

DIALOGUES,

PLEASANT AND INTERESTING,

UPON THE

ALL-IMPORTANT QUESTION

IN

CHURCH GOVERNMENT,

WHAT ARE THE LEGITIMATE TERMS OF ADMISSION TO

VISIBLE CHURCH COMMUNION?

BY ADAM RANKIN,

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} 48.

BE it remembered that on the ninth day of June, in the year of our Lord 1819, and in the 43d year of the Independence of the United States, ADAM RANKIN, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the following words and figures, (to wit.)

“Dialogues, pleasant and interesting, upon the all-important question “in church government, what are the legitimate terms of admission to “visible church communion? By ADAM RANKIN, pastor of the Associate “Reformed Presbyterian church in Lexington, Kentucky.”

In conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, entitled “an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,” and also an act, entitled “an act supplementary to an act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof, to the acts of designing, engraving and etching, historical and other prints.”

JOHN H. HANNA,
Clerk of the District of Kentucky.

PART I.

SCENE IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE.

A Professor of Theology;

His Session;

A Dutch Female;

Cara, the Professor's wife, and

Adult Sons and Daughters;

A Doctor of Divinity, and

The joint Session of both the Doctors.

PART II.

SCENE IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE.

The Professor of Theology, and

A Young Man, an elder in his Session, and

His Student, now on trial for holy office.

The Professor is a thorough-bred divine, second to none in pulpit eloquence, long a professor of theology with great eclat; but whether from nature, or habit contracted in his office, is somewhat overbearing.

His antagonist, named William, is a youth of handsome abilities, natural and acquired; in modesty pays due respect to his minister, professor and antagonist; but to no man will sacrifice his zeal for truth.

PREFACE.

CANDID READER,

Although the author of these sheets is decidedly opposed to a work entitled "A PLEA FOR SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION UPON CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES," written by a certain D. D. he is far from presuming equality with him in talents: but "there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding:" by which he is constrained to speak out. He cannot accept any man's person, neither give flattering titles unto man, whether he be great or small. He will defend his principles, especially if he appreciate them, as Luther did truth; of which, he says, one grain is of more value than heaven and earth: and he said well, for without truth, they would no more avail him, than the world would a man who should gain it, and lose his own soul. Though Doctor Clark complained there were many in his day, who had not as much care for their principles as the angel had for Peter's sandals, we have, as they had, some who are not willing to give up the palm so cheap. Though the author is old, infirm, and utterly insufficient for sword or bow, (1) the fire of his wonted zeal aroused him to gird on his armour, when he beheld a challenge from his antagonist, accompanied with as many irritating provocations as attended Goliath's defiance of the armies of Israel, saying he would prove from authentic facts, that sacramental communion, on catholic principles, is agreeable to the faith, and practice of the church of Christ, from the day of Pentecost to the present time, with a few local and party exceptions. (2) So widely different is the fact, which the author trusts he

(1) Forte meum si quis te percunctabitur avum,
Me sexaginta quarta quę sciat implevisse martios.

(2) Plęa, page 4.

will manifest to his readers, that there never has been, and indeed never *could have been*, such a communion since the death of the apostles to the present hour.

The Doctor alledges that for one christian to refuse communion with another, is to excommunicate that christian, and the church to which he belongs; "and that it is so desperate an assault upon the sense of consistency—such a Leviathan of a paradox, that the faculties of poor human nature sink beneath it." The author acknowledges there is but one church, over which Christ is head, and that he holds continued communion with her, which forms an everlasting bond of union among all her members. But as to those, who keep the fruits, there are many, there were seven in Asia, and churches in Galatia. Now he acknowledges there are many churches in the world, which he can recognise to be churches of Christ Jesus, with whom he cannot hold visible, sacramental communion. (1) It is often the case, that a church of Jesus Christ has prophets daubing with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, divining lies; building upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble. Is he bound by any law, human or divine, to receive such with him into the highest act of communion, and bid them God speed? The purest church has sufficient to answer for, without making the sins of other churches her own. If he cannot believe with them in articles of faith, if he cannot have fellowship with them in government, worship or discipline, how can he swear fealty to them at the Lord's table, for one half hour, and never afterwards know them any more than if they were Gentiles!

Sacramental communion is a blending of souls and spirits into one law, in faith, in love, in practice and reciprocal interest, so that if one member rejoice, all the members rejoice, if one suffer, all suffer, if one receive that which is good, it is common to all. "Nor is it possible, if they are

(1) John x, 16, Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold.

truly persuaded that God is a common father to them all and Christ a common head, but that being united in brotherly love, they should mutually communicate their advantages, one to another." They have no rest but in love, no pleasure but in communicating and receiving something. They delight in fellowship, as wisdom with the sons of men. He must love his branch of Christ's church, and all others as far as he can know them; as Christ loved her, when he gave his life for her. Although he can pray for all, known or unknown, it is more convenient for him to hold visible communion with his professed confederates than with strangers, concerning whose principles and practice he was never in providence called to inform himself. He lives among his people. The Doctor thinks the Anti-sectarian practice would be of infinite advantage to the surrounding world: his opponent thinks, that until there is such a reform in principle, as never has been, it would be as dangerous in the civil polity, as in the church. It was a combination of clergymen, who were as mighty hunters after power as Nimrod before the Lord, who built the see of Rome.

Now, candid reader, that I may not be further tedious, I affectionately commend you to God, and the word of his grace, who is able to build you up, and give you an entrance among them who are sanctified: and at the same time, I dedicate this fruit, as Hannah did her Samuel—for this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition, which I asked of him; therefore, also, I have lent him to the Lord, as long as he liveth he shall be the Lord's. Go my son, (1) I send you as a lamb among wolves, be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove.

They will say all manner of evil against you, for my sake. But blessed are ye if you bear reproach falsely for the sake of purity, and its successor, peace.

(1) *Fuge quo descendere gestis*, Har. 20, Epis.

If they deride your title, "Dialogues, pleasant and interesting," as some have already done; tell them your father took the name from the example of the book of Job, the song of Solomon, and Harvey's defence of imputed righteousness. If they deride your mode, as dramatic, because of the various scenes, tell them he caught the example from the revelation of John.

If they complain you are a dear pennyworth, tell them, that may be, but your father is not yet assured of a reimbursement; but that if he finds the merchandise good, he intends, by the aid of him who made a woman out of a rib, to form for you an help-mate, in vindication of the Lord's song, vulgarly called the old psalms, by those who forsook the Lord's house because they were sung in it: in order if possible to excite them to learn to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb in the church triumphant, and if he can afford it, he will give them a better bargain.

DIALOGUES, &c.



DIALOGUE I.—PART I.

SCENE, IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

*Persons of the dialogue—A professor of theology
and his session.*

Dr. My father is dead, and I am risen up this day to fill his place; blessed be God who accounted me a PROFESSOR worthy of this holy office. When David, and David's Lord came to the throne, they purged the floor of the chaff, which their predecessors had collected. Neither my father, nor any of our fathers since the days of the reformation, have ever yet arrived at the perfection, which I wish to attain. In their days, they had to contend with the beast of Italy: our days resemble the peaceful reign of Solomon. In theirs, they could not do the things that they would, for fear of the enemy: in ours, we sit under our own fig-tree, and under our own vine, and there is none to make us afraid. God has brought us to a goodly land, flowing with milk and honey; and blessed us with every immunity he ever promised his church. Now it is our place to shake both earth and heaven, that we may remove those things that are shaken;

as of things that are made; that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.

