ but of Envy, Strife and Contention, not sincerely, supposing to add Affliction to the Apostles Bonds, *Phil.* 1. 18. Yet says the Apostle, *What then, notwithstanding every way, whether in Pretence or in Truth, Christ is Preached, and therein do I rejoice, yea and will rejoice.* And notwithstanding, *Phil.* 2. 21. *They all sought their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ.* Yet he exhorts to Union, *Phil.* 2. 1, 2. And Forbearance, *Phil.* 3. 15, 16. Or 3. These Infirmities and Failings are Moral in outward practices which are offensive, whereinto sometimes even good Men may fall, under some Tentations. As suppose some Ministers in Pride, Passion or Prejudice, should utter Expressions importing Contempt of us and our Testimony ; That is no Ground of Withdrawing, *Aaron* and *Miriam* spoke against *Moses*, and accused him for Marrying the *Ethiopian Woman*, *Numb.* 12. 1. And did not confess the same till the Lord

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convinced them in an extraordinary way: Yet *Moses* in meekness did forbear them. Yea, suppose some should, in an hour of Tentation, for fear of their Life, dissemble, instead of giving a Testimony, as *Peter* and *Barnabas* did; This were no Ground of Withdrawing, as said is. Yea, or if one should take some unlawful Bond in such a Case to save his Life, and yet may be will not confess it, because he thought it not a Head to state his Sufferings upon, certainly he is to be reprov'd for it, but not in every Case to be withdrawn from; For that was his Infirmary, and therefore he is to be restored in the *Spirit of Meekness*. Considering our selves, lest we also be tempted, *Gal: 6.*

1. Reasons also confirm this, For 1. To expect a Church free of personal Failings, is to expect the Barn Floor shall be without Chaff, and to unite with none but the Church Triumphant. 2. Personal Failings cannot pollute the Ordinances to us, to make our joining with them sin upon that Account, whether they confess them or not: For then the not confessing Hypocrisy, would make it sinful to join with Hypocrites. And if the not confessing of one Failing be a Ground of Withdrawing, why not the not confessing of others? And if the defending or excusing of one sin be a Ground of Withdrawing, why not the defending of any, even of Hypocrisy. 3. All the common Rules of Union agree with this: For personal Failings confessed or not confessed, cannot warrant a Breach where there is Union or Communion, else there could be no Union or Communion in the World kept up for a Years time. And therefore, if that Ground cannot be a Warrant for Separation where there is Union, then it cannot warrant a continuance of it to the hinderance of Union. Personal Failings confessed or not confessed, do not involve us in the guilt of them, if we testify against them, and mourn over them: Nor do they oblige us to condemn Duty or justify Sin, or restrain us from any thing that we are called to. I need say the less of this, because the whole is confessed. *Inform. Vindic. Head 4.* in the first and third insufficient Grounds of Withdrawing, page 64, 65, 66. which I need not transcribe. And in *Distinct.* forecited page 66. But from this I argue, if the personal Imperfections, Infirmities, Faults and Failings of Ministers, be not a Ground of Withdrawing from their Ministry, then we may have Communion with the Ministers of *Scotland*, about whom the Question is. For the Question is not about their Scandalous Defections, Whether we shall Join with them in these, or Countenance the Exercise of their Ministry under these? but about not confessing of the Guilt of them. Now, this omission of Confession, or refusing of Acknowledgement is not an *Official* or *Ministerial* Sin, affecting the Exercise of their Ministry, by vertue of which they Preach; But now only Personal, through want of Knowledge or Conviction, or Confidence or Sincerity: None of which is a sufficient Ground of Withdrawing.

3. There may be Union and Communion with Ministers and Professors, that not only are chargable with Failings, but many Scandals even not Confessed. I do not say, in no Case are Scandals sufficient Ground of Withdrawing. Such as are Atrocious, Reproachful, and Religion Infectious, like to

spread, and leaven all in Communion with such a Congregation; Especially when not only they are Personal, but Official, affecting the Exercise of Ministerial Duties, which cannot be done but by vertue of, and as Authorized by Scandals in a broken State of the Church; These are sufficient Grounds of Separation; And even in a settled State may be Grounds of Secession. Accordingly we declared in *Inform. Vindic. Head 5. pag. 98. §. 3.* That we would Call and Hear such Ministers, *as then we had just Exceptions against whatsoever the right Removal thereof shall satisfy our Consciences by their Condemning Defections; Testifying before God and the World their Resentment of the same, and taking up the right State of the Quarrel. Let us still stick at this, that we would not Call or Hear any Ministers, against whom we had just, solid and valid Exceptions, until the same be rightly Removed in manner foresaid.* This is allowable in that circumstantiated Case, when these Exceptions were Solid and Valid; That is, when they were Infectious, hazarding the Involving of all that Countenanced them in the Sin of these Scandals, when they were Official, affecting the Exercise of their Ministry; So that they could not Preach but in such a scandalous way; In that broken State of the Church, we could not Call or Hear them, except they should have satisfied our Consciences by Condemning and Confessing of these Scandals. Yea it is conceded, that some of these Scandals most Reproachful to the Church, may be Grounds of Secession from one Congregation to another: But for Withdrawing from the Church, or all that were then, or are yet Chargable with these Defections, these Exceptions are not solid and valid Grounds; For now they are not Infectious nor Official, since they Preach by another Right and another Authority than these Scandals. And now there are many Ministers to be found, to whom these adjective Epithets are not applicable, about which the Question used to be about that time, *Head 7. pag. 108. 111.* That is who are neither *Compliers with the Enemy, nor silent in lying by from the Publick Work, or not discovering the palpable Sins of the Time; Nor in such a measure Unfaithful, as would be deemed Censurable by our Church Constitutions,* tho' at that time they were chargable with these things; And I wish these that were then, or continue to be mostly chargable with these things, were Censured condignly. Respect to the Honour of Christ, and to the Churches Peace, would plead for this. But all the Exceptions that we can have against many Ministers, is their hearing the Indulged, their Preaching with them under the Toleration, without either Addressing for it or Witnessing against it, their Silence and other pieces of Unfaithfulness of that Nature, in times of Temptation, would never be deemed a Ground of *Deposition* (for that only is the Censure which can Justify Withdrawing; See *Head 4. Pag. 19.* since that only enjoins to Withdraw; *Pag. 70.*) by our Church Constitutions. Nor if there were Ground for such a Censure at other times, could it be now expedient to draw forth such a Censure, and depose all that are so guilty in this Epidemick Involvement. Nor can we warrantably withdraw upon this Account, because these Scandals are not Censured nor remo-

ved by Confession, in such a Case, wherein Faithful Men may follow Peace, and do their Duty, and therein acquiesce without partaking of the Faults of others. For upon the Censuring of all Scandals, (especially the Ep'demick) Union cannot be suspended, but would rather be pressed, that Scandal might be gotten orderly Censured: Yea when Union comes in Competition with the Censuring of Unfaithful Men, and both cannot be obtained together, Union is to be preferred; As we find the Apostle doth, when the Evils and Inconveniencies of Schism are greater and more hurtful to the Church than the Evil of such an Union. In times of Division, Purging is not to be so much pressed as in times of Union, but then in several Cases, Censures of Unfaithful Men may be spared out of respect to the Churches Good; As Mr. Gillespie proves in his *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, and Mr. Durham on Scandal, Part. 4. Ch. 17. In this Case Union is not to be suspended, but either these Debates about Scandals waved for a time, or referred to a more convenient Season; Especially when the Scandals are to be looked upon as past, and may probably never recur. And so the common Rules of Union may be observed, that is, when the Scandals are such as would not warrant a Separation in Times of Union, when they do not make Communion in Ordinances sinful, when there is access for a Faithful Man to discharge his Duty, and there is no hazard of partaking of the Guilt of these Scandals. I prove this from Scripture and Reason. Many Instances Scriptural do clear it. 1. In the Church of Israel in the Times of the Judges, especially in that loose time like ours, when there was no King in Israel, and every Man did that which was right in his own eyes, the whole Tribe of Benjamin became scandalous in Defection, in Compliance with the Men of Gibeah; Yet after their discomfiture the whole Congregation sent to them in the Rock Rimmon, not only to enter into an Association of Peace with them, (as I noted in the Debates about Association) but to restore them to all the Privileges they enjoyed before, and consequently Church Fellowship among the rest, as to attend the Feast of the Lord in Shiloh, &c. *Judg. 21. 13, 14, &c.* For now the Scandal was past, and no more a continuing Snare. But whatever Confession was after this Union, it was not proposed as the Term or Condition of Communion with them at first. 2. In that same Church, in the days of Eli, a very Indulging Priest his Sons Hophni and Phinehas were very scandalous Church Officers, being Sons of Belial, that knew not the Lord, Covetous Wretches, scandalously Adulterous, in so much that Men were made to abhor the Offering of the Lord. *1 Sam. 2. 12—17.* Yet Godly, *Elkanah* and *Hannah* the Mother of *Sammuel*, went up yearly to Worship and to Sacrifice unto the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh, albeit the two Sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the Priests of the Lord were there, *1 Sam. 1. 3.* This was not their Sin, because their Scandals, tho' atrocious, were Personal and not Official; They did not Sacrifice by virtue of their Scandals, and so they did not pollute the Ordinances, nor make Communion in them sinful, nor did they make *Elkanah* Partaker of the Guilt of them. But it is certain they continued in them, without Confessing and

Forfaking. 3. After the Captivity, in the Days of *Ezra*, the Church Officers were charged with feveral Scandals: The Priests and the Levites did not feperate themfelves from the People of the Lands, doing according to their Abominations even of the *Canaanites* and the *Hittites*, &c. For they took frange Wives of their Daughters for themfelves and their Sons, joining in Affinity with the People of thefe Abominations; As *Ezra* laments afterwards, *Ezra* 9. Yet before then, even when thefe Scandals were not removed by Confeflion, the Godly joined with them in Ordinances. *The Children of Ifrael, the Priests and the Levites, and the reft of the Children of the Captivity, kept the Dedication of the Houfe of God with Joy, and Offered one hundred Bullocks, two hundred Rams, &c. Ezra* 6: 16, 17. to the end. Also at the delivering of the Veffels of the Houfe of the Lord, by number and weight, the Children of thofe that had been carried away, Offered Burnt-offerings unto the God of Ifrael, in Communion with thefe Priests and Levites. *Ezra* 8: 35. This was not their Sin, becaufe the Scandals were not Official, and tho' of evil Example to the People, to enfnare them into the fame Sin, yet it was not their Sin to Sacrifice. And the Peoples joining with them, was not a Countenancing or Communicating with them in the Sin of their Scandals. But this joining was before their Confeflion, and not Sufpended upon that. In like manner, in the days of *Nehemiah*, *Eliashib* the Priest having the Overfight of the Chamber of the Houfe of God, was under Scandal, in being Allied unto *Tobiah*, and in preparing for *Tobiah* a Chamber in the Courts of the Houfe of God, *Neh.* 13. 4, 7. for which he was put away. Also at the fame time one of the Sons of *Jofada* the Son of *Eliashib* the high Priest, was Son in Law to *Sanballat the Horonite*; Therefore he was chafed away in like manner. Thefe two had defiled the Priefthood, and the Covenant of the Priefthood, and of the Levites, *Neh.* 13. 28, 29. Yet before thefe Scandals were removed by Confeflion or Cenfure the People had joined with them all the time, v. 3. 4. This was not their Sin, becaufe, as they were Ignorant of their Sin and Scandal of thefe Compliances, (as People in one day cannot know whether many Minifters be guilty of Compliance, or not, or if that Guilt be a Ground of withdrawing, or not) fo the Scandals were not Official, nor did Communion with thefe Priests involve them in the Sin of their Scandals. 5. In the Church of *Corinth*, there were many Scandals among the Officers and Members of that Church; Inceft was not Cenfured. *1 Cor.* 5. 1. 2. Some went to the Law with their Brethren to the Offence of others. *1 Cor.* 6. 1. Some committed Fornication, *1 Cor.* 6. 15, 16, 18. They offended their Brethren by their Scandals, and Wounded their weak Confcience, *1 Cor.* 8. 12. They did Eat in Idols Temples, having thereby Fellowship with Devils, and Provoking the Lord to Jealoufie, *1 Cor.* 10. 22. They were divided in Communicating; And at the Lords Supper, one was Hungry, another Drunk, *1 Cor.* 11. 21. And for thefe things they were threatned with Cenfures, and the Apoftolick Rod. Some of them, even Officers, were puffed up, defiring his Cenfure, *1 Cor.* 4. 18, 19, 21. And Reproaching the Apoftle, as if he walked after the

Flefh,

Flesh, 2 Cor. 10. 2. Yet for Respect to the Good of the Church, and for preventing the Stumbling of the Weak, and for preventing the further Mischances of such as should have been Censured, we find the Apostle would not Censure in such a Case, lest he should state a Schism, Gal. 5. 12. Tho' he Asserts, and Vindicates his Power to Censure, 2 Cor. 10. 8, 9, 12. And Communion was still intainted in Ordinances by the Godly; Yea, enjoyned by the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11. 22, 23. Albeit there were many Scandals among them, and these not removed by Censure, or Confession. This was not their Sin, because the Scandals of others that did joyn with them, did not Pollute the Ordinances to them, nor make Communion in them Sinful. They were not Official Scandals; If every one of them examined himself, and did Partake of the Ordinance worthily himself, no more was required. Reason also doth Confirm it: For 1. Scandals of Officers personal, cannot pollute Communion in Ordinances, no more than the Graciousness, or Inoffensiveness of Officers can Sanctify Communion in Ordinances; For we can no otherwise Partake of the Evil, than of the Good of another in Church Communion. As is proven by *Durham on Scandal*, Part. 2. Chap. 12. And by *Rutherford in his Peaceable Plea*, Chap. 10. *Conclusi. 5. Pag. 132. &c.* where he proves this Conclusion, *It is not lawful to Separate* from any Worship of the Church for the Sins of the Fellow Worshipers, whether they be Officers or private Christians. 2. Confession of Scandal supposeth Conviction; Conviction supposeth Information, and the same Sentiments of these Scandals that we have: Must there therefore be no Union or Communion with any, until they be of the same Sentiments with our selves? This is disproved before, that difference of Judgment is not a Ground of Withdrawing, otherwise there had never been Union or Communion in the Church since the beginning of the World; For they were never of one Judgment about Sin and Duty. And shall we Condemn the Generation of Gods People in former Times, who entertained Union and Communion among themselves, without pressing this. 3. If Confession be necessary, Withdrawing is not the Way to engage to it, which doth Imbitter and Confuse Men in their Opinion. Now from this I Argue, If Scandals personal, be not a Ground of Withdrawing, then we may have Communion with the Presbyterian Ministers of *Scotland*, concerning whom the Debate is. For these Scandals are now past, not abiding to be Snares or Stumbling Blocks; Not Involving us in the Guilt of them, if we Protest against them, and Mourn for them. And now, no more Official Scandals, under which, and by vertue of which, they have Liberty to exercise their Ministry, it being founded now upon another Authority and Right, and separated from these Scandals.