Elder Eli. Sir, I am this day three score and ten years old, and have served the church in the character of a ruling Elder, with your father, from his youth. I was ever with him in all his afflictions and temptations, which beset him in the kingdom, and patience of Jesus Christ. More than a thousand times have we taken sweet counsel, going up to the house of the Lord. He was my right eye. I never found an error in his doctrine, nor a blemish in his government; and I conceive he has left little chaff in the floor for his son to purge out. I tremble for the ark.

Dr. I grant, my father was honest, able and wise, and faithfully did the work of an evangelist; but wisdom is not always with the aged, nor has the church yet risen to the zenith of her perfection. As Joshua said to Israel, there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. My father did his best, in his day, and must be canonized among the saints. But you know there were many things David could not do, which he left for his son Solomon to accomplish. What we have attained, let us hold fast, and occupy our talents that we may go on to perfection; and that we may give a good

account of our stewardship when we shall render up our accounts.

You know brethren, that when our worthy reformers came forth from the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom, and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified; they wisely carried with them a few of the customs, rites and ceremonies, which were comparatively innocent, that they might not make an impassible gulph, between themselves and those they left behind, that they might deal mercifully with them as brethren, and allure them to do as themselves had done. And from that day to this there have been so many Elis, who tremble for the ark, that the best divines could not do as they would. The consequence is, that the yoke of bondage, which neither we, nor our fathers were able to bear, lies on the neck of the young disciples. Where our father made the yoke heavy: I intend, through the grace of God, to make it light. Because "his yoke is easy, and his burthen is light;" and God forbid that I should be found binding burdens I would not touch with one of my fingers. This was an ancient practice of all the fathers of tradition, and it will be the never-ending foible of all those, who depart from the gentle and simple institutions of our Lord Redeemer.

Isachar. (This Isachar had been long a ruling elder, he was a wise man, and knew what Israel

ought to do in times of trouble. He spake and said;) Sir, there is nothing, which can be proved, and supported from divine authority as ameliorating the condition of this church; to which I shall not say *Amen*; notwithstanding my former prepossessions. But as ye, I am ignorant what can be added or taken away, without defacing the beauty, and splendor of the house of God.

Dr. Brethren, you know there was a heavy burden lay on my father, and the church under his care, which took its rise accidentally: and not from any divine warrant; to connect fast days, and days of thanksgiving, with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Every thing is beautiful in its season, but it is not beautiful to connect fast days and feast days. It is an absurdity in nature and cannot be supported. The administration of the Lord's supper is an ordinary duty: fasting is an occasional or extraordinary duty. To connect them is absurd and insupportable. Again, your pompous parade of holidays, and the august assemblies collected by them, have a tendency to fill the tender roes and the young harts with such awful terror, as prevents many from communing; and disqualifies more for the familiarity they would otherwise enjoy. This sounding of trumpets, and calling on multitudes to days of fasting and prayer, carries in it such an ostentatious show of pomp and parade, as is oppugnant to invisible christian communion.

Elder Isachar. Sir, if the practice is accidental, it cannot be warranted, and nothing is further re-

moved from the associate reformed, than to institute ordinances of human device. If I could believe it, I would never have another fast on such an occasion. But whether from practice or from divine authority, I have acquired my impressions, I must confess I have felt a religious obligation, to keep our appointed fasts and feasts, at the same times. Whether I shall be able to give a rational, or scriptural account of my impression, so as to satisfy my brethren, must be left to the event. But I shall offer the following thoughts.

1. The nature of this ordinance is such, that unless I wash my hands in innocency, I cannot, I dare not, encompass his altar. If my brother have aught, (much more my maker,) I stand debared. If I regard iniquity in my heart, although never brought into overt act, the Lord will not regard me. If I come without self examination of my faith, love, repentance, and new obedience, not discerning the Lord's body, torn into the integral parts of body and blood, till there was no place for the soul, I come to eat and drink damnation to myself, and may be justly doomed to spend my wretched, miserable years in sickness, poverty of spirit, and blindness of mind; till my carcase falls in the wilderness. Now, if the nature of the ordinance, calls for an examination of myself, as cannot be denied, I see there will be a double call for preaching, praying, and fasting.

2. There is no work more *difficult* for us, than

a strict scrutiny of our own hearts: there is no appointed aid more effective, than the pulpit means, of declaring to us our sins, and the plagues of our own heart. A Boanerges in fifteen minutes may do more execution, for bringing forth the monster, and gaining our hearty consent to slay the once beloved sins before our eyes, than a thousand men, while at their daily employment, would do in a month. Then the most efficient aid in our hardest work is ministerial: but this work calls for prayer, and not only secret, but what is more effectual: *“is any sick, let him send for the elder, and let him pray over him, anointing him with the oil”* of spiritual instruction *“and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him.”* But it may be said, James speaks of bodily indisposition. Granted. That which was a cure for the one, will not be bad for the other, *“the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”* But again, to do this most arduous work, I need to afflict my soul, lest it sleep, instead of work; and the appointed means David used, were tears and fasts, that the enemy turned to his shame; and as there is communion in the ordinance, there ought to be communion in the fasting: and by this mode of reasoning, there ought to be a congregational fast. Again, the consequence of examination is conviction, this calls for repentance, the best outward aid is ministerial. John came preaching repentance, this pre-

duces godly sorrow, weeping, and wailing, humility and self denial. [Dan. 10. 23.] "In those days, I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks: I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh into my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till the three whole weeks were fulfilled." [Ps. 50. 5.] *Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and giveth them tears to drink, in great measure; my heart is smitten like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.*" Ministerial aid is needed, to preach to the broken hearted and grieved spirits, gospel consolation. But sacramental occasions call for mourning, when we look upon him whom we have pierced, no outward mean is more effectual to produce this discovery, than ministerial. Paul gloried in nothing more than in preaching Christ crucified: he desired to know nothing else amongst his people, so there is no employment more proper for us upon those occasions, than bitterness of spirit. When Hannah wept, she did not eat; nor did she drink wine, nor strong drink, like the sons of Belial. Therefore, fasting is naturally connected with this ordinance, and so is public fasting. Again, every communicant becomes a minister of the New Testament, not of word and doctrine; but of acts, and deeds, and they must be set apart for it by fasting. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work, whereunto I have

called them. And when they had *fasted* and prayed, and laid their hands upon them, they sent them away.

The holy work of a communicant is, to shew forth the Lord's death till he comes; there is nothing more sacred in preaching, and if divines must be set apart by fasting &c. so must, so ought communicants. But it is objected, this is done but once with the divine; and why oftener with the communicant? The apostles were oft in fasting, and so must communicants, each according to their order: and if they are to officiate in this branch of ministerial office publicly, a public fast must be proclaimed and celebrated with that solemnity, which the occasion requires, & there never can be a greater. Again, there is a call for fasting and prayer, when we have some important request to make: that we may obtain, it is made our duty to ask by prayer and fasting. This Nature taught the heathen, and Ninevah will rise up in judgement against us, and condemn us; if we refuse thus to humble ourselves, when we would make our wants known: Some kind of devils will not go out, but by prayer and fasting; and the holy spirit dwells with the contrite, who sow to the spirit, & not to the flesh. Now the greatest favor sought or found, is obtained upon those occasions; fellowship with the Father in his love, with the Son in his death, and the Holy Ghost in his resurrection; and who would refuse to humble himself, that he may be exalted in due time!

Before honor is humility; but a haughty spirit before a fall. If we are to sit with him in heavenly places; we ought to humble ourselves with him. If we are to ask for favors, let us take a queen for our example, a queen of queens in the sight of Heaven. *“Go, gather together all the Jews, that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night nor day: I also, and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go unto the king, which is not according to law; and if I perish, I perish. And Mordecai did according to all that Esther had commanded. And God gave her, far above all that she was able to ask.”* (Esth. 4. 16.)

David sinned grievously, but he grievously repented, and obtained pardon. The Lord hath put away thy sin. The Law of God had said, thou shalt surely die, but by the blood of the covenant, the sentence is reversed—thou shalt not die. But though he pardoned thy sin, he would have vengeance upon the deed. Because by this deed he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme: which occasion, they have gloried in to this day, without abatement, by reproaching the Lord's anointed, and the Lord's prophet, forgetful of three things, they ought to know:

1. That they are enemies, who do it. 2d. that their sin is blasphemy. 3d. the power of the Redeemer's death to atone for sin. David finds the

invisible relation, through the power of his mediation, was secure, and the stroke temporary. But one of the four sore evils, the sword, shall never depart from thy house; the child also born unto thee shall surely die. The prophet's word soon took effect, the beginning of his sorrow: the Lord struck the child, and it was very sick. David has recourse to a moral duty, binding, as occasion requires, at all times.

He knew not what alleviation of affliction was consistent with the awful prediction which he acknowledged just, and clear,* that he had learned by Moses the opinion of Jonah." I know that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." Though he was told the child should die, the time was not set: the sword should not depart, it was not said how heavy it should lye, or whether these should be in judgement or mercy. Upon the whole, there is left a landable example worthy of our imitation when we have any thing to pray for, and especially the mortification of the old man, and our sanctification for the supper.

Again, Daniel intercedes for the children of his people. "And I set my face unto the Lord my God, to seek by prayer, and supplication, with fasting, and sack cloth, and ashes! and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession."

“In these days, I Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh, nor wine, in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.”† Was Daniel so interested in the temporal liberation of others, and do we make a decree, that we will not ask by fasting, our eternal liberty, and enjoyment of God, or think the yoke heavy if we did?

This ordinance calls for all the religious exercise we can practice, till we go to heaven.

Though the Dr. says, to connect fast days and feast days in the same ordinance, is an absurdity; saith the scripture, *whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*‡ The Psalmist informs us, how he performed this duty. “*I humbled my soul with fasting.*”*

Again, “whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. *God resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble.* Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.”†

But are we too proud to follow the example of our crucified Lord? who ‘being found in fash-

† 9. 3. and 10. 2. ‡ Math. 18. 4. * 35, 13. † Jam. 4. 10. Deut. 5.

ion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

I think the nature of the ordinance, connects a fast and a feast; the first an essential prelude of the second. Do we not see verified what Christ told his disciples? "ye shall have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy." They saw him crucified, they smote their breasts with grief. And there followed him, a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But when he was risen they believed not for joy. Thus Joseph's brethren thought they were called to atone for their brother's death; but when he told them, I am Joseph your brother, they eat and drank, and were merry. I see no inconsistency, that we connect our godly sorrow and our godly joy, in the same solemnity. When our sins hid him from us, and when we seek him sorrowing, we have good cause to say, or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadal.

Again, the Dr. says, the celebration of the supper is an ordinary duty, fasting an occasional or extraordinary, and they ought not to be connected. Fasting is a moral duty, to be practised when occasion requires. Now if the bridegroom be taken away, in those days shall they fast. What con-

gregation is habitually in the full enjoyment of the divine presence, and has no sin to bewail? If there be but one member, who by sin had provoked his departure, or had wounded his profession; there is a call of God for fasting. *"Ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned, that he, that hath done that deed, might be taken away from amongst you."** "Your glorying is not good, know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump. As ye are unleavened, for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, let us keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

But, suppose the congregation be all clean, through the word spoken unto them, there is at all times a preparation of the sanctuary, necessary for this communion, to be observed by the congregation, as a congregation. Christ did not need water baptism, but he said it behoves us to fulfil all righteousness.

Another reason: suppose the church ever so pure, if there be large harvests, and few labourers, thousands of brethren suffering for want of our high privileges; we should fast and pray for our sisters, who have no breasts. There is no church since Christ's ascension, but can find cause for keeping a fast, as often as they eat this bread.

* 1 Cor. v. 2. 7. 8.

As to alarming young communicants, by the multitude, I am of a different opinion. If the religion be pure and undefiled, they will see no man, for the man who laid down his life for them. If it be not, they need more than this to keep them from eating and drinking damnation to themselves.

As to pomp and parade, it is an easy matter to fix the vilest epithet, to the purest hosts. If keeping many days where the people are assembled in multitudes, is inconsistent with christian humility. I wist not how the tribes of Israel assembled three times in the year, and always kept seven days, and sometimes other seven days. I expect, spiritual exercise, is the same in one age, as in another. It is a public ordinance, and not to be done in a corner nor hid under a bushel. We are not to be ashamed to acknowledge him before his father and his angels, nor yet the wicked adulterers.

Elder Elihu. [This Elihu was the son of an estated gentleman, who favored him with every advantage with which literature could endow him. He early taught him the use of the Bible; and thereby caused him to know, that an acquaintance with it was essential to the character of a gentleman, and the most powerful mean, to elate him to public life, and splendid utility. In consequence of this fatherly instruction, he made it his guide, and minutely walked by its precepts. It brought him into notice in the church, and in process of time, he entered

into holy orders. But at this period, it appears, he thought it was a matter attainable, to know the scripture of truth, by the diligent use of the outward means: which in better times, he found impossible, and had to be as dependent as Peter. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father only." We have his defence of the Dr's. sentiment, in his juvenile years, which is no reflection upon his judgement, now matured. He opened his mouth, and said:] Great men are not wise: neither do the aged understand judgement. I also will shew my opinion: I have maturely weighed the subject, by examining every text in the Bible, which alludes to fasting; and I am thoroughly convinced, it receives no sanction, either positively, allegorically or implicitly, and that to require it, is presumptively to legislate for heaven, without liberty or authority. If Isachar can produce any thing higher, than his own reasoning, I trust it will be thankfully received.

Isachar. Reverend Sir, I see in the works of Elihu, that he acknowledged that fasting is an occasional duty, and left to us to appoint, when the occasion offers, and that it is a moral duty, we are bound to perform, when the occasion demands it. Now if he has left it to our volition, to appoint our fast days, when we find the occasion which God offers, the act of obedience will be praiseworthy.

and profitable: if neglected, it will be no less criminal, than if we had the time set by himself. Now I ask of all men, if the age of time ever did or ever will find a more appropriate time for fasting, than the Friday before a communion Sabbath: the very day the ancient of days was made a little lower than the angels of heaven, that he might taste death for every man. The apostles and primitive saints observed this day in fasting for many ages. See Dupin and Mossheiu.

This day the sun went into sable mourning, the earth tremble with fear, the rocks rent with indignation, and the dead could not sleep in their graves, but arose and came forth into the city, to convict the guilty citizens of their Theocide. The man who can find no occasion to bring forth his sins upon that day, that they may be slain; which occasioned the death of the Lord of glory, must war with his sins, as David with his son Absalom, deal tenderly with the young man and spare his life.

But, does my antagonist pretend to say, we have no scripture warrant, for making this day a fast to the Lord, because the supper is a feast day. O Israel keep your solemn feast. Did I not find in his work that the great day of expiation was a fast day, and yet that fast day was called a feast. Num. 23: But that great day of expiation of the sins of the Israelitish nation, was as much kept a day of humiliation for our sins, the meritorious care

of the death of the Lord Jesus, as it is possible for us to keep such a day of humiliation upon the present occasion.