4. There may be Union and Communion with Ministers and Professors in a Church where many Corruptions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government are Tolerated and Intertained, neither Confessed nor Reformed. It is evident by former Concessions. I do not mean either Heresie in Doctrine, Idolatry in Worship, Tyranny in Discipline, Intrusion in Govern-

ment

ment, or Schism in Communion; Or such Corruptions as are inseparable from the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, making our Communion with the Church a Participation with, and Homologation of the Guilt of these Corruptions; Such as Popery, *Arminianism*, *Socinianism*, *Quakerism*, and other Errors in Doctrine, *Idolatry*, *Superstition*, *Leiturgies*, *Humane Ceremonies*, *Inventions* contrair unto the Second Command in Worship. *Prelacy*, *Erastianism*, *Indulgence*, *Toleration*, &c. in Discipline and Government; Or *Sectarianism*, *Brownism*, or *Gibism*, or other Schismes in Communion, while these Corruptions remain. But it is as evident; that there may be Union and Communion with a Church, where there are several Corruptions neither Confessed, nor Reformed; Even all such wherein these Common Rules may be Conserved; Such as would not warrant a Separation, if the Church were United before; Such as do not make Communion in Ordinances Sinful; Such as give Access to Faithful Men to discharge their Duty; Such as do not preclude Edification; And such as do not Involve us in the Sin of them, either by putting us to Condemn what we approved before, or approve what we Condemned before, or Restraining from any Duty. As for Example, in Doctrine there may be Difference of Judgment, about many Things, of which before, and Doctrinal Determinations of Disputable Points exacted by Synods, contrary to our Sentiments; And yet there may be Forbearance with Protestation, if we be not constrained to Subscrib, or Homologat the same. In Worshop there may be many Defects and Disorders, and such things as had need to be Reformed; Yet Consistent with Union and Communion. In Discipline and Government, there may be many Dissatisfactions with Church Officers, Unjust Censures, Unfit Ordinations, Erroneous Decisions Synodical, wrong Constitutions of Judicatories, Dissatisfactions with Persons that have the main Stroke in the Administrations, occasioning Jealousies and Fears of Misgovernment for the time to come, and the like; In which it is impossible that divided Parties, can expect full Satisfaction to their Mind, or to their Light. But they may keep themselves free of Sin, by Mourning for these things; Witnessing, Protesting, and Wrestling against them, without Withdrawing from Church Communion; Which I prove from Scripture and Reason. In Scripture we find, 1. In the Church of *Israel* in the Wilderness, there were many Corruptions and Defections, they turned aside quickly out of the way unto *Idolatry*, Worshipping the Golden Calf, wherein *Aaron* the Priest had a great hand, *Exod.* 32. They were Defiled with, and not Cleansed from the Iniquity of *Baal-Peor*, *Numb.* 6. 6. 25. *Josh.* 22. 17. They Rebelled, Murmured, and Mutinied against the Lord, and against *Moses*, appointing to themselves a Captain to return to *Egypt*. *Numb.* 14. *Neh.* 9. 17, 18. Yea, when they were Reproved and Witnessed against, they Threatned to Stone the Lords Servants with Stones, *Numb.* 14. And in the Schism of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, who, with their Adherents, separated from *Moses*, the People Murmuring against *Moses*, and *Aaron* took part with the Schismaticks, even when the Lord had Convicted and

and Punished them, saying, *They had killed the People of the Lord, Numb. 16. 41. They had Corrupted themselves, their Spot was not the Spot of his Children, they were a perverse and crooked Generation, Deut. 32. 5. They forsook God, and provoked him to Jealousie with strange Gods, they Sacrificed to Devils, not to God, v. 16, 17.* All which Corruptions in Worship, Discipline, Government, and Conversation, were still continued in, not Reformed, and never Confessed, until God extorted it by Judgments; Yet all that time before their Confessing, or Forsaking, the Faithful did abide in the Communion of that Church, and did not Separate from the Congregation or Tabernacle; Which was not their Sin, because they did not Communicat with them in these Corruptions, only in the Worship of God separable from these Corruptions: In the mean time they were not imposed upon to approve these Defections, but had freedom to Witness, Protest, and Wrestle against them. 2. In the time of the Judges, there were many Corruptions and Defections intertaind, not Reformed, even in *Joshua's* days, the first Judge: *They had strange Gods among them, even when they were in one Assembly together, and had Communion in Worship, and were Covenanting, Josh. 24. 14, 23.* They allowed a Toleration to the Cursed Nations devoted to Destruction, making Leagues and Covenants with them... They forsook the Lord, and served *Baal* and *Asteroth*, *Judg.* chap. 1. and 2. throughout. They complied with an Apostat City *Gibeah*, and yet without Confession were received into Communion, Civil and Ecclesiastick, *Judg. 21.* When *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, their Ministers, were Sons of *Belial*, Adulterers, making Men to abhor the Offering of the Lord, yet *Elkanah* and *Hannah* joined in Communion and in Worship. These Corruptions in Worship, Discipline, and Government, and Conversation, were still Persisted in, frequently Relapsed into, Maintained, and never Confessed until Judgment forced them, and some of them never Confessed at all; Yet all that time before their Confessing and Forsaking, the Faithful Remnant had Communion with them, not in these Defections or Corruptions, but in Religious Ordinances, and kept themselves free from these Defections, by Mourning over them, Wrestling, Witnessing, and Protesting against them. 3. In the time of the Kings, there were many Defections and Corruptions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government. In Doctrine, *Solomon* says of the *Watchmen* in these Days, *They found the Church, they Smote her, they Wounded her, the keepers of the Wall took away her Vail from her, Cant. 5. 7.* handling her Case very Unfaithfully, Untenderly, Ignorantly, Torturing her with many Misapplications and Reproaches. In the days of *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*, *Isaiah* says, *The Watchmen were Blind, Ignorant, Dumb Dogs that could not Bark, sleeping, Isa. 56. 10.* In the days of *Josiah*, *Jehojakim*, *Zedekiah*, *Jeremie* says, *The Prophets prophesied falsely, Jer. 5. 31. They were not valiant for the Truth upon the Earth, Jer. 9. 3. They walked in Lies, they strengthened also the hands of Evil Doers, that none returned from his Wickedness. They made the People Vain. They spake a Vision of their own Heart, and not out of*

Mouth of the Lord, for which they were not to be hearkned unto; That is, Obeyed, and their Doctrine received upon Trust, Jer. 23. 14, 16. In the days of the begun Captivity, Ezekiel says to the Shepherds of that time, that they fed not the Flock. And the Lord's Flock was made to Eat that which they had troden with their Feet, and to Drink what they had fouled with their Feet, Ezek. 34. 3, 19. In Worship, not only were the high Places and Groves not taken away in many Reformations; But the Collective Body of the Ten Revolting Tribes, went a Whoring after Jeroboam's Calves at Dan and Bethel, and after the Gods of the Nations, excepting a Remnant of 7000, which did not bow their Knee to Baal, of whom the Lord speaks to Elijah, unknown to the Prophet. And also Judah was Universally Corrupted with Idolatry and false Priesthood, described at length, Ezek. 16. and 23 Chap. And in Discipline and Government, at that time, Isaiah says, Their Watchmen were Greedy Dogs, which could never have enough, they all looked to their own way, every one for his Gain, from his quarter, Isa. 56. 11. Jeremiah says, The Priests bear Rule by their Means, and the People loved to have it so, Jer. 5. ult. in so much, that he wished for a lodging Place in the Wilderness, that he might Leave his People, and go from them, wishing for a Secession from them; Yet not daring to Separate, tho' he calls them all Adulterers, an Assembly of Treacherous Men, bending their Tongues for Lies in Reproaching the Faithful, and none of them were Valiant for the Truth, Jer. 9. 2. 3. The Pastors Scattered the Sheep of the Lord's Pastures and Drove them away, and did not Visit them, Jer. 23. 1. 2. And Ezekiel says, The Shepherds in his day did not Strengthen the Diseased, did not Heal that which was Sick, nor bind up that which was Broken, nor brought again that which was driven away, nor sought that which was Lost; But with Force and with Cruelty ruled them, Ezek. 34. 4. All these Corruptions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government were still kept up among them, nor Confessed, nor Forsaken, until the Lord enforced it by Judgments and Desolations; Yet all that time before, their Confessing or Forsaking, the Faithful Remnant separated indeed from their Errors and Idolatries; But as soon as ever they could recover the Ordinances in Purity, they joined in Sacrifices and Feasts, and other Worship, Celebrated by the Corrupt and Impenitent Officers; Nor were they ever Commanded to Withdraw from Prophets, Priests, or Levites in the Worship of God, because they did not Confess their Defections, or though they did not acknowledge them; No more was required, but that they should not bow their Knee to Baal, should not go up to Gilgal, Bethel, or Bethaven, but Mourn for these Sins, and Witness and Protest against them, Pleading with their Mother, Pleading that the might put away her Adulteries, and yet still joining, not in these Abominations, but in Ordinances, when they could not get them Pure; Whatever the Dispensers were, that were Authorised and called to Dispense them. This was not their Sin, it is never so called, because they had full Liberty to go about their Duty, and were not required, either to Homologat any Sin, or Condemn or Forbear any

any Duty. 4. After the Captivity, in the days of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, there were several Corruptions and Defections intertaind long before they could be gotten Reformed and Removed; For that is never the Work of a Day or a Year, after times of long continuing Tentation and Tribulation. There were several Defections and Compliances found among the Priests and Levites, defiling the Priestly and Levitical Covenant, as their Marrying strange Wives, &c. *Ezra*, 9. *Neh.* 13. *Haggai* Propheying at the same time, says of them, they were Indulged in ease Laziness, dwelling in cieled Houses, when the Lord's House lay waste, and saying, the time was not come that it should be Built, *Hag.* 1. 2. 4. That which they offered was Unclean, *Hag.* 2. 14. And *Zechary* his Colleague, at that time says, when they Fasted and Mourned in the Fifth and Seventh Month, they did not Fast unto the Lord, *Zech.* 7. 5, 6. The Possessors of the Lord's People slew them, and held themselves not Guilty, and they that sold them said, Blessed be the Lord for I am Rich, and their own Shepherds Pitied them nor. The Lords Soul loathed them, and their Soul abhorred him, *Zech.* 11. 5, 8. These Corruptions in Worship, Discipline, and Government, and Scandals in Practice, continued very long ere they were Confessed and Reformed, even until *Nehemiah* and *Ezra* came from *Babylon* and *Persia*; Yet all that time, even before their Confessing and Forsaking these Sins, the Godly had Communion with them in Worship; Nor did the Prophets reprove them for it, but Encouraged them and Countenanced them in it, *Ezra.* 3. 2, 3, 4, &c. *Ezra.* 5. 1. *Ezra.* 6. 16, 17. *Ezra.* 8. 35. all before their Confession, as was shewed above. 5. In the time of Christs Humiliation in the Flesh, the Church of the Jews was a most Perverse and Corrupted Church in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government. In Doctrine, the Teachers of that time, even those that had Right to Teach, as well as Usurpers, perverted the Law of God with their false Glosses; They denied that Hatred and Rash Anger was a Sin *Matth.* 5. 22. or that Heart Adultery was a Sin, vers. 28. They made the Commandment of God of no effect, by their Traditions, *Matthew* 15. 6. They taught for Doctrines, the Commandments of Men, Verse 9. *Mark.* 7. 7, 8, 9. In Worship they were corrupted with Superstition, as is every where Taxed. The House of God was polluted with them that Sold and Bought in the Temple, Tables of Money Changers, and Seats of them that sold Doves: Whereby the Houle of Prayer was made a Den of Thieves. *Matth.* 21: 12, 13. And in Discipline and Government the Priesthood was acquired and kept by *Moyen*; *Cajaphas* was High Priest that year. Yea they were a corrupt Generation of Vipers that killed the Prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto them. These Corruptions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, were Tolerated without Confession or Reformation, till the Erection of the New Testament Order: Yet all that time, even before Confession or Reformation, the Godly had Communion in Ordinances. I do not say, nor think, they had Communion with the Intruding or Usurping Pharisees, that sat on *Moses's* Seat, not on *Aaron's*. *Matth.* 23. But in

true Temple Worship with the Priests and Levites, tho' they were so corrupt, as I have said, and Tolerated and Connived at, and Complied with all these Corruptions of the Scribes and Pharisees. Christ and his Disciples attended their Feasts and went to the Temple. *Joh. 7: 10. Joh. 8: 2.* He commands the *Lepor* to go to the Priest, *Matth. 8: 4.* And commends the poor Widow casting in her two Mites in the Temple Treasury, *Luk. 21: 1-3.* *Zacharias* a Righteous Priest, walked in all the Commandments and Ordmanees of the Lord Blameless, joined with the rest of the Priests, executing the Priests Office before God, in the order of his Course. *Luk. 1: 6, 8, 9.* *Simeon* a just and devout man, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, met with Christ, waiting on the Ordinances there. *Luk. 2: 25, 27.* And *Anna* a Prophetess, departed not from the Temple, but served God with Fastings and Prayers night and day; *vers. 37.* *Joseph of Arimathea* a good Man and a just, who waited for the Kingdom of God, did not only join in Ordinances, but in Government in the Jewish Sanhedrim, as a Counsellor, continuing still in their Judicatories, tho he did not Consent to their wicked Deeds and Acts, *Luk. 23: 50, 51.* *Nicodemus* also, he that came to Jesus by night, joined in Government, and sat in Judicatories with the Chief Priests and Pharisees. *Joh. 7: 50.* These Joinings of the Godly were not sin, because they did not join with these Corruptions, but mourned over them, and testified against them. And as for *Joseph of Arimathea* and *Nicodemus*, they did not sin in so Joining, because they dissented and protested against the wicked Acts of these Judicatories, and stood in the way of passing some wicked Acts. Yea their Freedom and Faithfulness in so dissenting when they were present, is more solemnly Recorded to their Honour in the Gospel, than if they had divided; As *Mr. Durham* shews on Scandal, *Part. 4. Chap. 7. Pag. 292.*