The man must be a strange casuist, who would sound the trumpet of alarm, and proclaim a fast, rend his heart, and not his garment, and turn to the Lord, with weeping and supplication, because the worms devoured the harvest: and refuse to fast on the great day of atonement. But Elihu may inform you, that the day of the passover, the precursor of the supper, was seven months from the day of the atonement. And what if God appointed one in the spring, and the other in the fall, called by different names, when the very self same things were to be recognized, and the very self same things which we celebrate in the supper, we, under the New Testament, connect and simplify, throwing off the appendages of ceremony, but continuing what was virtually the same. But he will tell you, the one was kept without a fast day, the other with it. I answer, if the same death of Jesus was shown forth in the one, which was in the other, and he made but one offering, *“for by one offering he perfected forever them, who were sanctified;”* and if a fast day was positively enjoined on the one occasion, it would certainly, by all rules of interpreting scripture, be implied, if not expressed, in the other.

But, from the authority of Elihu, a fast may be

either partial or entire abstinence. He alledges, Daniel's mourning three full weeks, and eating and drinking nothing pleasant, was of the first kind: the fast of Esther and Nineveh of the latter; the former as compleat and acceptable to God as the latter, and much more so, if we judge by the answer "O! Daniel, a man greatly beloved." All this acknowledged by my opponent; then I prove, to all intent, and purpose, my antagonist being judge, that the Israelites by the most positive injunction cogently enforced by threats and promises, were bound to fast seven days of the passover, and yet it is called a feast, by the very word by which it is called a fast. This may appear paradoxical to a young man, and is comparatively excusable in him, which would not be so in father Eli. But did he never read of dying to sin, and living to God? Now we are sure there never was, nor ever will be, another feast of fatter things, or purer wine upon the lees, or better refined. But I would recommend Elihu not to be so rash in giving his opinion, and especially among old men, saying, suffer me to speak a little, and I will shew thee, that I have yet to speak on God's behalf, when he did not know whose side he was on; he should have modestly said, days shall speak and multitude of years shall teach wisdom. Without look-

ing every verse in his bible, he may find it ten times, that the passover was kept with fasting,* *thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread therewith*, EVEN THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION, Heb. the crust or refuse bread called the bread of affliction.† And the people took their dough, before it was leavened, in their kneeding troughs, being bound up in their clothes, upon their shoulders. From sacramental fasts arose the proverbial expressions;‡ though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction &c. They do greatly err, not understanding the scripture, who alledge that either the feast of the passover, or the feast of expiation, was a carnal feast, sowing to the flesh; no, it was accompanied with every thing that betokened self-denial, deep humility, bitterness and contrition, devotion and purity. The most unsavory bread to those accustomed to leaven, and lest they should be tempted to eat the forbidden morsel, under the penalty of excommunication, it must not be seen in all their dwellings, so strictly were they bound, that as a preparation, the house must be searched, with lighted candles. What they eat, unsavory as it was, must be mixed with bitter herbs. The Lamb must be roasted, not boiled in a pot, the mode of cooking it with savory ingredients, not

*Ex. 12. 34. †Deut. vi. 8

‡Eccl. x. 1.

soden in any part, but crisped with fire on the outside, till the interior is thoroughly cooked, and the essence melted in the flame. Were they clothed in their most beautiful robes or Babylonish garments? No, they must have tokens of flight, their loins girded up, their shoes on their feet, and their staffs in their hands, and they must eat it in haste. The promised land was before, but the inexorable enemies encompasseth their heels, saying let us overtake and divide the spoil. This is the day of Jacob's trouble, and the day of his salvation:*

Elihu. If so by what authority do ye saint Saturday?

Isachar. Hold your tongue, lest he smite you through as with a dart: know ye not, that this day the father of eternity mourns for his only son, who had dwelt from everlasting in his bosom this day, this memorable day, to be held in everlasting remembrance by all who lost immortality. Behold him lying, a mangled, breathless, bloodless, emaciated, dislocated skeleton, his visage, marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; abused in the field of a victorious barbarian, who riots on the blood of the slain.

Hearken to the father's unutterable accent, come behold all ye who pass by, and see if ever sorrow was like my sorrow. This day there is silence in

* See Beveridge's vindication of the Canon in 2d v. of his edition of the Apostolic Fathers, page 166.

heaven, not a harp but is hung on a willow, not a face but is mantled in shame; that the creator should receive such abuse from his fellow creatures. They are seeking a crucified Jesus, to do him honor, but not one to comfort another.

What day is this? The day of expiation? No it was yesterday: the day of resurrection? No, it is tomorrow. This is the day of the death of death; the day the creator rested from all the work which he had made, now rests in his grave. Tomorrow will be the resurrection of the resurrection and life eternal: in which we will keep a most solemn feast, mingling sorrow, and joy, when by faith we see our risen Lord, and hear him say, I am your brother whom ye delivered into the hands of wicked men, who crucified me, but though I was dead, I am alive, and live forevermore; and because I live, ye shall live also.

Elihu. I had thought I would have enquired why Monday was observed. But I find I have spoken to my own shame; and I will proceed no further. A thousand arguments will compel us, the beneficences to return the next day, to render due thanks.

I move for the continuance of the four days at least out of seven, and rather blush at the diminution, than complain of the number.

The Dr. carried his plea to the Synod, and lost it there, but has ever since practised in *his own way.* *No wonder Eli trembled for the ark.*

DIALOGUE II.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

Persons of the Dialogue.—The Professor, his session, and a dutch Female.

PROLOGUE.

Now in process of time the Dr. begins to long after his mother's house, as sorely as Jacob did for his father's: for his mother, his wife, and his wife's father and mother, belonged to the low dutch church; and his bowels yearned after his own flesh and blood, that he might impart to them some good thing; therefore, he was desirous to bring about a union with that church.(1)

And his friends among that body, claimed three-fourths of him by blood, and were as solicitous of union with their eminent kinsman. They had a soothsayer named Balaam, who knew what the Dr. thought in his bed chamber, and he and two of the Dr's. Elders, named Balak and Joab, made three substantial confidants. The soothsayer ordered the two Elders, to take a wise dutch female, named Tekoah, to attend the Dr's. church, on Saturdaynight previous to the communion Sabbath, and that she should feign herself as fervent as

(1) Sam, 13. 39.

Hannah in the temple, and to cause her to step up with the communicants and secure a token at his hand; for he distributes all himself, and it is impossible for him to discriminate between one of his own, and a stranger; and then to retire to the lower end of an aisle and recline on a pew, in a pensive attitude, till the people have all retired; then the Dr. will come toward her, then let her come to meet him, and introduce a conversation. This will bring the matter before the session and by discussing the subject, they might feel the Dr's. pulse.



Dr. to his parishoners. As you are always holy through the word I have spoken unto you, and can never be taken at a surprise, I hereby inform you, that to-morrow, I intend to break bread among you.

Let the Elders come forward. Let us constitute the session by prayer, the tokens of admission are distributed, the people are dismissed and removed. But who is this I see sitting, as devout as Mary at the sepulchre.

Dutch Female. Sir, I am afraid I have done wrong.

Dr. What have you done?

Tekoah. Sir, I went up with the communicants, and received a token: but I am not a member of your church, and I could not be at rest till I spoke to you about it.

Dr. to what church do you belong?

Tekoa'. To the Dutch church, and if you wish it I can satisfy you of my character and standing there.

Dr. But what made you come for a token, without mentioning the matter before?

Tekoah. I had not an opportunity, as I did not know in time, that your communion was next Lord's day. I am sorry I have done wrong, but I expect to leave the city on Tuesday, and to be absent, I cannot tell how long, in a part of the country where I shall have no opportunity of communing, and I wished once more before I went away to join with christians in showing forth my Saviour's death.

The Doctor to his session. Brethren there is a very moving case indeed. I am in a great strait to know what to do. I have often thought, and as often been told, that our church was too contracted to thrive—we debar from our communion thousands who would otherwise be very helpful members. You will speak your minds freely, but let us have closed doors.

Elder Balak. [This Elder was of the seed royal, and accustomed to greatness of thought, his talents and confidential acquaintance with the learned divines enabled him to speak the language of an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile; and being perfectly obsequious to the soothsayer, he

gloried in spending his time and labour, to build him as many altars of curious workmanship, as he was pleased to demand.]

Reverend Sir, It is with diffidence I develope the thoughts of my heart upon this subject: not that I distrust the legality of my principles, for with a good conscience I can carry them with me to a supreme judge; but because an attempt of reformation, however honest and however just, would raise surprise. Some fiend would touch my elbow with this; seeing that these things cannot be spoken against, you ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly. Thus fear prevents many; sense of inability stops more; all love to keep whole bones, and whole skin also, and so we trudge on in the beaten track; as if our fathers were all infallible, and no room left for improvement by the brightest light in many generations. It is true, nothing should be done precipitately, that might endanger the harmony of the church: but if we know one another's minds, and would wisely concert the best means, and watch opportunities to suggest our thoughts, as the people could bear them, I conceive, by a gradual progression, much might be done, which lays undone by our indolence.

But my serious opinion perfectly accords with the Dr's, that this sectarian principle, which so abounds in our day is a bar to all prosperity. While there are such thin walls, that nine tenths of the people

cannot discriminate which has the better side, if they are not humored in all their pretensions, by and by they are offended, and off at a tangent. Thus we have seen the impossibility of executing a mild discipline. Again, suppose I, a ruler in Israel, were called upon for a justification of a separation between us and the low dutch church, I confess I would be confounded, for I cannot give a reason for my faith in this matter, and I know not the wise man I could apply to for help. Perhaps when I have heard my brethren speak, I may enlarge.

Elder Joab. Mod. Sir, my soul kindies at the first spark, which would of necessity fill our souls with joy unexpressible and full of glory, if such a thing might be granted from above, that we could once conceive the happy day, that the antiquated litigations were buried as deep, as they ever rose high to the shame and confusion of christians; for we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: neither doth God respect any person, yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him.

And the woman said to king David, "wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one that is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished."*

* 2 Sam. 14 c. 18 v.

The word suggested by you, sir, in the introduction of this subject, is to me a comfortable word, and emboldens me to develope what I have long smothered; for I verily thought, that ministers were the cause of all dissention, and the very last to reconcile. Therefore, I was afraid to speak my mind, lest it should come to your ears, and you should conceive it treason. My opinion is, that an union, if it could be brought about with the Low Dutch church, would be no degradation of the dignity of the Associate Reformed. By combining our power and uniting our interest, we should be formidable to our enemies, and with facility carry into effect more beneficent establishments, which now pine away for want of finance. But truly, I know not why a good man, who has the love of God shed abroad upon his heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, should be so afraid of man, as to debar him from a deed, which carries, in its very essence and nature, love to God and benevolence to man. We are commanded to love all men. With the Doctor at our right hand, and a perfect unanimity among ourselves, I think we might lay the foundation upon which our successors might build with safety for eternity. I would be glad to try the experiment at a venture, to admit the applicant, as her case is somewhat peculiar; and if it be likely to make any disturbance, we will offer our reasons. If *that* will not heal; a slight confession, which we can make with a good conscience in so

good a cause, will soon turn away wrath: and we will find out thereby, how far we may presume hereafter.

Elder Joseph. My beloved brethren, let us weigh the matter in the balance of the sanctuary, lest we sin against God. Our Lord and master has put great honour upon us, that we should be door keepers in the house of the Lord. He has made us overseers, in his house, and over all that he hath; and since we have enjoyed this weighty charge, and he has seen us faithful, he has made all that we have done, to prosper in our hands; and we are this day come to excellent renown, and to favor with God and man. But this move must be a wilful, deliberate perversion of that order we are sworn to preserve. It extends to illimited degradation and will degrade us, as destitute of principle; and we shall forfeit, in one hour, all the glory we enjoy, and God may call us speedily to answer for our stewardship. If we are convinced, that a junction of this kind would be for the glory of God, let us do as Tamar told Ammon, speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from thee. There is an orderly way of coming into the unity of the spirit, the bond of peace. Let us first celebrate the nuptials, and the seed will be legitimate. Let us have a professional union, and then it will be in order to have a sacramental communion. But as soon would the Patriarch, my name-sake, have been justified before God to have

lain with his master's wife, or Ammon with his sister Tamar, as we can cause our shame to go, or our folly to be forgot in Israel, if we do this great wickedness and sin against God. I say to you, as Reuben said to his brethren, "do not sin against the child, do not sin against the Lord's anointed, do not trespass against the covenant." Let us keep ourselves pure; let us pay our vows; and with confidence we will render up our account: otherwise the blood of those, who perish by our unfaithfulness, will be required at our hand. I hope, Sir, nothing more will be said on this subject, lest some of us be called to an account for it, and for what has been said. For the day will come, when he will punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their master's houses with deceit.

Elder Gamaliel. Sir, I think the move would be attended with dangerous consequences: we had better let it alone. If it be of God, it will come about in an orderly way, for he is the God of order, in all the assemblies of the saints. If it be not of him, we will never effect it by violating our ordination vows. Assured I am, we have no power to admit this woman, by any authority, with which we are clothed.

Dr. I am, brethren, truly gratified to find so much of the christian liberty, which I hope is taking root, not only in this enlightened church, but elsewhere. May God speed its progress!

Dr. left to his own reflection. O! my heart smites; my conscience upbraids. Wretched man, that I am! I would I had never been born, to be thus tied to a miserable, contracted, sectarian tribe, as contemptible as diminutive; too illiterate to be taught. (1) "He went home exclaiming to himself can this be right? Is it possible that such is the law of the Redeemer's house? It quickened his enquiries; strengthened his doubts; and terminated in conviction, that it was altogether wrong." Great rivers rise from small springs. But why, my soul, so much discouraged? I have yet much in my power; and I am determined to improve it. I am D. D. of a flourishing divinity Hall, and my students adore me. They will take all for gospel that I teach them, and in the length of four years study, I shall inspire them with liberality. I will distribute them to different stations, according to their respective abilities, and the emergency to be effected: and then I will break the bounds, (2) and contest the point with my Synod. They will fight my battles; and when we make a rent, I will, at all events, have a respectable party, and they who remain will be so contemptible for number and influence in their contracted, sectarian circle, that they will soon diminish into a cypher. If not, I will take up

(1) Plea p. 7. (2) Hos. 5. 10. the princes of Judah were like them that remove the bounds. "Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them, like water."

my pen, and I am so confident of my superior talents, that I can depict their character in such a hideous light, that I will shove them, by hundreds and by thousands, to leave their holds, and flee to our party for mercy. And this example shall be the salvation of America, and I shall leave the world, regretted by all, who survive that melancholy day.

DIALOGUE III.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

Persons.—The professor, his wife Cara, and adult sons and daughters.

D. D. *To his wife.* My dear and dearly beloved; my breast swells with pleasing thoughts. To you in confidence, I shall impart what none must know, till, by joint counsel, we have matured our plan.