6. In the Church of Corinth, tho' it still remained a true Church, *1 Cor. 1: 2.* there were many gross Corruptions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government. In Doctrine, some of them said, *There is no Resurrection of the dead.* *1 Cor. 15: 12.* They despitefully traduced *Paul's* Name, as if he walked according to the Flesh. *2 Cor. 10: 2.* There were among them false Apostles, deceitful Workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ, being *Satan's Ministers.* *2 Cor. 11: 13, 15.* In Worship, they did eat in Idols Temples, having thereby Fellowship with Devils, *1 Cor. 10: 21, 22.* They were divided in Communicating, coming to the Lord's Table, some hungry, some drunken. *1 Cor. 11: 18, 21.* eating damnation to themselves, *v. 29.* They had made Confusions in the manner of their Worship, *All speaking with divers tongues,* *1 Cor. 14: 23.* And in Discipline and Government, the Ministers tolerated all these things, in so much as some of these Hereticks and Schismaticks were puffed up, despising the Apostle's Censure, and not fearing his coming with a Rod. *1 Cor. 4: 18.* to the end. There was also Incest tolerated, and such as was not named among the *Gentiles*, and they that should have Censured it were puffed up. *1 Cor. 5: 1, 2.* And Harlotry too common among them, *1 Cor. 8: 15, 16.* Together with their

their going to the Law. 1 Cor. 6: 1. And Murdering weak Souls for whom Christ died, by their many Scandals. 1 Cor. 8: 11, 12, 13. All these Corruptions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, were very long continued in without Reformation or Confession. Yet all that time they met together in Church Communion, and were commanded to meet for Worship, 1 Cor. 14. for the Sacrament, 1 Cor. 11. 18. wherein they were to tarry one for another, *vers.* 22: 33. And for Discipline, 1 Cor. 5: 4. And are reproved for Divisions and Schisms, 1 Cor. 1: 10, 12. 1 Cor. 3: 3. Yea and the Apostle himself thought it expedient to spare or deter the Censuring of some of them, 1 Cor. 4: 18. 2 Cor. 10: 5, 6—8, 9. This therefore was not their Sin, because the Faithful had no Communion with these Hereticks or Schismatics, or Idolaters, 2 Cor. 6: 14, 17. Or with any in their Corruptions. And tho' they had Communion with these that joined and complied too much with them, yet they exonerated themselves by mourning over them, protesting against them, and waiting for, and submitting unto the Apostle's Directions. 7. In the Church of *Galatia*, tho' still remaining a true Church, *Gal.* 1. 2. there were many gross Corruptions and Defections in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government. In Doctrine, they were removed unto another Gospel, *Gal.* 1: 6. 8. *Rowitched not to obey the Truth, beginning in the Spirit, ending in the Flesh.* *Gal.* 3: 1, 3. Pleading for Circumcision and Justification by the Law, rendering *Christ of no effect unto them.* *Gal.* 5: 3, 4. *Not obeying the Truth, ver.* 7. These that desired to make a fair shew in the flesh constrained them to be Circumcised, only least they should suffer Persecution for the Faith of Christ, *Gal.* 6: 12. In Worship, many adhered to the Mosaical Ceremonies, *turning to weak and beggerly Elements, observing Days, Months, Times and Years.* *Gal.* 4: 9, 10. And in Discipline and Government, these that troubled them were not cut off or censured, *Gal.* 5: 9, 10, 11. All these Corruptions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government were for some time maintained without Confession, or returning from them; Yet all that time the Faithful maintained also Church Communion, tho' not in these Corruptions and Defections, yet in Worship and Duty without sin, exonerating themselves by standing fast, and protesting against their being entangled with the Yoke of Bondage. 8. In the Churches of *Asia*, tho' true Churches, having Christ walking in the midst of their Candlesticks, there were many Corruptions and Defections. *Ephesus had fallen from her first Love and first Works,* for which she is commanded to Repent. *Rev.* 2: 4, 5. Yet none are commanded to Withdraw until she Repented. *Pergamus had these that held the Doctrine of Balaam,* and the Doctrine of the *Nicolaitans*; which thing the Lord hated, *vers.* 14, 15. *Thyatira suffered the Woman Jezabel,* which called her self a Prophetess, to teach and seduce the Lord's Servants to commit *Fornication,* and to eat things sacrificed unto Idols, *v.* 20. *Sardis was dead in Formality,* *Rev.* 3: 1. *Laodicea languishing in Lukewarmness and loathsome Indifferency,* *vers.* 15, 16. All these Corruptions and Defections were for some time maintained without Repen-

tance;

tance ; And tho' for all of them they be commanded to Repent, and consequently to Confess them. Yet none are commanded to Withdraw till they Repented. And no *other burthen* is imposed upon these that were free of these Corruptions and Defections, but to *hold fast* that which they had already until the Lord come. *Rev. 2: 24, 25.* On the contrary, these who kept themselves pure, tho still continuing in Communion, not with these Hereticks and Schismaticks in sin, but with these defective Angels in Duty, were commended and approved, and exhorted to continue as formerly. Now, if Communion with them in that Case had been sinful, and Personal Integrity (with mourning for, and protesting against these Defections and Defects) had not been sufficient for the Faithful, where the defect was sinful in the Officers ; How can it be thought, that the Faithful and True Witness Jesus Christ should so sharply Reprove the one, and so fully approve the other at the same time ?

Reason also doth confirm it : For 1. If many Corruptions in Parents or Husbands, will not warrant Children or Wives to separat from Parental or Conjugal Fellowship, which is the most Natural and nearest kind of Communion, yet not to be kept in Sin, as the Apostle Teaches, *1 Cor. 7.* Then also many Corruptions in Ministers or Elders, who must be submitted unto as Fathers, will not warrant Church Members to withdraw from Church Fellowship. 2. If known Corruptions or Defections in Church Officers simply, because not confessed, made Communion in Ordinances sinful ; Then no Communion could be kept at all with others, because all have Corruptions which they do not confess. Nay, no Believer could have Communion with himself, because he hath Corruption known better to himself, than any others Corruption ; Nearer him than any others ; Condemned in the Law as much as any others ; And making indeed his Duties to be sinful. If it be said, he Repents and Confesses these Corruptions, rests upon Christ for the removing the Guilt and the Power of them, and Protests against them ; and then he is exoner'd. I answer, He repents, but his Corruption, or unreview'd Part, does not, will not Repent. So in the Body of the Church, we may repent, tho Ministers and others will not ; We may mourn over their Defections, lay it over upon Christ to remove them, and Protest against them, and then be exoner'd, and have Peace of Conscience, in joining not with their Corruptions, but in Duty. 3. If we withdraw from one Church in a constitute Case, because of Corruptions and Defections unconfessed, then on the same Ground, we must withdraw from all Churches, because all have Corruptions & Defections to Confess, which they do not confess. Nay in withdrawing from one we withdraw from all : For the Church is but one. And if we Communicat with any one Congregation, we have Communion with the whole Body ; For all that eat one Bread are one Body, *1 Cor. 10. 17.* compared with *1 Cor. 22. 13.* And so tho one Congregation be free, yet either it is a part of the National Church, or it is not. If it be a part, then in having Communion with that, we have Communion with the whole National Church ; And if we withdraw from the Church

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National or any part of it, for Corruptions not confessed, then we must withdraw from that too: For that is a part of the Body corrupted. If that one Congregation with which we join, be not a part of the Church National, then it is a Distinct Church; And consequently Schismatical, according to our own definition of Schism, *Inform. Vindic. Head 4. page 63.*

4. If defections not confessed, tho not standing neither as present Tentications, involving us in Sin, be a Ground of Withdrawing from Ministers; Then it is Lawful to separat from Worship, because of the Sins of the Fellow-worshippers; Especially if they be Ministers. Which is Laboriously and Learnedly disproved by many Arguments, by Mr. *Rutherford* in his *Peaceable Ptea, Chap. 10, and 11.* And by Mr. *Durham* on *Scandal, Part 2. Chap. 12, 13, 14, 15.* Now hence I Argue, If many such Corruptions in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, not confessed nor reformed, be not a sufficient Ground of Withdrawing, as I have proved by Scripture and Reason; Then we may have Communion with the Presbyterian Ministers of *Scotland*, concerning whom the Dispute is. For these are neither Heresy, Idolatry, Tyranny, Intrusion nor Schism: Nor are they inseparable (but now actually separated) from the Constitution of the Church: Nor are they now standing or existent in Exercise, either to authorise their Preaching, or to involve us in the guilt of them. But they continue only as not acknowledged by them, which would not warrant a Separation in any Church united; Nor can they make our Communion in Ordinances sinful; Nor do they any way put a Bar, but rather a Spur, to our Faithfulness in protesting against them.

In the *Fourth Place*, I shall Answer some Objections, wherein I shall consider the chief of the Scriptures and Reasons, that are, or may be alledged against what is said.

Object, 1. "It is prescribed to *Jeremiah*, when there was a Contention between him and the Priests, *Jer. 15. 10. Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* Therefore, until the Ministers offensive and backsliding Courses be turned from, acknowledged and forsaken, we cannot return unto them, but must continue in Withdrawings. *Ans. 1.* Upon this Ground indeed we did before suspend our joining with them, and did continue a *Conditional Withdrawing*, as it is said, *Inform. Vindic. Head 4. page 92. We judge it Lawful, Reasonable and Necessary, in the former declining, backsliding and troubled State of the Church, as that was in Jeremiah, to leave that part of the Church which had made such Defection, whether Ministers or Professors, as to a joint Concurrence in carrying on the publick Work.* According to that Scripture, as it is said *Vindic. pag. 36.* Because then in these Circumstances, their Defections were standing as snares, involving us into the sin of them, if we should have returned unto Communion with them, while they were preaching by virtue of Sin, and their Ministerial Exercise had its holding on sin, to wit, by the Indulgence and Toleration, built on Supremacy and Popish Tyranny. But now it is not so; these are not standing to involve us in sin. And seeing they

they have, so far returned, tho not to us, yet to the Ancient Reformation of the Church of Scotland, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government; as that they have recovered their Ministry into Liberty, from these Incroachments; We may return so far unto them, as to have Communion with them in Reformation, when we are not desired nor tempted to return to their Defections. 2. The Prophet here in the midst of his Contentions, which were a great Grief and Grievance to him, *Verse 10.*, falls into an excess of Impatience and Unbelief, wherein he speaks as a Man in a raving Fit of a Fever, *Verse 18.* The Lord in this Verse, giving him a check for his Extravagancy, first encourages himself to Repent, *If thou return I will bring thee again.* If there were more of our returning to the Lord, there might be more hope of the Ministers. Then he instructs him to be Faithful in his own Ministry, *to take the Precious from the Vile;* That is to distinguish them, as to speak to them as the Lord's Mouth pertinently, giving to every one their due, to the Precious the Promises, to the Vile the Threatnings, he had to deliver. In the close of the Verse, he gives his Direction with reference to the People, that they should return to him, not he to them. Where (1) It is the People, his Persecutors that is there spoken of, *Verse 15.* not only Priests or Prophets, he must not return to the Ways and Courses of his persecuting Enemies. This is a good Argument not to unite with the persecuting Party. 2. It was the Duty of these Persecutors, be they Priests or People, *to return to him;* Not only to return to God by Repentance and to him by Confession, but by Reformation of their Life, changing their Course, returning to Favour and Respect him, returning to hear him, and receive his Message off his hands. It cannot be said, that if they had not returned by Repentance or Confession, but had returned by Reformation and Amendment, to join with him and to hear him; He would have refused them; tho certainly he would have dealt faithfully with them, in testifying against their former Courses. Nor is it said by the Lord, *Until they return unto thee by Repentance and Confession, thou shalt not return unto them; only let them return;* Importing it well became them to subject themselves to the Prophet. Now the Ministers have in some respect returned, tho not by Repentance or Confession; Yet by Reformation and changing their Course, unto a Course more like the old Way, than their former Backslidings. 3. *Jeremiah* was forbidden *to return unto them,* not absolutely, but in some sense; He behoved not to return from his Duty, to follow their Backsliding Courses, nor to subject himself to their wicked Impositions; But he was allowed to return to Preach to them; Yea and to have Communion with them in the Sacrifices and Solemn Feasts, and other Temple Ordinances: As we find him frequenting the Temple, both to Preach and to Hear, *Jer. 28.* Yea there is not one Word in the Scripture of his Withdrawing, or that ever he was commanded so to do from the Priests in those days.

Object. 2. "But if they do not acknowledge their Iniquity, God will have no Communion with them; And how can we have Fellowship with them, while

“ while they will not Confess their Sin, but maintain Causes of Wrath,
 “ then *Prov. 28. 13. He that covereth his Sin shall not prosper, but whose confesseth*
 “ *and forsaketh them shall have Mercy*; Without this Confessing and Forsaking,
 “ we cannot expect the Lord’s Blessing with them, or that they shall Prosper
 “ in their Ministry, for without this they cannot stand in the *Lords Counsel*,
 “ and consequently cannot be Instrumental in turning People from their Evil
 “ way, and from the Evil of their doings; nor Profit the People at all, *Jer. 23. 22,*
 “ 32. therefore we dare hear none to whom the Lord hath not promised his
 “ Countenance and Concurrence. *Ans. 1.* This makes Communion with
 them, while it is so, very Uncomfortable and Unheartsome, and Unhopeful,
 but it does not make it Sinful. For 1. Confession of known Sin, is indeed
 alwise necessary for attaining and intertaining Communion with God, but
 not so necessary in Church Communion, as that no Communion must be with-
 out it. These Scriptures speak no such thing, but says it is necessary for
 finding *Mercy* in the sight of God: Which again 2. Must be understood of
Known Sins, not Explicitly Confessed, but purposely Covered, tho’ they be
 convinced they are Sins; And unknown Sins, not *Implicitly Confessed*: It is
 not to be understood of every Sin; ’Tis impossible for a Man to confess all his
 Sins, and unlawful to confess any until he be Convinced. Known Sins we
 must Confess expressly, but unknown Sins, such as we have not, and are not
 convinced of, only implicitly. Now the Ministers are not convinced of
 these Sins that they will not Confess, and it is hard to say that they Cover
 them purposely, and against their Light; And yet harder to say, they shall
 not find Mercy or Communion with God, until they Confess them. Many
 Believers under the Old Testament found Communion with God, tho’ they
 never Confessed their Polygamie, Marrying moe Wives than one, which
 was their Sin. *Solomon* found Communion with God in the high Place at
Gibeab, which was his Sin. 3. But whether they have Communion
 with God or not, we may have it under their Ministry; For the
 Hearers may have Communion with God when the Minister hath it
 not. Ministers may Edify others, and not be Edified themselves; They
 may Preach Salvation to others Fruitfully, and be themselves cast away.
 Ministers Impenitency cannot hinder Peoples Edification. The Reason why
 the Prophets in *Jeremiah’s* time, did not turn People from their Evil ways,
 nor Profit them at all, was not because they were *Impenitent*, or did not Con-
 fess their Defections, but because they were Unfaithful, preached Peace to
 Evil doers, when they should have warned them of the Evils of their ways,
 and because *they stood not in the Lords Counsel*, that is, sought not, and took
 not Counsel from God, and did not Consult that, so much as the Counsel of
 their own Imaginations: It were hard to apply this to the Ministers, con-
 cerning whom the Debate is. 4. But whether we have the sensible Com-
 munion of God, or Manifestations of his Presence in Ordinances dispensed by
 these Ministers or not, that is not the Rule of our Duty. ’Tis a very un-
 certain Rule; For he may give his Presence where he does not approve the

Minister, and he may approve the Minister where he does not give his Presence ; And if he be absent, it is uncertain whether it be the Ministers Fault or our own, and upon that Ground the other Party may be justified in dividings; His Presence in Communion is the End of our Meetings, and not the Rule : The Meeting is alwise Lawful, and may have the Expectation of his Presence, that is gathered in *his Name* ; And none can say, the Meetings of Presbyterian Ministers of *Scotland* at this time, in these Circumstances, are gathered in any other Name. However, if we would expect the Blessing, let us endeavour Unity, for that is as the *Dew of Hermon*, and there the Lord commands the Blessing, *Pf. 133. ult.*

Object. 3. *Many of these Ministers did subject their Ministry to the disposal of strange Lords, and took a new Holding from and upon that New Architectonick Usurped Power of the Supremacy. We dare not therefore Homologat such an Affront to the Prerogative Royal of our only King and Law-giver, who sent them to Negotiat a Treaty of Peace with us, in giving them the Respect of his Ambassadors, after they have so foully broken their Instructions, and become Servants of Men, and Subject, even in Ministerial Functions, to another Head than Christ. We dare have no more meddling with such Changlings in things that they and we dare not come and go upon, Prov. 24, 21. We cannot countenance them, who have so corrupted the Covenant of Levi, by Misregarding the Honour of him who called them to be his Messengers, by departing out of the way, and causing many to stumble at the Law ; For which cause, they are in Holy Justice deservedly made Contemptible and Base before all the People, according as they have not kept his ways, and have been partial in the Law, Mal. 2. 7, 8, 9. We must rather look upon them as ipso jure, degraded and fallen from that Honour. As the Lord hath taught us expressly, declaring, that the Priests and Levites that should come near to him, should be the Sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of the Sanctuary, when the Children of Israel went astray from him, but not Backsiders ; They shall not come near to do the Office of a Priest, but shall bear their Shame, Ezek 44. 13, 15. And seeing they became in the Exercise of their Ministry the Servants of Men, and bound to please them, they have thereby Forfeited the Honour of the free Servants of Christ, Gal. 1. 10. For Mr. Durham in a Digression of hearing Ministers, Rev. Chap. 1. pag. 55. in 4to shews, that by palpable Defection from the Truth and Commission given to Ministers in their Call, they may Forfeit their Commission ; And so no more are to be accounted Ambassadors of Christ, or Watchmen of his Flock, than a Watchman of the City is to be accounted an Observer, when he hath made publick Defection to the Enemy, and taken on with him. Ans. 1. I grant this was once our Argument for Withdrawing from the Indulged and Tolerated Ministers, Inform. Kindic. Head 4. Ground 2. Pag. 71. 72. Testimony against Toleration, Pag. 30. and might be sustained in that broken and declining State of the Church, while their Ministry were so Subjected to, and holding upon that Usurped Power, while they were Servants of Men, while they continued corrupting*

Lev. 5.