Cara. Why, Doctor, you fill my heart with the itch of curiosity. What deep laid plan, in more than human wisdom, heaves thy breast? To one, with confidence repose, who ever esteemed thy wisdom equal to Daniel's.

D. D. My Cara, you remember, our beginnings

were small. By the providence of a gracious God, we are greatly encreased: our family have risen to excellent renown; our fame extends from pole to pole. But our mansion is obsolete; we have nothing in or about it, to please our taste, now refined to delicacy. I do not expect our children will be unanimous. But it would be beneath our dignity to make them our counsel. I will cast the die in the twinkling of an eye. I have thought of disposing, and building according to our ability, taste, and splendor, among a people of the better sort. Here, you know, our neighbours are poor, and as plain as a pike staff, and as void of ambition, as if they had been limited by an eternal decree; in short, there is no hope of seeing them better.

Cara. Most excellent! my noble lord, your wisdom resembles some sacred oracle. Anticipation fills my soul with rapture.

D. D. But, my *Cara*, how shall we broach our thoughts to our children? They will suspect us of vain glory, as we have raised them up according to the custom of the place.

Cara. Indeed, my dear Lord, I would never ask their leave. It would be degrading to our dignity to make them our counsel. You have the whole power in your hands, just where it should be. Do as your wisdom will direct, and they will be forced to bow in subjection: and when the deed is done there will be no room left for division; and your well digested system, will not be obnoxious to op-

position; and you will perfect the whole, with the serenity of a judge, and the dignity of a sovereign.

D. D. Never was a man so blessed in the cordiality of a wife! I will watch the first opportunity to cast the die.

Adult sons and daughters. [“And there was a day, when his sons and his daughters were eating, and drinking wine, in their eldest brother’s house.” He thus addressed himself to the rest.] Dear brothers and sisters, was ever a family so blessed as ours! Our reverend father is our crown of glory: his magisterial dignity, his comely graces, his sweet and affable addresses, are all worthy of our imitation, and all sanctioned by a consort, alone worthy of such a husband, and to us a fond, indulgent mother. Hark! some one raps at the door. Oh! welcome brother Solomon, we are glad of your arrival: as we were alone, gratifying ourselves in contemplating the singular felicities of our family, your sentiments will add to our hilarity.

Solomon. Myself, for such you are to me, you must summon up all your fortitude. I am the messenger of heavy tidings to you. Our father, whom we adored, without the least intimation or previous counsel with friend or stranger, has sold his mansion, yea all his real estate, even to the ark of his house, and set the time of delivery, and then, if another is not provided in time, we are cast out, to wander, till we find another home.

Thomas. Brother, I beg your pardon; I will
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never believe the tidings, till I cannot help it. But, brother, tell us all about it, I pry with anxiety.

Solomon. Why friends, there is nothing more to be told. He disposed of all without giving any friend time to advise with him. (3) But the heart of a king is deep.

[Upon a day appointed, the Dr. thus addressed his family. My beloved, I have explored the city for a site to build on, and found none equal to our taste: and the time of giving possession is up: and we must commit ourselves to the courtesy of our friends.]

The family being struck with astonishment; all are silent, none dare reflect. No one can justify. Some are bedewed with contrition: some look upon others, expecting they will surely reply. Their silence was the sharpest reproof he could get. He hastens to find a retiring place, that he might refrain. As he had no counsellor, he had no comforter.]

Dr. My soul is filled with astonishment. I was confident the dignity of my family entitled them to a cordial reception into the most eligible place in the city, and now we are neglected by all. How true the proverb, "the rich hath many friends, the poor is despised of his neighbour!" This is to me a dark and cloudy day, "my belly trembles, my lips quiver, rottenness enters into my bones; I tremble in myself;" oh! that I might rest in the

(3) See the Dr's defence before his Presbytery.

day of trouble! But mine eyes are debarred from rest and sleep, and my couch is watered with my tears. I am full of tossings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day. Whence can arise this trouble? "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." Oh! that it was with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon my temple. Alas! my halcyon days are past and gone; something betokens a frown from Providence, who has not succeeded my enterprise, and my soul faints, in a day of adversity. My conscience upbraids me with neither a sin of omission or commission. I know some diversity of sentiment has been, between some of my most worthy Elders and myself: but in the integrity of my heart, and the innocence of my hands, I have done this. (4) "But why art thou cast down, my soul!!" What should discourage thee? Before honor, is humility. If one door is shut, I trust a more effectual door will open; if I am put out of my stewardship, it the more behoves me to make friends. I am resolved what to do; and that I will do. I know that Dr. R. of this city, is a liberal hearted gentleman, who gives his own away. I will straitway make him my confidant; and, with his concurrence I will indirectly bring about a union with the Dutch Church, where I wish to be. I would do it direct, but for the connection.

(4) Gen. 29, 5.

DIALOGUE IV.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

Persons.—D. D. and Dr. R.

D. D. Brother, I am extremely glad of this interview. I have to congratulate you upon the report I have just received, both from our Bible Societies and Missionaries for the propagation of the Gospel, foreign and domestic. It would be utterly incredible; but that we durst not lay limits to the holy One, whose mighty works are so characteristic of their divine author. By it we have many infallible proofs, that our work is with the Lord, and our judgement with our God, who will, beyond controversy, second our laudable and benevolent achievements; and put a seal on the lips of all, who condemn our labors of love. Such a work of diffusing the light of the Gospel, has not been in a hundred years past, as we see accomplished now in a few days, and by the same ratio, there will not be a spot of the earth in ten or fifteen years, but will be amply supplied with the written and living oracle of divine revelation. Then swords may be beat to ploughshares and spears to pruning hooks, for the nations will learn war no more. For the envy also of Ephraim shall depart; for the adver-

saries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

D. R. Why Doctor, you bring to my ears good news from afar. It is as cold water to a thirsty soul. My soul doth exceedingly rejoice, and by it I am the more convinced, the time to savour Zion is now come: and he is now ushering in his illustrious reign of a thousand years, when Kings shall be made nursing fathers, and Queens nursing mothers, and our sons and our daughters shall become noble princes in all the earth. It is manifest to me, from the harmonising system now visible among those, who have lived in dissension. that illustrious prophecy is commenced: "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them, and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den." (5)

D. D. My brother, this is what we are bound by every tie, to encourage: and, as much as lieth in us, to discountenance every let to its progress. For, if roes, and the hinds, or the tender grapes

(5) Isa. ii. 6 7. 8. But let the reader take knowledge of v. 5.

of our new born churches, should receive authentic intelligence, that their mother churches, who gave them being and support, are at variance among themselves; they will draw the most unsavory conclusions concerning the reality of our religion, and be led to doubt their own. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes. It would be better, that a mill-stone was hung around their necks, and they cast into the sea, than offend one of those little ones, who believe on him. And we may rest assured, it will put them to the most exquisite anguish of mind, to hear of our ancient sectarian spirit continuing among us, as in years past.

D. R. Indeed, Sir, I must do myself the pleasure to let you know, I have lately perceived, since my people began to feel the power of religion upon their hearts, that they are much more loving among themselves, and charitable towards other denominations: and they sometimes deplore, with tender compassion, the rigid and narrow spirit of some, who seem to take no delight in our revivals, but are rather disposed to doubt its reality, than take an interest in its practice.