Levi's Covenant, causing People to stumble at the Law, remaining in these palpable Defections to the Enemy; But this was only applied to the Indulged, and the grossest sort of the Tolerated Ministers, the Addressers, &c. All the Ministers with whom we differed, were not such then, and much less now, when these Usurpations and Subjections to them are done away. 2. These Scriptures do not warrant our Withdrawing in the present Circumstances, we were not to meddle with Ministers in their Changes to the worse, *Prov. 24.* but we may meddle to join with them in their Changes to the better. That Scripture *Mal. 2. 7, 9.* will not now warrant Withdrawing from Ministers, but rather to *seek the Law at their Mouth* *vers. 7:* For 1. In the exercise of their Ministry at present, they are not departed out of the way, nor give occasion to People to stumble at the Law; Nor in the Constitution of the Church, and Ministerial Exercise, is the Covenant of *Levi* now corrupted. 2. The way to induce them to return, and to remove these Stumblings, and to redintegrat their Levitical Purity, is not to separat from them, except we were in unavoidable Hazard of their Sin, which we are not; but to Unite, and Wrestle, and Witness against their former Departings, Stumblings, and Corruptions, and their present Impenitency. 3. *Their Contemptibleness and Baseness before the People*, is their just Punishment from the Lord for their Defections, but does not justify the People's continuing therein, and treating them as Base; We should rather Mourn for them out of Love, and join with them not in Corruptions, but in Duty. That Scripture *Ezek. 44.* will not prove all the Backsiding Ministers of the Church of *Scotland* to be *fore Degraded*, and fallen from that Honour. For 1. These Priests Ministred unto *Israel*, before their Idols and caused the *House of Israel* to fall into Iniquity, Verse 12. We cannot say this of all the Ministers with whom we differed, tho many went along with the Generation, in bowing to the Idols of the time. (2) They were not to be degraded from the Ministry or Priesthood, or to be deprived of the Honour of being heard, countenanced and joined with in their Ministry, v. 11. *Yet they shall be Ministers in my Sanctuary, they shall slay the Burnt Offering, and they shall stand before them to Minister unto them.* v. 14. *I will make them Keepers of the Charge of the House for all the Service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.* Only they were to be degraded so far when they returned, as not to bear the Office of a Priest, or come near the Holy Things in the most Holy Place, v. 13. That is, they were to lose some Degree of Honour and Priviledge, but not to Deposition or Suspension from their Ministry. 3. This Degradation such as it was, was not anticipated by the Sentence of the Peoples Withdrawings from them, except in the Case, when they were Ministring to them before their Idols, then they were to abstract themselves: But when they left off that, the People were still to own them as their Ministers, and never looked on them as Degraded, until by the Intervention of a Judicatory the legal Sentence should be inflicted. And lastly, That Scripture, *Gal. 1. 10.* will not warrant our Disrespecting of the

Ministers, as no more Servants of Christ. For if they yet pleased Men, by Subjecting their Ministry to them as formerly, we would not yet give them the Honour of the faithful Servants of Christ, as formerly, but now they do not so. 3. What Mr. Durham says in that Digression, is very Right, and did suit the Case before, when the Ministers *did so far take on with the Enemy, as to Address him, and accept of his Favours, with a Cessation of the War they should have maintained against Antichrist*; Then they deserved to be, and were looked upon in tantum & pro tempore, as having Jure Forfeited the wanted Respect due to Christ's faithful Ambassadors, while they continued in that Defection; As it's said Testimony against the Toleration, pag. 30. But now they do not continue so, and the Enemy being b^e away, the Watchmen have returned to their Charge; And tho' they deserve a Check for their Unfaithfulness in it, yet I suppose that none of the Godly will say they have Forfeited their Commission, so as to become no Ministers, for we alwise counted them such, as its said in that Vindication, and that same Testimony.

Object. 4. "We alwise held it to be a Ground of Withdrawing, when Ministers perverted their Doctrine, in Contradicting and Opposing our Testimony, according to these Scriptures; *Prov. 19. 27. We must cease to hear the Instruction that causeth to erre from the Words of Knowledge, whatever these Words be, especially if they be the Words of Christ's Patience, we must withdraw from these Leaders that will cause us to Err, by perverting the right ways of the Lord, or leading into Snares, or cause us decline any way to the right Hand, or to the left, from any of his Truths, for we are afraid of the Threatning to be destroyed, even tho' the Error be not Fundamental, Isa. 9. 16. Ans. 1. I grant this was our Third Argument for Withdrawing, in that broken and declining State of the Church, Inform: Vindic: Head 1. Pag. 74. 75, 76, and also our Third Argument in Testimony against Toleration, Pag. 31. When the Ministers were perverting the Testimony against the Supremacy and Tyranny, when they were owning, approving, and preaching, and perswading it to be Duty, to own and approve the pretended Authority of the then Tyrants, and People were in hazard of being perverted from some parts of our Covenanted Reformation, by their Doctrine and Prayers, and in their Application, were Condemning Essential Parts of the then Testimony. But now it is not so, they are not now perverting that Testimony, they are not now owning that Authority, &c. nor are they perverting the present Testimony against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism and Tyranny. There is a difference between the Testimony then and the Testimony now, integrally considered, for there were some Truths opposed then, that are not opposed now, that makes the difference. 2. As now it cannot be said, the Ministers do now cause us to Err from the words of Knowledge, nor that they that are led of them in hearing them Preach at present, are thereby in hazard of being destroyed; So it is not every Error, or Misapplication in Doctrine, that will give sufficient Ground of Withdrawing, but we are to hold fast that which is Good, and reject what is not according to the Law and the Testimony. There is*

no Man but will preach Mistakes sometimes, we must try it before we trust it.

Object. 5. " We held it a sufficient Ground to Withdraw from Compliers ; For this Abiathar was thrust from the Priesthood, because he complied with A-donijah the Usurper. 1 Kings 1: 7. Comp. with 1 Kings 2: 27. 'Tis time now we were scar'd from Compliances, after we have felt the Smart of them from sad Experience, shall we again join in Affinity with the People of these Abominations? would not the Lord be angry with us till he consumed us? Ezra 9: 14. The Lord we hope hath instructed us better, that we should not walk in the way of this People, nor say a Confederacy with them, to whom this People says a Confederacy ; But sanctify the Lord, and wait upon him in an abstracted way of following Duty, tho' we should be counted for Signs and Wonders in Israel, and branded with Singularity. Isa. 8: 11, 12, 18. He is now calling loudly to us, Depart, depart ye, go out from thence, touch no unclean thing, they should be clean that bear the Vessels of the Lord. Isa. 52: 11. Since Israel hath gone a Whoring from God by open and avowed Desertion, we dare not join in their Wine-Offerings, for they are not pleasing unto the Lord, and their Sacrifice was the Bread of Mourners, all that eat thereof shall be polluted. Hof. 9: 1, 4. We must have a Care not to be unequally yoked with such Varighteousness ; But as we would be the Temple of God, and have him to dwell among us, we must come out from among them, and be separate, and touch no unclean thing ; And then he will receive us. 2 Cor. 6: 14, 17. Answ. 1. I grant this was our fourth Argument in the Vindication, pag. 77, 78. and had some weight in that broken and declining State of the Church. When these Compliances were standing as Snares and stumbling Blocks, but now past Compliances not confessed, are not a sufficient Ground of Withdrawing, nor do these Scriptures prove it, which were then adduced by way of some Analogy, to deter us in these Circumstances from Compliance. 2. For that Scripture 1 Kings 1: 7. 1 Kings 2: 27. says nothing to the present Case : The Usurper is now away. Let these who are so treasonable as to comply, now be punished according to Law. 3. That Scripture Ezra 9: 14. will not help ; For (1) it may scar us indeed from Compliance, that we are not pleading for : Joining with the Presbyterian Ministers in the present Circumstances is not sinful Compliance with the Enemies. (2) The People of Abominations there spoken of, are Strangers and open Enemies, Presbyterian Ministers are not such, tho' formerly they made too much Affinity with them, yet Joining with them now is not a Joining with Enemies. (3) Notwithstanding that was the Priest's sin in these days to join in Affinity with the People of these Abominations, yet the Godly joined with them in Worship, before they confessed it, as is proven before. (4) That Scripture Isa. 8: 11, 12, 18. cannot now be Applicable ; For (1) to walk in the way of the People, when their way is not sinful, cannot be condemned ; Albeit their former ways were sinful, and they will not confess them, yet if their present Course be not sinful, there is nothing can oblige the Faithful, who were Signs and Wonders before, to

affect

affect Singularity now, in an abstracted way of following Duty. In *Ahaz* his time, indeed *Isaiab* was instructed not to walk in the way of the People, but he did walk in the ways of the People in *Hezekiah's* time. (2) The Confederacy the People was driving and carrying on, was with the *Assyrian Tiglathpilseser* an encroaching Enemy. *Isaiab* and the Faithful were instructed not to homologat that, when Ministers and People were saying a Confederacy to a Popish Usurper, under the Indulgence and Toleration, we durst not join with them in these; But now they are saying no such Confederacy. And when we Confederates with the Ministers now, we do not Confederates with Assyrians or Papists, or Enemies of Truth now. (3) Tho' they were not to walk in their ways, nor to say a Confederacy with them, yet the Faithful were still to join with them in Temple Worship, directed to the true Object in the true manner. There is never one word of Withdrawing here from Worship, nor was there any in *Isaiab's* Time, but from Idolatry, as I proved above. (5) That Scripture, *Isaiab* 52: 11. says not, that we should now Depart from the Ministers of *Scotland*; For (1) it's a Promise by way of Command, that the Lord's People shall come from *Babylon*, when *Cyrus* shall proclaim Liberty to them to come home, and so may be applyed to Popery or Prelacy, or what is *Babylonish*; People should now come from these things, when they have Liberty and Opportunity to embrace Reformation: But it cannot be applyed to the Presbyterian Ministry at present, which I hope none of the Tender will call *Babylon*. (2) It proves we should not join in any unclean things, but we may join in Gospel Ordinances in purity, which are not unclean things. (3) They should be clean indeed, that bear the Vessels of the Lord, but it is not said, except they be clean every whit, we must not join with them in Worships. The Priests that bore the Vessels of the Lord out of *Babylon*, were not clean, they joined in Affinity with the People of Abominations; And yet the Godly joined with them, as is said. That Scripture *Hos.* 9. 2, 4. says nothing to that purpose we are upon at present; For (1) 'Tis a threatening Israels Banishment from the Church, *They shall not dwell in the Lord's Land, but shall eat unclean things in Assyria, v. 3.* Then their Sacrifices, being excluded from the House of the Lord, and being stated and punished as Schismatics, *shall be as the bread of Mourners, polluting to all that eat of them.* But now we are speaking not of Schismatics, excluding themselves, and excluded by the Lord from his Church, but of Communion with the Church in Ordinances. (2) Their Wine Offerings were not offered to the Lord, and so their Sacrifices were Idolatrous, and polluting to all that did partake of them, we are not speaking of Idolatrous Worship. (3) Tho' it should be applyed to complying Ministers, when they are going a Whoring from their God by open and avowed Defection, that then we should not join in their Sacrifices or in Religious Communion with them; Yet that says nothing to this Case, when these Defections do not continue to be Snares polluting our Communion with them. Will any Body that is not a Sectarian say, That the Ministers Compliances,

not

not confessed, will pollute the Ordinances to us? That is against Presbyterian Principles. 7. That Scripture, 2 Cor. 6: 14—17. is very much abused, if it be offered to any such thing, that we must come out from among the Ministers, and be separated from them. For (1) This is a Separation here commanded from Infidels, Unrighteousness, Darknes, *Belial*, Idols. The *Corinthians* did very ill in eating, and sitting at the Idols Tables of the Gentiles, which gave great offence to the Weak. 1 Cor. 10: 17, 20. while any such Offences continued, they were to separate from them. But what says this to the Case of the Ministers of our day? Are they driving us to a Communion with *Belial* or Idols? (2.) This was not a Separation here commanded from the Church of *Corinth*, nor from the Ministers thereof; Tho' there were many Corruptions intertain'd among them, yet they were to have Communion in publick Ordinances, as is proved above; Only 'tis a Separation from the Idolatry in it. There may be a Separation from the Corruptions of a Church very well consistent with abiding in the Communion of that Church.

Object. 6. *If they confessed their Compliances, we could join with them, but they defend and justify, palliate and plaister them, which was that horrible thing the Lord saw in the Prophets of Jerusalem, for which he threatens sad things, and for which he commands not to hearken to them. Jer. 23: 14—16. We dare not join either with Builders or Daubers of such a Work, as was carried on to the Dishonour of Christ, and ruining of Reformation; Nor by our Countenance and Concurrence strengthen either Builders or Daubers, lest we be consumed in the midst of them. As we have our Certification, Ezek. 13: 10—14. See also vers. 18, 22. We desire to keep our selves free of having any hand in that Consecderacy of the Prophets and the Priests that violate the Law and profane the Holy Things; And that put no difference between the Holy and Profane, and that Daub with untempered Mortar. Ezek. 22: 25, 28. We cannot reckon our selves free of this Conspiracy, if we Incorporate our selves with them. Vindic. Head 4. pag. 80. Answ. 1. I grant this was our fifth Argument, and very much in it to disswade from joining with these Ministers in that broken and declining State of the Church, when their defending and daubing of these Compliances did expose People to the hazard of them, and of erring from their Duty. But now it is not so. 2. That Scripture Jer. 23: 14--16. will not prove the warrantableness of Withdrawing from the Ministers that defend their Compliances, but rather the contrary; For (1) he does not bid the People Withdraw from them at all, that they should not go near the Temple nor Synagogues, because the Priests and Prophets strengthened the Hands of the Prophane. The Godly of that Day, and *Jeremiah* himself, had Sanctuary Communion with them, and were free of sin by this Protestation, and the like of this, given in this Chapter. (2) Tho he says vers. 16. *Hearken not to the words of the Prophets that speak a Vision of their own hearts*; Yet he does not say, *Hear them not*, or do not go to hear them. There is a great difference between these two: We may hear many that we must not hearken to in every thing; Yea we must hearken to no Man implicitly.: Again we may*

may hearken to many, that we must not hear, that is, receive Ordinances dispensed by them: For we may hearken unto a Woman's Admonition, tho we must not hear her Preach. Harkening imports Obedience, intaining the Doctrine, and complying with it. We must not hearken to Ministers defending their Compliances, yet we may hear them, at least when they are not defending them, nor yet confessing them. 3. Nor does that Scripture, *Ezek. 13: 10, 14, 18, 22.* say any more, but (1) That the Lord is highly displeas'd with Ministers Defections and others daubing and defending them. This we grant. (2) That all their daubings and plaisterings will not preserve their darling Defections, nor these that go along with them, but down they must go in the Lord's own time. We do not deny this. Let them look to it, who have employ'd themselves most that way. (3) That they that defend and daub Defections are in hazard of being consumed in the Punishment of the Sins they defend. (4) That flattering deceiving Teachers, that make the Righteous sad, and the Wicked glad by their Doctrine, are under the Lord's threatned Wo; But what says all this to having Communion with Ministers who formerly built with untemper'd Morter, but now that building and daubing both is tumbled down by the Overturning of the Times; And they are now setting too to build the Lord's House. Dare we refuse to build with them upon that pretence, because the Children of the Captivity refused to build with the Adversaries of *Judah, Ezrah 4.* No, we must not put the Ministers of this Church in the Category with the Adversaries of the Church: For the Children of the Captivity did not refuse to build with the Priests and the Levites, that had join'd in Affinity with the People of Abominations, and defended them ay until *Ezrah* came from *Babylon.* Nor can it be found in the whole Prophecy of *Ezekiel*, that the Godly did withdraw from these Builders and Daubers, in Sacrificing or Worshipping of the true God, as was shown above. 4. That other place, *Ezek: 22. 25, 28.* does say very much against Ministers Unfaithfulness and Defections, and their consenting and working to one anothers hand, in promoting and abetting, and vindicating these sinful Courses, for which they and the whole Land were liable to grievous Judgments. And hence it may well be infer'd, that the Godly should have no hand in that Conspiracy. And that when they are promoting and abetting these Conspiracies, they should carry themselves more abstract from them. But there is not one word here of Withdrawing from Ministers that are not conspiring to promote Defection; But uniting themselves, and pleading for Union with others, to promote Reformation.