D. D. And this I have not the least doubt of: for, as they are now, so once was I, till God, by his wisdom and goodness, was pleased, by the instrumentality of a Dutch female, to convince me, that what God had cleansed, I should not call com-

mon: and, from that day to this, I am ashamed that I belong to the secession party, who are not only extremely rigid, but glory in it, and glory in being reproached on that account. When they hear of a revival, in which multitudes are converted, you may see sadness in their countenance; for they cannot believe, that any good thing should be conferred upon any, who are not of their way of thinking, or who do not connect themselves with them; although they had power to cast out devils. Upon this subject, dear brother, I wished a free and confidential conference, *inter nos*; as, you know, it would be the worst of policy to provoke them to think, I had become their enemy. If I can hold an interest in their affections, I may do them good, by leading them unto more pleasant paths.

D. R. Dear brother, I rejoice to have from your mouth those candid acknowledgements of what I ever lamented to see in you: and, at the same time, I wish, with the utmost sincerity, to tender my services, in support of any laudable measure you may propose, to ameliorate the public mind.

D. D. We are informed by good authority, if two shall agree on earth, to ask any thing in his name, it shall be done for them. So highly did Jesus approve of harmony among brethren. Now, I am fully persuaded, as providence has chosen for us the principal seats in his kingdom, over which the Holy Ghost has made us the overseers, that we stand in the highest responsibility, and, as such,

are clothed with more than ordinary authority; and where much is given, much is required.

D. H. Of these remarks I am conscious of the correctness: for the harmonising spirit has seized my soul, and I wait with anxiety, to accord with what, I hope, is some well digested system worthy of its author.

D. D. With the utmost confidence in your integrity, I take the liberty to communicate, that, since my late conviction, I am determined upon a reform in the constitution of our church, at the risk of my character and all I possess. Yea, I would not count my life a dear sacrifice.

D. R. This is coming to the point, and, I must say, it is laudable, worthy of a *D. D.* But how shall it be wisely and most securely effected?

D. D. The plan is not only digested, but partly executed. I have drawn off my people from their old stand. We are now without a church.

D. R. Pardon the interruption. I now conceive you will have a sufficient apology for preaching in my church twice in the day in the times of vacation, and the people will naturally come to hear us both without distinction. They will sweetly amalgamate till they will be blessed with a spirit of reciprocal affection for one another, during our ordinary Sabbaths.

D. D. You are perfectly upon the plan. When the communion comes on, I shall prepare, as God may enable, some most lively and masterly dis-

courses, suited to the occasion; and when we invite to the Lord's table, I shall, in the most pathetic manner, touch all the fine strings of their affections, treating of the love of Christ to perishing sinners, as if immediately endowed from on high, pressing a sacrifice of all immaterial distinctions to the solemn ordinance, and invite the two to become one. Your liberal minded people will not scruple to commune with us: and when the next occasion comes, you will reciprocate the compliment. I shall lead the way to my people, and, I hope, there will be a general communion. In the mean time, it will be proper, as prudence may direct, to let all our labor, public and private, have a bearing towards the goal. Much can be done by enlisting, by secret insinuations, some of the most influential characters on both sides: and when the less informed see their leaders go, they will follow. It was thus the revolution of France was brought about by the Illuminati. It only requires wisdom and prudence in leaders, to bring the human mind to almost any thing, which a leader can desire. Indeed, I am sanguine, that with the blessing of divine Providence, we will achieve such wonders, that it will make one of the most noted epochs in history, for a thousand years past, and as many to come. I have no doubt but it will meet with opposition, but not formidable, hardly sufficient to adorn the history, and in nothing sufficient to terrify our bravery.

The power of schism and amalgamation belong to the——

Adieu, my brother.

[*Exit.*

DIALOGUE V.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

Persons.—The two Dr's. and their joint session.

D. D. Well, brethren, the solemn scene is over, and we are met: suppose we spend an hour or two together, in a free conversation; as we may find for mutual improvement and social pleasure.

D. R. I think we cannot be better employed; but that it may be the more to our purpose, let us have closed doors; and use all freedom in unbounded confidence. I move, that we commence with making such remarks upon the occasion we have enjoyed, as the members may think will be for edification, and that we commence with the Elders as they sit.

Carried, nemine contradicente.

D. D. IN THE CHAIR.

1st. *Elder.* D. D. you have seen what you never expected to see, such a junction of different denomi-

nations commune together. We wish to receive from you your candid and serious opinion, concerning the whole.

Mr. Chairman. To be candid, I must confess it was to me, not more rare than pleasant: and from the appearance, I thought that every one felt as I did.

2d. Elder. Sir, I am now an old man, and must confess, I never witnessed such a Heaven upon earth. I often thought on the words, "Lord, it is good to be here."

3d. Elder. It brought to my mind the most lovely scene of Solomon's dedication of the temple, when the Glory of the Lord filled the temple, till the Priest could not minister.

4th. Elder. I think the Lord hath done for us great things, whereof we are glad. I only long for the next communion. (1)

[Such contentment, sentiments of love and gratitude, praise and admiration, were general with the rest.] (2)

D. R. Reverend Sir; I must confess, I never knew a better digested plan, nor a plan more perfectly executed. Not a thought of all the good hoped for, but, lo! it is fully accomplished; and this hour's approbation of the Eldership is crowning the whole. There has not reached my ears a single murmur, more than if they had been all one

(1) Prov. 25, 4. (2) 10, 18, 25, 27.

church from the beginning. I never would have conceived, that your church, who ever appeared so tightly laced to the exclusive use of David's Psalms, would, without murmur, yield themselves so cordially, and join so heartily in the use of our gospel psalmody. This is little less than a miracle, in favor of praising God with new songs, suited to new occasions. The sweet poet, Dr. Watts, says,

When we are raised from deep distress,
Our God deserves a Song, (1)

But why should we marvel? Nothing is hard with God, where he determines to manifest his unsearchable love.

I now move the chairman will favor us with his sentiments.

D. D. I frankly acknowledge, I stand on too delicate ground to commune with usual freedom. If I speak, I must speak the sentiments of my heart; and should I develope them, it might be thought I was tinged with vain glory. As to what my brother deemed most marvellous, I can account for it on my own experience. So long as we kept a religious distance from all churches, who used gospel psalmody, and often had recourse to it as a separating wall, ever preaching our own way, our

prejudice was confirmed from the cradle, so that to have attacked any one of us upon that subject, we would have resented, as though we knew our assailant had brought an image from the bottomless pit, to lead us to offer sacrifice to Devils. But when, by the call of divine Providence, we were brought into the assembly of his people; and with our eyes beheld the glory of God's house, and all his saints praising him and exalting the same Jesus whom we love and adore, in language which exceeds all others for purity and sublimity, suited to the weakest capacity; it seized the mind with the power of an electric shock, that every one in its circle must yield, or resist by hardihood they are not willing to account for, and so must infallibly take every mind, who ever felt the power of the gospel. If he should shut his eyes and his mouth, his heart must accord; as there is a never failing congeniality between the power of saving faith in the affections, and that gospel, which is illustriously set forth by Dr. Watts. And, what is a confirmation of it, I never knew a single instance of a man or woman, who had been brought up in the habitual practice of David's Psalms, who once tasted the superior delights of the gospel psalmody, ever incline to sing the old, more than he, who had tasted the gospel. would be willing to trust his salvation to the law. But, upon the whole, I think we have all good reason to join in singing his praise in the 133 Psalm, Watts' imitation:

2d. *Elder.* But, Dr. some how or other, young William, the student you ordained an elder last week has been passed over, and we have not had his sentiments. (*Now this William was ruddy, and withall of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the spirit of truth was on his lips.*)

D. D. Why William, my son, I beg your pardon; I had like to have neglected you. Come up, and speak your mind freely: let no man despise thy youth. You may have much to do, when we are dead and gone.