Object. 7. But is not Unfaithfulness a Ground of Withdrawing, *When there is such a terrible Threatning against unfaithful Ministers, Jer: 14. 14, 16. When the Lord declares, he did not send them to Preach that way, and that he would consume them; And the People to whom they Prophees'd, should be cast out in the Streets; Wherefore we dare not admit them to Prophecy to us.* "It were better and safer, to plead against them, and forsake them in time; According to that Scripture, *Hos. 2. 2. Plead with your Mother, plead, &c. Ans. I. I*

grant this was our sixth Argument, or rather a Gravamen aggravating other Grounds: But as I shew'd before, it must not be understood of every Degree of Unfaithfulness, but such as withholds instruction necessary at such a time, that yields the Testimony, that lays us open to sin, and the countenancing whereof, would be stumbling and offensive. This Unfaithfulness is a Ground of Separation, in a broken and declining State of the Church; But I deny, the Ministers about whom the Debate is, are thus Unfaithful. 2. That Scripture *Jer. 14. 14, 15, 16.* says, 1. That it is a great Sin to Ministers, and Misery to the People to be unfaithful Flatterers of People, preaching Peace, instead of giving warning of Wrath approaching. 2. That tho' unfaithful Ministers may flatter themselves, and flatter the People in promising Peace, & that they shall not be Consumed, yet the Lord will not fulfil their false Prophecies, but the rather hasten the threatned Judgment to a sinful People. 3. That the unfaithfulness of Ministers, promising Peace to People, is both a procuring Cause, and a sign of approaching Judgment: But it speaks not one word of Withdrawing from the Temple or Sacrifices. If it allow any Withdrawing at all, it must be from those that prophesied false Visions and Divinations *vers. 14.* that's not in our Case. 3. The place *Hos. 2.* 2. pleads rather for Union than Separation. For 1. It says, That our pleading with the Church, and Protesting against her Whorish Defections, will be a sufficient Exoneration from Guilt; Nothing is here required but to Plead. And 2. In the Jewish Church, or in *Judah*, in the days of *Hosea*, there was no Separation. In Apostate *Israel*, there was Separation, because of *Idolatries* and *Whoredoms between her Breasts*; So that the Children could have no Suck, but what was defiled with Whoredoms, but in *Judah* it was not so; And in *Scotland* this day it is not so. 1. They were to esteem her as a Mother, and it was their Duty as Sons, to plead with her: And if they were to Plead with her, and Rebuke her, they were to keep Communion with her; Because, not Rebuking, or not Pleading, is a sign of Separation, and Suspending Communion for a time, as *Ezek. 3. 26.* where the Lord says, he would make the Prophets Tongue cleave to the roof of his Mouth, that he should not be to them a Reprover; Their Reproving is a sign of Communion, as *Mr. Rutherford* Argues in his *Peaceable Plea*, Chap. 11. pag. 161.

Object 8. "They Withdrew from us when we stood most in need of them and their Preaching, lying by from that work of Preaching, and Deserting their Ministerial Duty, when Snares were most abounding; Therefore we may "Withdraw from them now. *It is the Character of the Hirelings and Strangers, whose Voice Christ's Sheep will not bear, that when they see the Wolf coming, they leave the Sheep and flee away, Joh. 10. 5, 12. Yea we find Paul refusing to take John Mark with him, because he had departed from them, and went not with them to the Work, Act. 15. 37, 38. This is to be reckoned and carryed towards, as a very great disorder, when a Minister is so far out of Order, that he will not work the Work of the Lord, from which we are commanded to Withdraw, 2 Thes. 3. 6, 7, 11, 14. Vindic. Head. 4. Ground. 7.*

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Pag. 84. *Ans.* 1. This was indeed our Seventh Argument for Withdraw-
ing, in that broken and declining State of the Church, when they were al-
ways leaving us in greatest Extremity; But even then all did not so, some
left the Land upon a Call to another place, some left it in extreme hazard,
through a fainting Fear, as is noted, *ibid. Vindic. Pag. 85.* and now they do not
continue in that Fault or Practice. It is a bad Argument, that we should
Withdraw from them, because they Withdrew from us. That is as much as
we should leave our Duty, because they left theirs, and that now we should
hurt and punish our selves, in depriving our selves of the Gospel, because
formerly they did injure us, in depriving us of it. For we must alwise look
on it as a Misery to want the Gospel preached. 2. That Scripture, *Joh. 10.*
5, 12. proves only, 1. That Christ's Sheep should not hear Strangers, that is,
such Teachers as have a strange Commission and Authority to Preach, not
entering in by the Door, but climbing up another way, *vers. 1.* and such as have
a strange Voice, & strange Doctrine, contrary to Christ's Doctrine, *vers. 5.* this
is not in our Case. 2. That it is indeed, the Character of an Hireling and
Stranger to leave the Sheep, and flee away in hazard. That is one Character;
But that alone does not make the Fleers, Hirelings and Strangers. All
Hirelings and Strangers do flee and leave the Sheep, but all that flee and
leave the Sheep are not therefore Hirelings and Strangers. Christ does not
say that his Sheep must never hear their Shepherd that leave them in hazard;
They must leave them indeed, while they are left of them, but when they
return to their Duty again, they must be received, even albeit they will not
alwise confess their Fault, which is their Duty to do. 3. As for *Acts 15. 37.*
38. it says 1. That good Men may be Backdrawers from the work of the Gos-
pel, as *John Mark.* 2. That these good Men must not be spared from Cen-
sure for their Goodness, but are to be refused the Honour of Concurrence
with the Faithful Ministers, in visiting of Churches. 3. That all good Men
are not of one Mind about this, *Barnabas* was not of this mind, but contended
strongly for *Mark.* 4. That there may be hot Contentions, that may
come the length of Division, and parting asunder among the Eminent Ser-
vants of Christ, and yet no Separation. *Paul* did not refuse to hear *Barnabas*,
nor he him, nor either of them *John Mark*; Nor did ever *Paul* write to the
Churches that they should Withdraw from *Barnabas* or *Mark*; If it had been
so, we would have been in hazard of losing that precious Treasure of the Gos-
pel of *Mark*, which was written by him after this his Defection. 4. I shall
consider that place, *2 Thes. 3. 6, 7, 11, 14.* afterwards. Here it will be suf-
ficient to Answer, 1. That the disorderly Brethren there spoken of, are the busy
Bodies that work not at all, *vers. 11.* The Men in the Country that cast them-
selves out of all Employment. The Apostle was in his own Example, so far
from this Disorder, that he wrought with his own Hands, at Labour and
Travel Night and Day, that he might not be chargeable to them, and there-
fore exhorts them all to work in their Employments, *vers. 10.* and *1 Epist.*
4: 11, 12. So that it is not mean'd of Ministers literally. 2. Tho' it be
transf-

transferred to Ministers by Analogie, where they do not work in Preaching, they are to be Withdrawn from after the Churches Sentence, when the Church is Constituted, and hath Judicatories; And tho' privatly before that Sentence, Brethren may withdraw from them, yet not when they return to their Duty. We cannot but Withdraw from hearing, when they do not Preach; But the Question is, whether we shall Withdraw when they do Preach?

Object. 9. " But the Schism cannot be fastned upon us, but upon them " who have divided the Church, and widened the Breaches thereof, by their " Reproaching, Misrepresenting, and Misinforming against us. *We are commanded expressly to Note such Schismaticks, and Mark such Causers of Division and Offences, which they effectuat, both by their Practice, and by their Words, crying up their own Party, and informing against the more Pure and Faithful Remnant,* Rom. 16. 17. *Such an one was Diotrephes prating against the Apostles, and the Brethren with malicious words, and receiving them not, and casting them out, which the Apostle threatens he would Animadvert upon, by the Severity of Discipline and cowdign Sentence,* 3 Epist. John 9. 10. Vind. Ground 8. pag. 86.

Ans. 1. This was our Eight Argument, when in that broken and declining State of the Church, Reproaches and Oyles casten into the Flames of Contention, were too frequently and fervently followed on both hands, when they Complained of our dividing the Church, and we Complained of their dividing it, and none of us were free of it: They called us Schismaticks, and we called them such, indeed upon some better Grounds, but neither they, nor we would take with the Charge, or Confess it, as indeed neither of us could be charged formally with a stated Schism; But now that is much fallen and now it should be our Glory to Forget and Forgive, and overcome Evil with Good. 2. That Scripture *Rom. 16. 17.* doth not command us to avoid every one that causeth Divisions and Offences *Occasionally* and *Passively*, by giving the first Rise to Divisions, by offensive Courses. For that way Divisions may be caused by Infirmities and a Mans using his own Light, and by the Offence of others, whom upon that account to avoid, were contrary to that same Apostle's Doctrine in that same Epistle, *Chap. 14. and 15.* But it Commands us to avoid them which cause Divisions and Offences *Actively, Designedly, and Purposely*, and do promote and abet a down right Schism, and will not be perswaded to let Divisions fall; tho' it may be done without prejudice to Truth. I hope it will not be alledged, that the Ministers we are speaking of, are such Schismaticks. Next to *Avoid* there, is the same with the Duty of *turning away*, *2 Tim. 3. 3.* Extended there to *Self-lovers, Covetous, Proud, Unholy*, having a Form of *Godliness* without the *Power*. This cannot be interpreted atwise, and only of *Withdrawing from Church Communion*, for then we must withdraw from all that are *Self-lovers*, from all that are *Unholy*, from all that are *Hypocrites*, which none will affirm; But we may avoid Men several other ways, by *Withdrawing from personal Communion with them, or Familiar Converse, and from Communion in their*

Corrupt Designs and Courses. 3. The place 3 Epist. *John* 9. 18. does not speak to the Case: For 1. It speaks of the grossest of Schismatics, a *Diotrephes* loving the Pre-eminence, an Arrogant Prelat; That is not the Question, the Ministers I am speaking of, are not such. 2. He was not content only with prating Malicious Words against the Apostle and Brethren, but could not *Receive* or *Acknowledge* the Apostle, *Vers.* 9. Neither did he *Receive* the Brethren, and *Forbade* them that would, and *Cast* them out of the Church, *Vers.* 10. If any Minister would do so, he ought to be Forsaken with Detestation. 3. We see here also, a Church Officer, tho' guilty of many Scandals, is not suddenly to be Withdrawn from, because he is not to be suddenly Censured. *John* the Apostle here, only threatens to do it, if he came, but he defers it until he came, tho' by his extraordinary Apostolick Power, he could have done it before, but the Question is not of Withdrawing from *Diotrephes*.

Obj. 10. " We judg'd scandalous Disorders a sufficient Ground of Withdrawing: *Such were the profane Scandals of the Sons of Eli, which made Men abhor the Offering of the Lord, 1 Sam. 2: 17. From such Brethren especially (from which Rule Ministers cannot be exempted, for if they be not first our Brethren, they can never be our Ministers) we are expressly commanded to Withdraw our Company, if they be Fornicators, or Covetous, or Idolaters, or Railers, or Drunkards, or Extortioners, including all the like scandalous Disorders. 1 Cor. 5: 11. Vindic. pag. 87. And that known and much urged Place, 2 Theff. 3: 6, 14. Withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly, &c. Note him, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed. Therefore our Duty to themselves, yea our greater Office of Love we owe to them, in order to their Conviction, does oblige us to Withdraw from them, to shame them out of their Sin, and not suffer Sin upon them, especially because they are Brethren, 1 Cor. 5: 11. that walk disorderly against and without the Order of their Office, and the Order of the Church; Qui quod sui est ordinis atque officii non faciunt & facientes turbant. 2 Theff. 3, 6, 14. Testim. against Tolerat. pag. 32. Anf. 1. This was indeed our ninth Argument in the Vindication, and our seventh Argument in the Testimony against the Toleration, in that broken and declining State of the Church, yet even then all these Scandals were not applyed to Ministers. And tho all be Withdrawn from to whom they are now Applicable, my Debate will not be weakened thereby: Tho all be discountenanced that follow scandalous Disorders, yet others may be countenanced that do not follow them. 2. That place *1 Sam. 2: 17.* is an Argument against Separation; This was not Duty to abhor the Offering of the Lord for the Scandals of these Priests, *Elkanah* and *Hannah* did not abhor it. 3. Nor can that Place *1 Cor. 5: 11.* prove what is adduced; For I grant indeed, Ministers are not these exempted. But (1) we are not pleading for Hearing these that are scandalous in that degree there spoken of, that is Ministers that are Fornicators, Idolaters, Drunkards, &c. But the Apostle doth not say, Keep not Company, if any Man that is called a Brother be guilty*

guilty of any thing that is a Scandal, offensive or stumbling, if he Faint and prove Unfaithful in a day of Tentation, if he be guilty of any Defection and will not confess it. (2) He does not bid them Withdraw from Church Communion with such, but from Civil and Personal Communion, not to eat and drink, converse familiarly with them, v. 11. He does not allow them to have so much converse with scandalous Brethren, as with Others that are scandalous. But with reference to others, he means certainly Communion Civil and Personal, and not Church Fellowship, as *vers.* 9, 10. therefore he must mean the same here. We find, as was shewed before, in the 11th Chapter, he allows them Church Fellowship, even partaking of the Sacrament with *Drunkards*, *vers.* 21, 22. to the end. And therefore this must not be understood in a sense contradictory to that. There is no Withdrawing Ecclesiastical allowed to the *Corinthians* upon the Account of Scandals.

(3) Tho it were understood of Church Communion, and that the Eating there, 1 *Cor.* 5: 11. were to be meant of Sacramental Eating, as the *Independents* understand it, yet in a Constitute Church this Non-Communion should be posterior to the Churches Sentence, purging away and censuring these scandalous Persons. And so it must be understood in connection with the beginning of the Chapter, where Excommunication of such Scandals is enjoined, v. 5, 7. (4) The Place 2 *Thess.* 3: 6, 14. will not prove that we must now Withdraw from all Ministers, guilty of offensive Disorders. Tho I shall grant, that Ministers are not excluded from that Rule by Analogy, tho literally Idle Men are understood, as was said before; And I shall grant in a broken and declining State of the Church, when there is no Judicatories, there may be a private Withdrawing from disorderly Brethren for such Disorders after Admonition: Yet (1) this is not for every walking disorderly, but such as not working, which is a shame to the Gospel, such as are highly heinous, hateful and dishonourable, Every disorderly walking in Ministers and Professors is not of that Nature. (2) Nor must it be in every Case, but only when it is a mean to make our Brother ashamed of his Disorder. I fear our Withdrawing from the Ministers in Question shall neither have that effect, nor is a Mean proper to produce it; We may more probably obtain this another way, so Withdrawing is needless. (3) Nor is the Withdrawing to be understood alwise, or only of the Ecclesiastical Withdrawing, tho Learned *Vocimus* in his *Polit. Eccles. Parr.* 3. *Lib.* 3. understands it of Civil Personal Withdrawing from *Domestick* and Familiar *Converse*. And

(4) the Withdrawing that is Ecclesiastick must be after the Churches Sentence in a constitute state of the Church. The Judicatories must Note him, that is, stigmatize him with Disciplinary Censure, and then we must Withdraw, and keep no Company with him, but carry towards him, as in the Case of Excommunication. Now the present state of this Church must be looked upon as Constitute.

Obj. 11. "The Ministers are so defiled with the Defections of the Time, that we cannot but fear their Administration of Ordinances be not clean,

and:

(62)

and that which scares us from partaking with them, is that which is said Hag. 2: 12, 13, 14. *If one bear holy Flesh in his skirt, and touch bread, &c. shall it be holy? The Priest answered, No; But if one that is unclean by a dead Body, touch any of these, shall it be unclean? The Priest answered, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, So is this People, and so is this Nation before me, saith the Lord, and so is every Work of their hands, and that which they offer is unclean.* Hence we are afraid our Communion with them, when so defiled, will infer a Participation of their Sin, *Being a Communion in Sacred things, which makes the Partakers of the Bread to be one Body,* 1 Cor. 10: 17-20. Testim. against Toler. pag. 31. *Therefore we dare not be Partakers with them, nor have Fellowship,* Eph. 5: 7-11. Vindic. Head 4. Ground 9. pag. 87, 88.

Ansiv. 1. I grant all hands have been defiled in these unhappy times, few have kept clean Garments, and the Defections of Ministers have been very defiling; And this made us to abstract in declining and broken times of Defection and Division, when we could not have Communion with them without countenancing their sin. But now, tho these things not removed by Confession, be very burdensome, afflicting and discouraging to the Tender; yet the Defilements of Ministers do not defile the Ordinances to us. And now the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, being constituted and established without these Defilements, it is very consonant to the Practice of the Lord's Servants in all Ages, to have Communion in Ordinances, with Protestations against the Corruptions of Officers. 2. That Place Hag. 2: 12--14. needs not scare us, if we understand it right. For (1) it says indeed that the Holiness of Officers, or Ordinances cannot sanctify all their Actions that do Administer them, or the People that partake of them; And likewise that the Uncleaness of Officers does pollute every thing they handle; But to whom? *To themselves* before the Lord, according to that Word Tit. 1: 15. *To the Defiled and Unbelieved, nothing is pure.* It says, Preaching and Praying, and every Duty is unclean to all Hypocrites and Impenitents of either Ministers or People: But the Uncleaness of Officers does not pollute the Ordinances *to others*, no more than the Holiness of Officers can sanctify the Ordinances to others. (2) This Uncleaness here spoken of was Legal and Ceremonial, opposite to Ceremonial Holiness, whereof we have the Law, according to which the Priests here gave their Answers to the Prophets Queries, in Lev. 22: 3, 4, 5, &c. - Now in the New Testament Dispensation this hath no place, yet the Ordinances may be polluted several ways; As 1. when the Essentials and Substantials of an Ordinance are corrupted, this makes Communion sinful. 2. Or when in the manner of it, it is modeled and moulded according to the Inventions of Men in dependence upon, and subordination unto the usurpations of Men; Neither in this Case can we countenance it without sin. 3. Or when it is irreverently abused by the Miscarriages of those that are about it, as when it is indifferently Administrated to the Precious and the Vile, and without the Holiness that's due. This pollutes the Ordinance to those that are Guilty of these Miscarriages, but not to others there present;

Nor

Nor can former Miscarriages now not connected with the Administration, pollute that Ordinance at all to others. 3. There is not a Word here that the Godly should Withdraw in this Case; And if we observe the Practice at that same time, of *Haggai's* Prophecying, we shall find the Godly and the Prophet himself joined in Ordinances with these same Priests, as is shewed above, *Ezra* 3. 5, and 6. *Chap.* 3. The place *1 Cor.* 10: 17, 10: will not make our Communion, as now Circumstantiat, Sinful, as I cleared from this place above. Here I shall only say, 1. 'Tis clear from the place, where the Worship is Sinful, Communion in that must be Sinful too, but we are not speaking of sinful Worship. 2. Even when the Worship is materially Lawful, but Circumstances make it Sinful, Communion therein is Sinful, eating of these things that were Sacrificed to Idols, was lawful in it self, but in Idol Temples before the Idols, Idolaters, and offended Christians, on the other hand, it was Sinful, and Communion therein was Sinful; Sometimes some Circumstances made Ministers Preaching to such and such Meetings under Indulgences and Toleration, complexly considered Sinful, then we durst not have Communion in these Circumstances. 3. Whether the Worship be Sinful or Lawful, Communion in it infers Incorporation with the Worshippers, that is clear from the place, all that Eat at the Table of the Lord are one Body, and all that Eat in Idol Temples of things Sacrificed to Idols, are one Body also, and have Fellowship with these Idols or Devils; And the Apostle makes it very Absurd, *vers.* 12. to partake of the Lord's Table, and the Table of Devils, and be Incorporat with the Lord's Worshippers, and Devils Worshippers at once. Hence it may well be inferred, that we should Countenance no Worship, not so much as out of Curiosity, but where we may own Incorporation with the Worshippers. So if we go to the Mass we are Imbodyed with Antichristian Idolaters. If we go to the Curates, we are there one Body with the Prelatick Church. But now it is not absurd for us to own our selves one Body with the Presbyterian Ministers, and Professors of *Scotland*; we always owned we were of the Body of the National Church. (4) This says, the Godly were to withdraw from Idol Temples, but not from the Church of *Corinth*, nor from all these that went to these Idol Temples, when they came together to the Lord's Table; as was cleared above. 4. The place *Eph.* 5. 7. 11. will not infer what it is adduced for. For (1) It is a bad Consequence to argue, we must not partake with Whore-mongers, nor Covetous Persons, *vers.* 3. 5. Therefore we must not join with Presbyterian Ministers in Gospel Ordinances, that have been Offensive in their Course. 'Tis true, we must partake with none in Sin, but we may partake with Sinners in Dury, especially with these that have been Sinners; but they have left off these Sins, for which we stood aloof from them before. (2) Its no partaking with the Unfruitful Works of Darknes, to Reprove these Works by Protestation, and join with these that have been involved in them, as soon as they are Separated from these Courses. (3) The Godly did join with the Angel of the same Church of the *Ephesians*, tho they had

had fallen from their first Love and first Works, Rev. 2. And yet were not Reproved by our Lord Jesus. (4) The *Donatists* in former times, Objected the same Argument, in Defence of their Schism; *Quomodo incorruptus poteris permanere si corruptis Sociaris*: That is, how can thou continue Incorrupt ed, if thou be joined in Communion with those that are Corrupted or Defiled. To which *Augustin* Answered, *Sociatur si quis mali aliquid cum illis committat, aut committentibus faveat, si neutrum facit, nullo modo Sociatur*: That is, He is Sinfully joined with them, who so commits any Evil with them, or Favours and Connives with them that do commit it; but if he do neither, he is no way Sinfully joined.

Object. 12. " But albeit we should not be Partakers of their Sin, yet we fear, " so long as they do not Confess and Forsake their Sin, Wrath shall be upon " them, and us too, if we adhere unto them. The ground of our Fear is from " these Scriptures, *Josh. 7. 11.* &c. When *Achan* Sinned, all *Israel* is said to Sin, " and to have taken of the Accursed thing, and therefore all shared of the " Stroke: And especially for Ministers Unfaithfulness, *there are many Scrip- " ture Woes and Threatnings Thundred against them, and the People for adhering " to them. Isa. 43. 27, 28. Thy Teachers have Transgressed against me. — There- " fore I have given Jacob to the Curse, &c. Iam. 4. 13. For the Sins of her Pro- " phets, and Iniquities of her Priests, &c. See also Isa. 9. 16. Jer. 14. 15. 16. " Ezek. 13. 10, 11, 14. &c. Ezek. 22. 25, to the end Testim. against Toler- " tion, Pag. 31. Ans. 1.* This was indeed our fourth Argument, for With- drawing in the time of Toleration, when we could not have Communion, without partaking of Sin, and partaking of the Sin did make us lyable to the partaking of the Threatned Judgment: But when Communion with Ministers may be had without Sin or Accession to their Sin, we need not be scared by their Judgments: All these places of Scripture cited, do suppose the People to be some way guilty of the Sin of these, for whose sake they are Threatned, one of these ten ways. (1) By Cooperating in working with them, as helping Causes, that is a direct Participation of the Guilt of it. (2) By Counselling or Encouraging to it. (3) By Approving and Applauding the Sin. (4) By Provoking and Tempting to it, and laying Stumbling Blocks by Omission or Commission to occasion it. (5) By Consenting and Submitting to it. (6) By Conniving at it, and not Rebuking it, or not Restraining or Resisting it. (7) By not Warning of it, before it be Committed. (8) By not Mourning for it, and pitying the Sinners. (9) By desiring in heart to do, what others do Wickedly, in External Suits. (10) By doing the same Sin, by Analogy that others do, or something like it, of the same sort and kind, tho it be not every way the same, as Mariners were punished for *Jonah's* Sin, because as *Jonas* fled from the true God, as if he had been an Idol, so they served their Idols, as if they had been the true God. Now any one of these ten ways, will involve us in the Guilt of others Sins, and expose us to the hazard of their Punishment: But it is not every one of them, that will make our Communion in Worship with the Persons sinful, nor oblige us to With- draw,

draw, in order to absolve our selves from that Participation; for in Separation as well as Communion, we may be partakers of their Guilt, several of these ways mentioned, to wit, the *Fourth*, the *Seventh*, the *Eighth*, the *Ninth*, the *Tenth* way: But if we partake of their Sin not Personal, but Official, the *First*, the *Second*, the *Third*, the *Fifth*, or the *Sixth* way, our Communion is Sinful. 2. As for that Scripture *Josh. 7. Israel did Communicate with Achan's Sin* several ways, though it was Secret, viz. The *Seventh* way, because *Israel* did not carefully Observe and Warn one another, to take heed, that they meddled not with the Accursed thing. And the *Ninth* way, for *Israel* coveted in their Heart, what *Achan* took with his Hands. As also, the *Tenth* way, by Analogy, they might do several things that were as ill. But however, *Joshua* never dreamed of Withdrawing from *Israel* for *Achan's* Sin, which was not known, till it was Discovered by the Lord; so we are not to Withdraw from the Sins of hidden *Achans*, and unseen Hypocrites. 3. That place *Isa. 43. 27, 28.* does clearly suppose People to be guilty of their Teachers Sins, as of their *first* *Ether his Sin*, there also mentioned, which they were guilty of by Imputation and Propagation, as being Represented in him, and Procreated of him, so likewise they were Guilty of their Teachers Sins, not by Imputation indeed, but by Imitation and Concurrence and Approbation, (as 'tis said *Jer. 5. ult.*) Consent, Obedience, Connivance, not Warning, not Mourning; and all the rest of the ways above specified. But as all these Degrees of Participation did make them lyable to the Threatned Curse, so accordingly as the Sins of their Teachers were, so these Degrees of Partaking with them, did make their Communion Sinful, or not Sinful. If they were Official, such as Heresie or Idolatry, or Infecting the People, then it was their Sin to have Communion with them; If they were only Personal Scandals, or Church Corruptions not Confessed, yet consistent with the Foundation and Edification, then Communion was not sinful; or if it had been so, the Prophet would have commanded them to Withdraw, which he does not, as was shewed above. 4. As for that place *Lam: 4. 13.* I Anf. (1) These Sins were very Atrocious, as *Shedding the Blood of the Just*, which the People should have Refrained and Hindered; and because they did not so, were justly Threatned for it: This doth not quadrate with our Case. (2) The People was Guilty of these Sins of the Prophets, and Iniquity of the Priests, all the ways above mentioned: But now we need not be Partakers of any of the Sins of Ministers, any of these ways, by our joining with them in Worship. As for the other places cited, I have Answered them above.

Object: 13. "This will Bury our former Testimony against Defection. *Anf.* (1) All particular Testimonies of particular Periods of the Church, are sometimes Buried; That which was the Testimony 1000 years agoe is Buried, and a more Ample and Clear Testimony is Transmitted to us, in the stead of it. (2) The matter of the Testimony is not buried, but the manner of Prosecuting it, as formerly by Separation, so now by Communion and Protestation, &c. (3) As the Testimony in several Respects changeth with the

Times, according as the Enemies of Truth, change their Assaults and Weapons against it, and Defections from it, and Perversions of it, and Contradictions to it do vary; So the Testimony can never be Buried, as long as all Truths and Duties are Witnessed for, and Errors and Sins are Witnessed against by us, in our Respective Stations; and nothing is Condemned what was Approved before, nor Approved, what was Condemned before, and there is no Engagement to forbear any Duty. (4) What tho some of the Integral or Accidental parts of the Testimony were Buried, if the Essential and Substantial part of it be Vindicated, we never pressed every Part or Pendicle, Clause or Consequence of all the Integrals of our Testimonies, as the Bond of our Communion: We may condescend in some things, not to Bury but to Wave them. (5) There is no part of the Testimony in hazard to be Buried by *this Union, but this, that the Ministers not Confessing their Defections, is a ground of Withdrawing, which I deny simply was ever our Testimony; but the then Continuance in Defections, was a Ground of Withdrawing.* This Testimony is not Buried, but rather Victorious, because these Defections do not continue. (6) Let us have a care, least a contending for Keeping up our Testimony against Defection in Unadvised ways, we do not Bury our Testimony against Schism. (7) It will tend much to the Honour of the Testimony, to have it Recorded, *That at such a time, in such Circumstances, a Suffering Party did maintain it under all Discouragements and Difficulties, as long as Defections continued; but as soon as ever they had any Access to join with these Ministers without Sin, they had such Love to Gospel Ordinances, and such Respect to the Peace of the Church, that they would no longer Separate, notwithstanding all former Provocations.*

Object. 14. "This will Harden and Stumble these Ministers and others, in their Defections and Compliances, which will be a partaking of their Sin; It will also Grieve and make others sad, who are tender of such things, and will make all Difference of that kind to be thought light of, and exceedingly weaken the Hands of these that Witness against these Defections, *Testim. against Toler. Pag. 32. Ans: 1.* This was indeed our Sixth Argument, for withdrawing in the time of the Toleration, and had great weight, when Scandalous Defections were Standing and Carrying on, which necessarily inferred a manifold Offence in countenancing of them: But now when these are removed, none can be justly offended at Union and Communion with the Persons, when the Scandals are separated from them. (2) If Weight be laid upon Offence, no Question, it will be found to sway to the other side: By Division and Separation, many of the Godly in the Land, in Neighbouring Churches, and the Posterity will be Stumbled and Tempted, to think our Testimonies and Contendings against these Defections, have been nothing but Schism. This will also make these Ministers themselves Despise all our Witnessing against them, and Encourage them to say, none in the Land oppose their Course, but Schismatics; And it will open the Mouths of Malignants, and it will make the Popish and Prelatical party Rejoice and Triumph. (3) Our Join-

Joining in the present Circumstances, cannot have any Tendency to harden them, if we continue Pleading and Protesting against them, but rather to oblige them to Consider their ways, when they see that these that Witness against them are not Dividers, and Protesters are no Subverters, and that it is Reformation not Schism, or Separation we Design.

Object: 15. "There are so many apparent Inconveniences in this Union, that we see it will never be well fixed, we have been, and are yet Divided, and they will still look upon us, and we upon them, as a distinct Party; the Un-faithful and Self-seeking Party among them, will still have the greatest sway, &c. Ans. It is a common Rule of Union, when the Inconveniences that follow Division, are Greater and more Hurtful to the Church, than the Inconveniences of Union, then the Lesser Inconveniences of Union are to be chosen, rather than the greater of Division. So that when things cannot be done as Men would *Simply*, then they are to do as they may *Comparatively*; that is, make use of what may be most Edifying, and least Hurtful to the Churches Edification, amongst all means Probable and Possible. In this the Conscience may have Testimony, that the way that had fewest Inconveniences, and manyest Advantages to Edification was chosen; and tho' some Inconveniences fall out afterward, yet the Conscience may be quiet on this ground. Sometimes the Lord in his Providence, will order so, that there is no side, either Union or Division, can be chosen without Inconveniences; then we must Regulate our selves, suitably to the Providences and Cases we meet with, and to the Tempers of these we have to do with. But we are neither to Regulate nor Answer for Providences, and the Distempers of others. Indeed in such a Case the Mind may be Disquieted because of Fear, and the Consolation of the Duty may be Diminished, and Affections may be Grieved and Jumbled, because there is not full Satisfaction, yet may the Conscience have quietness and Peace in its Duty notwithstanding. And Men are specially to Discern, and put Difference between Peace of Conscience, and the former Discomposures, as Master *Durham* says on *Scandal, part. 4. Chap. 7. Rule 5. Pag. 295, 296.* But I would have it considered, whether the Inconveniences of Division will not be greater: For let it be inquired, what shall we do next? whether shall we Unite with any Church in the Nation, or out of it, or shall we make an Independent Church of our own, or shall we have no Communion or Union at all? These last cannot be, 'tis impossible we can claim any Relation to Christ, and have no Communion with his Body, or some part of it. The Communion of Saints must still be an Article of the Creed; It must still be the desire of all the Saints to have Communion in Ordinances; There is none of them can live well without it, *Psal. 26. 8. Psal. 27. 4. Psal. 42. 1, 2, 4. Psal. 43. 3, 4. Ps. 63. 1, 2. Ps. 84. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10. Ps. 89. 15. Ps. 122. 1, 2, 3, 4. Lam. 1. 4, &c. Lam. 2. 19. &c.* Can we live without Ordinances to our selves, and Baptism to our Children? Shall they be as Heathens within the visible Church, as if they were without? Is not this a Misery and a Punishment upon our selves? How absurd is it, that the Unfaithfulness of Ministers should infer the Punishment of those that are Faith-

ful? The second cannot be said, that in this case we must gather and constitute an Independent Church of our own, distinct from, and not Subordinate unto the National Church, having Officers of our own, invested with all Church Power; For then, what shall become of Presbyterian Government, and our Testimony for that against Independency, Sectarianism and Schisma? Or shall not this be a Schism, if ever there was any in the World? If the first be said, we must then seek a Church in the Nation, or out of the Nation, where it can be found Purest, and freest of these Corruptions. Then I ask, 1. What if such a Church, or Society, cannot be found in the Nation? Shall we then leave the Nation, and in effect in our Practice declare, it is Un-churched? If we cannot find it in the Nation, where will we find it out of it? The greatest Purity of the rest of the Churches, will be found scarcely to come the length of this Church, with all its Corruptions. 3. Suppose it be found in the Nation, or out of it, on what Terms shall Union and Communion be settled with that Church? Shall it be in these that for every Scandal, Defection and Corruption not confessed there must be a Rupture, Division and Separation again? Then how long shall that Church last? And if there be a broader Breach then, what shall be at the end of that Breach? must there be endless Divisions and Withdrawings? 4. This Particular Church, is either a part of the National Church, or Universal Church, and Subordinate unto it, or it is distinct and not Subordinate. If it be distinct, then we join with Independents; If it be a part of the National Church, then in joining with a part, we must join with the whole, for all the parts make but one Body, and the Church is but one. And therefore, it will not be enough to eschew and avoid sinful Communion to Withdraw from the rest of the Parts of the Body, except we Withdraw from that part, and all the parts belonging to that one Body so corrupted. Let any judge then, whether the Inconveniencies of Union or Division be the greatest.

And thus much in Answer to the Objections drawn from the Compliances of the former Times. Now follow some few Objections which ye have drawn from somethings supposed to be wrong in the Constitution and Practice of this Church, to which I shall endeavour also to give Satisfactory Answers.

Object. 1. "That there are Corruptions in the Constitution of the Church, as now established, being under the Bondage of an Erastian Yoke, now submitted to; Our Supreme Church Judicatories, or General Assemblies, being only Called and Indicted, Adjourned and Dissolved by Civil Authority, and Prelimited, both with respect to Members, some being excluded, and with respect to Matters, some Terms being laid down by the Parliament of receiving Episcopal Ministers, and closed with by the Assembly, tho' not coming up to what the word of God requires. And all this yielded to without a Testimony. For Answer, we say, 1. This Charge is injurious to both Church and State, and contrary to both Truth and Charity, besides the Ignorance that is in it. For whatever be the Corruptions of the Constituent Members of this Church in her Judicatories, or the Defects or Miscarriages of their Admini-
strati-

strations, or Obstructions put to the Exercise of some of the Churches Powers and Priviledges, in many Cases incident to the best Churches in the World; It is false, That the Constitution of the Church is corrupt, having all things that makes a Church in its Constitution True, Incorrupt and Intire, Soundness of Doctrine, Purity of Worship, and an Order of Discipline and Government of Christ's Institution; with all the Officers, Ordinances, and Judicatories appointed by himself, and no new kind of Officers, Ordinances, or Judicatories introduced by any Human Invention or Usurpation. It is false, that the Church is under the Bondage of an Eraastian Yoke, since the Yoke of Prelacy and Supremacy are removed by Law, or that the Church hath submitted thereto. It is our Mercy, that we are required to submit to nothing, but what our Fathers, and all the Reformed Churches would have gladly yielded unto. And yet we have not submitted to every thing has been required. And as this is false, so 'tis highly uncharitable, to suppose the Ministers of this Church, who formerly wrestled against Prelacy and Supremacy, would be so contradictory to themselves, and Treacherous to their Master, as to betray his Interests, and the Churches Priviledges, for which they suffered, to any Eraastian Yoke. 2. The Instances alledged, are far from proving the Charge. It is true, the Civil Magistrate Calls and Indicts, Adjourns and Dissolves our General Assemblies; and his Adjourning and Dissolving of them, hath been a Grievance to many, who have Declared their Grief and Dissent: But this is not such a Bondage of an Eraastian Yoke, as makes the Constitution of the Church Corrupt, nor to be Withdrawn from upon this Account; for the Dissolving of an Assembly, cannot make an Assembly Corrupt in its Constitution. If it be so before its Dissolution, it is a Mercy and not a Grievance to Dissolve it, and rather a Grievance to Call it; but this Church hath always acknowledged, that the King's Majesty hath Power to Indict and Call as many General Assemblies as he Pleases, and Appoint what Time and Place he Pleases; so it is acknowledged Assembly 1638. Sess. 26. concerning yearly General Assemblies, and in their Supplication to the King, they own that they were convened by his Majesty's Special Indiction; and the Light of Nature seems to Instruct, that he that Calls an Assembly may dismiss them, when their Business is over; But this is not privative of, nor Prejudicial to the Churches Power of Calling, and Adjourning her own Assemblies, if he Declare the Church hath no such Power, and to require of the Assembly to own they have it not, if he should hinder the Convocation of Assemblies, when they have occasion for them, or Dissolve them in the midst of their Work, when it is needful for them to continue; This were indeed a stretch of Eraastian Supremacy, and a Yoke that could not be submitted to. But as we hope, there is no need to fear that our Gracious King will do any such thing, so we cannot Complain that he hath done often so. He hath not denied the Churches Priviledges in this matter, nor hindered our Assemblies when we needed them, And before ever any of our Assemblies were Dissolved; the Moderator Declared, the Assemblies Work was done. And so upon the matter, the Assembly Dissolved it self, and his Majesty's

jefty's Commissioner added his subsequent Declarator, and Indiction of another. As for Prelimitations, we know none offered nor submitted to. We never saw Measures offered for the Choice of Members to Assemblies, nor a Moderator chosen but by the full Votes of the Assembly, nor the Votes overruled, nor limiting of Matters treated on, but by the Determination or Order of the Records of the Assembly. Where these are not, the Assembly cannot be called prelimited. We never knew a Minister excluded but one, for refusing the Oath of Allegiance, which was done by His Majesty's Commissioner by private Means, to which he yielded for Peace, without the Assembly's Mind ever being sought in that Point. The Parliament indeed by Law allowed Episcopal Ministers to be received into a Share of the Government, upon their subscribing the Confession of Faith, if they were neither insufficient nor negligent, erroneous nor scandalous; Which are all the Grounds the Scripture gives for debarring or deposing any Men from the Ministry. In which yet the Assembly was left at their Liberty. These cannot be called Prelimitations of Assemblies.

3. Let it be granted there be some Encroachments upon some of the Churches Privileges and Freedom of Assemblies, and in our part a sinful weakness in Ceding unto them, without a seasonable and suitable Testimony; Yet a Defect in not asserting our Rights in difficult Circumstances is not a surrender of our Rights, nor submission to an Eraastian Yoke; Nor can it impeach the warrantable Constitution of a Judicatory; Far less can it be a Ground of Separation from a Church that still claims these Rights, tho it may be her Servants and Messengers have no strength to contend for them. It is ordinary when Reformation is carrying on, that many Difficulties are in the way, and that all things cannot be done that are wished; Nor is every thing that hath been done formerly and laudably done, necessary to be done now, in Circumstances far different from former times. To every thing there is required both Time and Judgment; A thing may be Lawful and not Expedient: Yea an affirmative Duty may be necessary at one time, and necessarily superseded at another, when the Circumstances are such, that it would do more hurt than good. This is no disowning of the Duty, nor deserting of a Testimony, nor Compliance with an Encroachment, but a prudent and patient Forbearing of it, until it be more seasonable, and may do more good. As Paul withheld a positive Testimony even against Idolatry at Ephesus, while the People were in a Tumult and Ferment, nor at leisure to hear it.

Obj. 2. " There is no Zeal to purge the House of God of perjured Curates, nor suitable Endeavours used to ridd the Church of that ungodly Crew, nor are Censures duely executed against them upon the Account of their National scandalous Defections; But upon the contrary, many contend for their Continuance, and for receiving them into Ministerial Fellowship, upon terms that seem to import a condemning of the sufferings of the Godly in their Testimonies against them, laying aside Discipline against corrupt Teachers, and receding from the Rules and Practice of this Church, without

" out Trial and Evidence of their Repentance, Honesty, Fitness and Call
 " to the Ministry. Yea now by Act of Parliament much of the Lord's He-
 " ritage is given over to them, without any dependence on the Judicatories
 " of this Church. *Ans.* This Objection comes not well from these that are
 following divided and divisive Courses in a Separation from this Church, that
 are so far from contributing to their help, to do that which they require to
 be done, that none do more marr the Work, and weaken Discipline than
 they. Is it not a shame to you to exclaim so much against Men, that main-
 tain and promote a Schism in this Church, and will not own a Subjection un-
 to, and Dependence upon the Judicatories thereof; And in the mean time be
 guilty of the same things your selves, and contemn the Communion and Au-
 thority of the Church, as much as they? This Complaint would come better
 from these that were united with the Church, and so concurring in the work
 had access to excite others to more Zeal in purging the Church. It would
 require all the united Power and Prudence to expedite this Work effectually,
 and manage it so, as none should have Ground of Complaint: This is the
 work of an united Church, and not of a divided one. It being a Matter of
 the greatest concern, both to the present and future Generations, wherein
 the Church in this broken Condition is very much strained, and can do
 nothing but what shall be cry'd out against, and lashed with Reproaches on
 all hands. One Party complains, that we are so severe in our Procedure a-
 gainst Episcopal Ministers, and so Revengful in retaliating their Treatments
 towards us in purging out so many of them, and thereby making so many
 Congregations desolate that reckon themselves injured and robbed of these
 they adhere to as their Ministers, and in receiving so few of them into Mi-
 nisterial Fellowship, and a share of the Government. Another Party com-
 plains, that we are so slack in purging out those Men that have been so long
 the bane of the Church, and under whose Ministry the People have so long
 perished in Ignorance and Profanity, and so lax in receiving so many of them
 into our Communion, and thereby not only continuing them in the Posses-
 sion of what they had before without Right, but admitting them into a
 share of the Government which they had not before. This is grievous to
 many of our selves. But for more direct Answer, These Considerations may
 lenify the Complaint, and satisfy the Sober and Serious that this is no re-
 levant Ground for casting at this Church. 1. It cannot be deny'd but that
 a considerable Number of them were Ecclesiastically Censured and purged
 out for their Intrusion, Erroneous Doctrine, Persecution of honest People,
 and scandalous Lives, Witness their many Appeals to the first Assembly and
 several succeeding. These Sentences were ratified by the Assembly, which
 appointed Censures against all of them that were insufficient or negligent or
 erroneous or scandalous. That was as great a length as ever this Church
 could go in former times. 2. It is granted also, that a considerable Number
 of these Ministers that were under the Bishops, are received into Ministerial
 Fellowship, and a share of the Government, but they were reckoned among

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the best of them, and such against whom there were fewest Exceptions; some of them simply guilty of Conformity with Prelacy, and of the younger sort bred up under Episcopacy, that while that stood had a View of no other Organical Church to join with, and so acted according to their Light, following the Epidemick Course of the Time and Place they lived in, which was discovered when the odious Test was imposed, that they refused. Some of them have been useful, and carried well since. Never any Minister contended for receiving all of them, nor could any with reason plead, that none of them, even the most Worthy and of most excellent Talents should be received at all. If any Censurable for Insufficiency, Negligence, Errors or Scandals, have been received, let a Complaint be made, it would be heard: Nor have any of them been received upon Terms that could import a Condemning of the Sufferings of the Godly, as the Objection alledges; For nothing in their Reception can import that, except Prelacy be Justified or not Condemned. Now Prelacy is not Justified, but may very well be Condemned, tho' some that went along with that Course be allowed to come off, and received when they do so. Nor is it true, that they are allowed to be received without all Trial and Evidence of their Repentance, Honesty, Finesse, &c. On the contrary the Church hath proceeded with such Tenderness and Caution, discovering so much Fear and Jealousie of bad Effects and Designs, that upon the Account thereof many have complained of too much Rigidity. The Assembly committing the Trust of this to their Commissioners, required, That none be taken in but such as after due Trial of their Soundness in the Faith, and all Personal and Ministerial Qualifications, should be found to be Orthodox, of competent Abilities, Godly, Loyal, and of an Edifying Gift, giving some Ground to expect and believe they will prove Conscientious, True and Faithful to Presbyterian Government, to which they must profess Subjection. These Qualifications are very comprehensive, and due regard hath been had to them by Inferior Judicatories, who at their Admission use to exhort them to consider their Ways and Offences, Perjuries and National and scandalous Defections. It is also a Mistake, that this is alledged to be a Receding from the Rules and Practice of this Church; For in the Year 1638. there was a more general receiving of them, after the Worship had been more corrupted with Ceremonies: Nothing was then required of them but the subscribing the National Covenant, which was the Confession of Faith at that time, And now the Confession of Faith established in this Church, which is larger and fuller than that was, is enacted to be subscribed by all Intrants, and all that we received into Ministerial Communion; And their being now required to profess Adherence to Presbytery and Subjection to the present Government of this Church, and a relinquishing and renouncing of their former ways, and their submitting to these Terms in their Admission, is upon the Matter a Profession of their Repentance. If any have practically counter-acted this in the Reception of some, they are accountable to the Assembly for it.

3. After all that is said to alleviate the Charge,

Charge, let it be conceded; and let us take with Guilt in this, that we are defective in Zeal in purging the House of God; and that some are not put out, and some are taken in who deserve severer Censures: This will not amount to a Ground of Separation justified in Scripture Rules or Practices, or the Principles of this or other Reformed Churches: This will not make the Church in her Congregations or Judicatories so fundamentally corrupt, that there is hazard of sin in Communion with her. It will only argue Judicatories are guilty of some particular Aberrations, which none are enjoined to approve so much as by way of Connivence, and from which a Protestation may acquit any that conours in necessary Duties. It was a far more corrupt and wicked Judicatory that condemned the Lord of Glory, and yet *Joseph of Arimathea* a Member thereof, was acquitted by a Non-consent. 23: 50, 51.

Object: 3. "It is Offensive and Stumbling to us, that an Oath of Allegiance and Assurance is imposed on all Ministers, Preachers, and all that are allowed the Priviledge of Calling Ministers upon a strange Certification, and Penal Sanction, that none are to be Received or Admitted as Ministers, nor continued as such, nor have a Right to any Maintainance, and that none shall have the Priviledge of Calling Ministers, except they that take this Oath, which we think an *Erastian* Encroachment on the Church's Priviledges, and a sad Entrahment to Ministers, because it is an Allegiance unlimited, or without due Limitations not qualified as in the Covenant, granting to the King a Power of Putting in and Holding out of Church Officers, and Priviledges whom he pleases, Imposed on Ministers and others, as a new Qualification of Church Members and Office-bearers; and this without any Conceivable necessity, which is requisite in all lawful Oaths, because Ministers had many other ways given abundant proofs of their Loyalty, appointed instead of all other Oaths, and abrogating all other, which seems to Infer a Burying or laying aside of the Covenants: The taking of this seems contrary to an Act of Assembly 1648, Discharging all Oaths in the Common Cause, without Advice and Consent of the Church. This is Grievous to the Godly in a private Station, of whose Offence Ministers should be very tender. It hath had sad Effects, Dividing Ministers and People sadly; and is likely to produce more, being a Snare to some that cannot take it in Righteousness and Judgment, because many Honest People cannot understand the Debatable Rights of Kings; And if it be imposed in succeeding Governments, it may be of Dangerous Consequence. We desire either Reasons to prove the Lawfulness of it, or an Acknowledgment of the Sinfulness of it. *Ans.* In the present State of the Question, we are neither obliged to prove the Lawfulness of this Oath, nor Acknowledge the Sinfulness of it. For that is not the Question, whether it be Lawful or Sinful? But, whether, supposing the Sinfulness of it, it be a sufficient Ground of Separation? We say, it cannot be, unless you make every thing that is Sinful in Ministers, a ground of Separation; which will Dissolve all

Communion in the World; For neither can it be Heresy to assert, that Ministers may Swear lawful Allegiance to lawful Kings; The contrary, that they should be always excem'd from it, were Popish Doctrin: Nor can it be Idolatry in Worship, or contrary to the Honour we owe to God, to give so much Honour to the King, as to Swear Subjection to him in things Lawful; A Duty Commanded in the Fifth Command, can never be Forbidden in the first or second: Nor can it amount to the Sin of Intrusion into the Ministry, or Tyranny in Church Government, to submit to a Civil Qualification, required by a Civil Law in the State Government, Nor can it involve Men in the Sin of Schism in the Church, to avoid all appearance of Sedition in the State; Nor finally, can any Man have any Ground of Reason to say, that a Ministera Submitting to the terms of the Civil Magistrat, in his Entering upon or Continuing the Possession of his Benefice, doth any way impose Sinful Terms of Communion on them that hear them; There being no Law, that no Man shall hear a Minister Preach, except he Swear the Oath of Allegiance, and Own and Acknowledge that the Minister did right in Swearing it. Now supposing this Oath be Sinful, yet if it be neither Heresy, nor Idolatry, nor Intrusion into the Ministry, nor Tyranny in Government, nor Schism, nor Imposing any Sinful Terms in Communion, it cannot be a Ground of Separation warrantable by the Word of God, or the Doctrine of any Reformed Divines. 2. We shall further Condescend to them, and grant there are some things in these Oaths Grievous to many of the Godly, of whose offence we desire to be tender. It may be Grievous that in our day, Publick Oaths as Tests of Loyalty, have been so much Multiplied, and more frequently imposed than in any Nation of the World, to the Ensnaring and Debauching of many Consciences, which may justly make the Tender to fear, and be averse from Oaths. And as to this particular Oath, there are some things in the manner of Enacting and way of Imposing it, very Unpleasant and Dissatisfying to our selves. We are Grieved, that after all our most Publick and Solemn Assertings of the Kings Right, and of our Allegiance to it, before God and the World, in our Preaching, and Praying for this Government, and giving all other Proofs of Loyalty, that ever could be required of, or Performed by any Ministers, an Oath of Allegiance should be Imposed, Importing some Suspicion of our Dissaffection and Disloyalty, which is odious to all that are Conscious of their own Sincerity. If the Government had thought fit to Impose it on all Subjects, as such, without Distinction or Exemption of any Rank, none could have quarrelled it; But it is unpleasant for Ministers to be specially singled out, and required under that Reduplication to take an Oath, that belongs to all others, as well as to them, as if they were the Persons most to be Suspected. Nor are we Satisfied, that it should be Extended to all that are allowed to Call Ministers, and with any Speciality required of them as such, since there are many who cannot be Deprived of a Priviledge to call Ministers, that yet do not understand the Rights of Government, and so are not in Capacity to take this

Oath

Oath in Judgment, as Oaths should always be taken; Neither do we approve the annexed Certification or Penal Sanction, that none are to be Received or Admitted as Ministers, or continued as such, &c. Except they take this Oath. If any other thing be understood by it, than simply that they shall not be Admitted to, nor continued in the Possession of the Legal Maintenance, which indeed the Civil Magistrat may Deprive Ministers of, for Disobedience, but cannot hinder their being Received or Continued as Ministers; We Regrat all the sad Effects of it, in Promoting Division among Ministers and People in some places, and shall be sorry if this be pleaded as a Precedent in all succeeding Governments. But tho these things be grievous to many, and dissatisfying to our selves; Yet they need not be offensive or stumbling to you, so as to give you any Ground to think or conclude, that Ministers taking this Oath in these Circumstances, is a Compliance with an enthraling encroachment upon the Church's Priviledges, granting to the King a Power of putting in and holding out of Church Offices and Priviledges when he pleases, and to impose new Qualifications upon Miniiters, &c. And that therefore you are obliged in Conscience, to Withdraw from them upon the account of this Compliance. Many things may be Matters of Grief and dissatisfaction to the Mind, that are not Grounds of Offence to the Conscience, much less Grounds of Separation. Nor will you find that you have Ground to draw such harsh Conclusions, if you will consider, 3. No Reformed Divine ever denyed that the Civil Magistrat hath Power and Authority to impose all Civil Duties on all his Subjects, and consequently on Ministers. He that hath Power to command and compel them to be Faithful and Diligent, even in all Ministerial Duties (that all things be diligently done for the House of the God of Heaven, which he hath commanded) may certainly impose upon them all Lawful Civil Duties, and in some Cases exact of them Legal Securities by Oath, or other ways for their Faithfulness in these Duties. An Oath of Allegiance and Assurance is of this Nature, which may be imposed on Ministers as well as others. The Matter and Form of this Oath is unexceptionable. There is nothing in it that can be called unlawful; Nothing but what we and all Subjects are antecedently obliged to: No Allegiance is required but that which is True and Faithful, which cannot be Illimited and Unlawful. Nor do we understand any thing by it, but true Loyalty and Obedience in the Lord, or in the Preservation and Defence of the True Religion according to the Words expressed in the Covenant: Nor doth this oblige us, to obey any unlawful Command, or Comply with any Encroachment, Prejudicial to the Church's Priviledges, but rather may give Confidence to oppose them; because by this it may appear, such opposition doth not flow from a Principle of Disloyalty, since we go the full length, in paying all Duties we owe to the King. Nor can Ministers simply taking of the Oath, Infer or Import their Homologating or Justifying the Sanction of it, or every Clause of the Act enjoining it. We declare we never looked upon this Oath of Allegiance, as a new required Qualification of Ministers, so as without this they

were not to be received as such by Christian People; We look upon true Loyalty and Allegiance to Magistrates, as a necessary Qualification of all Christians and Ministers, but not the swearing of it. Neither did any Minister swear it under that Reduplication as a Minister, to be thereby further qualified for the Ministry; But as a Subject, required to give this Lawful Signification and Demonstration of Lawful Loyalty to a Lawful King. And as the Matter of the Oath could not be scrupled, so neither the Object whom God hath so graciously set over us as his Lawful Vice-gerent, who must be acknowledged as well *de jure* as *de facto* to be only King of these Realms, whose Right is so undoubted, and Government so encouraging, that they that refuse Allegiance to King *William* must be such as no King on Earth can please. That which is objected with greatest shew of reason, is, that there could be no doubt nor question of Ministers Loyalty, who had given so many proofs of it; So there could be no necessity of an Oath for Confirmation, without which Oaths cannot be warranted. But let it be considered, that as it is not necessarily required of Subjects to understand all the reasons of State, or the necessities for the Laws which they are bound to obey, if they know the Lawfulness of them; Christians are not under Bondage in such Cases, but GOD calls them to Peace: So when this Oath was first enacted, there were several things in the state of Affairs obvious to all Men that seemed to plead for the necessity thereof. It was a Time of War, wherein many Subjects, and not a few in the Profession of Ministers, *viz.* Episcopals, were involved in Rebellion, it might seem necessary there should be something imposed to distinguish and discover the King's Friends from his Foes. It was in a Case of Competition between two Kings, like that between *Joash* and *Athaliah*, *2 Kings* 11: 4, &c. Wherein *Jehojada* imposed an Oath of Allegiance upon the Levites as well as others. The like was done not long after the Reformation in *Scotland*, in the Competition between King *James* and his Mother *Mary*, Ministers were to swear the Oath recognoscing the King's Authority out of the Pulpit, under the Pain of Deprivation. *Act* 46. *Parl.* 3. King *James* VI. *Anno* 1572. In which Cases such an Oath to one King is a Testimony against the other, and a Securing of his Title, against the Pretensions of the other. It is likewise very natural to suppose, many about the King, that are none of our best Friends, might Suggest to his Majesty, that Presbyterian Ministers, tho' now professing Loyalty; Yet if they were tryed, would not engag for it, nor proutise by Oath to be so. This might induce the King to judge it necessary to try them with this Oath, and so put an end to the Controversy; And the same might induce Ministers to think it necessary to take this Oath, and so Confute all these Calumnies, and Evil Surmises. It is vain to imagine, that this being appointed instead of all other Oaths, and abrogating of all other, seems to infer a Burying, or laying aside of the Covenants. We are Confident, no such thing was in the Mind or Design of the Enacters, nor can the Words bear any such Sense, but only that this was appointed instead of all other

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Oaths of Allegiance, or Supremacy, or others imposed by the late Government, which may rather commend than afford any Matter of Stumbling at it. Neither is that other Scruple better founded, that an Act of Assembly 1648. discharges all new Oaths in the common Cause, imposed without Advice and Consent of the Church, for that Act respects new Oaths about Religion, or Reformation, or for approving some of the Administrations of the State, which the Church could not approve, and especially (as is there expressed) *Negative Oaths or Bonds, which may any way limit or restrain Men in their Dutys, whereunto they are obliged by Covenants.* This Oath is not at all of that Nature, but only respecting Civil Allegiance to the King, which we are obliged to by the Covenants, which neither obliges us to approve any thing Unlawful, nor can any way Limit or Restrain us in, or from any Duty.

Now to draw to a Conclusion, *Dearly Beloved,* our Witness is in Heaven, that the Design of what is here said, is neither to Irritate nor Expose you, but out of sincere Love to your Souls Welfare, to Undeceive you, and Reclaim you from your sad Mistakes. We do therefore Beseech, Exhort, and Obtest you, as you Love your Souls, and the Church's Peace, consider without prejudice, what is here offered to you. Be not stiffnecked, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his Sanctuary, which he hath Sanctified for ever, and serve the Lord your God, that the Fierceness of his Wrath may turn away. If you will lay these things to Heart, it will not be in your Power to shift the Conviction of your being a considerable length out of the good Old Way of Truth and Peace. And if you be not Refractory, we would offer you some Directions, whereby you may find it again. Search and try your Ways, and turn again to the Lord, remember whence you are fallen, and repent and do your first Works: True Contrition for your own Sins, would remove the Causes of Schism, and so the Effect would cease. It would drive you to Christ the Prince of Peace, which would remove the Holy Cause of it, the Anger of the Lord; and would remove the sinful fomenting Cause of it, Pride and self Conceit of your being more Righteous than those you Separate from, Be more Humble, and you will soon be reconciled to the way of Peace: *Strife shall cease, if nothing be done in Vain Glory, but in Lowlyneſs of Mind; Each Esteem others better than themselves; Endeavour to encrease your Knowledge of the Truths of God; and you shall soon discover the Folly of Division: Ignorance is the Mother of Schism.* Be more Spiritual and Exercised in the Pursuit of Communion with God, and you shall have a greater Desire to entertain Communion with the Church. If you would know where he Feeds, and makes his Flocks to rest at Noon, you must go to the Shepherds Tents. If you would seek him whom your Soul loveth, you must go about the City and Streets thereof, and ask at the Watchmen. The more Concern you have for your own Soul, and Panting Hunger after God, the more Desire you would have for the Ordinances of his Courts and Tabernacles. Get more Love to Christ and his People, and

and this will natively lead you to Union and Communion, with all that keep his way, and will remove that Spirit of Factionness, and Prejudice, and Jealousie, that nourishes Division. Keep your Zeal lively against all sin, but let it have two Edges, to resent the Dishonour done to God, by Schism as well as Defection; let it be Ballanced with Charity, and managed with Discretion. And we request you, that you study Uniformity in your Zeal, that you be not like Cakes turned, hot for some lesser Points in Religion, and cold for others that are greater and more weighty. Be fervent for all Truths, and in all Duties, but with a regular Proportion to their Concern in the Vitals of Religion. Let Religion be more in your Heart than Head, in Practice than in Controversie. Neglect not the Duties of your General Calling of Piety towards God, Sobriety in your selves, Righteousness and Mercy to Men, Brotherly Love, and Holy Christian Fellowship; And forget not the relative Duties of your particular Callings. Have a care of the Idleness of busy Bodies. *1 Thess. 4. 11.* But study to be quiet, and do your own business, and to work with your own hands. *Beware of them that cause Divisions and Offences, and avoid them.* And look on them that blow the Bellows of Contention as no Friends to your, or the Church's Interest. Finally, study to be United one with another, and with your Pastors make Acquaintance, and entertain frequent and Friendly Converse with them, receive the Law at their Mouth, for they are the Messengers of the Lord of Hosts: Grieve them not by your Contempt, or continued Withdrawing, lest they be put to Complain of you to God, and it become Sin unto you.

I shall shut up all with one word to all the Lords People, and that in the words of the Apostle, *Dear Brethren, if there be any consolation in Phil. 2. 1, 2. Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same Love, being of one accord, of one mind. Finally brethren, farewell, be perfect, 2 Cor. 13. 11. be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you.*

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