William. Reverend Sir, I am indeed a young man in every sense of the word, and a younger Elder, and ye are matured in judgement. "Wherefore, I was afraid, and durst not shew my opinion. I said, days should speak and multitudes of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. Great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said, hearken to me; I will also show my opinion. Behold I waited for your words, I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say. Yea I attended unto you, and behold! there was none of you, that convinced me."

D. D. Well William, my son, whom I love in the bowels of Christ Jesus, we are all here; and will, with patience and tenderness, attend to any doubt or hesitation, which might possibly discompose your mind. It cannot be expected that the

juvenile will discover, with equal dispatch with the matured in judgement.

Senr. Elder. I move that we shall all hear and attend to the young man's feelings: and that of all things, we must be cautious of offending one of Christ's little ones. I hope it will be thought no pain, nor yet loss of time, to remove his doubts, before we adjourn. It would damp all my pleasure, to think one of our members, the very weakest, should go away with a sorrowful heart. (*To which the house assented.*)

D. D. Brethren, as this task may be more than we are all able to accomplish in our own strength, let us pray; and in the meantime, remember William our doubting son.

Now William, you are permitted to speak for yourself.

William. Reverend Fathers, I must confess, I have some jumbled thoughts, for which I have no words, as every thing appears novel, and to require new words; especially with respect to government. I could not give it a name. It is not a republic, for the people have no share in it: nor democratical, for it is not popular: nor aristocratical, for there are more than one and less than three: nor monarchical, for there are more than one: nor despotic, for although it is somewhat arbitrary, it is not absolute and unlimited: nor is it theocratical, for it has no divine authority: nor hereditary, for it will never have a legitimate heir. It appears to

me to have sucked the blood heresiarch and hierarchy, a kind of sacred government, in which the Hierarch sits chief of the order. Hear his declaration: "I will ascend into heaven: I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the most High, who opposeth and exalteth himself, above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, and sheweth himself that he is God."

Now all men know, that without some form of government, society cannot exist; and that God, placing man in this world, gave systems of government, civil and sacred; and the highest order he gave man was ministerial. Their supreme powers declare, that in their judgement, the constitution, which they establish for themselves and their nation, is founded in equity and justice, upon the divine law; but never presume to legislate. And the man, who will not walk according to law, must abide the penalty. But it only belongs to God, who is lawgiver, king and judge, to give laws, and those are too pure to admit of variation or shadow of change, except such as are positive and depend upon the will of the arbitrator. But the great throne I saw and he that sat upon it, were far above the throne of God; for he dispenses with laws and penalties, granting dispensations for many violations, and forming new institutions by corrupt-

ing old ones, making the strait wide, and the narrow broad, as if the way to Heaven was made for camels.

1st. Elder. Moderator, I hope you will not suffer this petulant youth to insult your honor and abuse our patience. He is as void of modesty as of discretion, and is more of a demoniac, than a divine. I move we send for an officer and have him removed to the Hospital. He is surely gone beside himself.

D. D. O! the young man will come to himself. Let us pray. I shall meet you before your betters.

The assembly breaks up in a great tumult of confusion.

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PART II.



DIALOGUE I.

SCENE, IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

Persons.—The Professor of theology; a Young Man; an Elder in his session; and a student, now on trial for holy office.

WILLIAM presents D. D. to the grand Sanhedrim.

A *Libel*, preferred against D. D. at the instance of William.

WHEREAS, the breach of a covenant, especially in things pertaining to God; and that too by an officer of high responsibility in the holy of holies, is an heinous sin and scandal, contrary to the word of God and to the profession of this church founded thereon, repugnant to the christian character, and injurious to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ: that you D. D. are guilty of the matters of scandal above mentioned; inasmuch as you did, without any previous counsel with the Elders of that branch of Christ's church, over whom the Holy Ghost had made you an overseer:

1st. Enter into occasional communion with as many as you could persuade of Dr. R's. church, a distinct denomination, to come to the Lord's table, where you administered, without any previous examination, or certificate of character, to those, of whom neither you nor your people could have any possible knowledge:

2d. You then returned, with as many as would follow your example, into sacramental communion with Dr. R's church; and so progressed from occasional to stated communion, and so reciprocated, from time to time, those years past:

3d. Instead of amending your way, by a testimony of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, "or continuing steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayer;" you did, and do continue to defend the same, from pulpit and press, with great contempt of those, who lament your fall and have laboured much for your recovery:

4th. Moreover, in attempting to justify yourself at the expence of the ordinance of church government, you have vindicated the extension of promiscuous communion, almost without limit:

5th. All these things, in opposition to your own declaration, when our constitution was ratified. (1)

6th. You did. in open defiance of the article on

1 Associate Reformed Synod, at Green Castle, May 31. 1799. The Synod having judiciously ratified ect. until the words "provided that nothing."

psalmody which you swore to support, sing, and encourage others to sing, songs *merely human* in public worship, confirming the guilty in their error, and leading the innocent astray.

7th. You did actually violate the express words of your solemn oath at your ordination; viz. “you do promise to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and that you will not follow any *divisive* courses, by complying with the defections of the times, or by giving yourself up to a detestable neutrality in the cause of God.” (2)

In all which, you have very much vexed the church of God, and put *them* to grief, for whom Christ died. These things therefore being found relevant, and proved against you: you ought to be proceeded against by the censures of the Lord’s house, according to the nature of your offence.

SANHEDRIM IN SESSION.

President. Doctor, you have heard the charges. Are you guilty, or not guilty?

DR. I confess the facts, but plead justification, and exclude all necessity for witnesses. I acknowledge, I now stand legally indicted for a deviation from the established laws of this house. “The Associate Reformed church, generally speaking, had been strict, and even exclusive, in her communion

§ (2) Constitution of the Associate Reformed church, p 503.

and to her laws:" and when this was their faith and practice, and no hesitation of its authenticity, I was by them ordained an elder or minister of Jesus Christ. I then believed as they believed; and according to all the laws and ordinances as then practised by this church, in the most solemn moments of my life, under the oath of God in my ordination vows, I was bound to maintain and apply. Yet, strange as it may appear, I now believe that the tenor, spirit and letter of that oath bound me to the present practice, I now stand up to justify. My contest is not with William alone. I presume to convince this house, as well as him, that, until we shall all unite in the very same practice, I have now exemplified, we never can practice according to our ordination vows. If I succeed according to expectation, of which I have no doubt, you are all my proselytes: if not, then I am your convict, although as unspotted as an angel.

When I swore, I swore to support exclusive communion, as I *then* understood the constitution: when I swore, I swore to support Catholic communion, as I *now* understand said constitution. I am far from regretting an event, which led me and others of my brethren, to an exchange of communion, most consonant as we believe, to the word of God. (1) I cannot regret such an event, because it invites a free discussion of my conduct, to a comfortable decision of the great question, what are

the legitimate terms of admission to visible church communion?

William. As the Dr. is so candid in his confession, it is far from me to exaggerate his transgression. As he seems to rejoice in what he has done, and even solicit an investigation, I shall not boast till I have laid off my harness, well assured that our debate will only darken counsel with words without knowledge; if we lean to our own understanding, or seek our own glory in the sequel.

D. D. "Much is gained, when, instead of putting our language in the mouth of the book of God, the book of God is allowed to sit in judgement upon us, and pronounce its own verdict. To this preliminary I hereby bind myself, and hope my antagonist will feel the same obligation. And, for the sake of precision, it is agreed, that communion presupposes union, and that, in every association, signals are essential to union and communion; and that invisible union is essential to divine communion; and that the privileges of every society must be kept sacred. But the question is; whether invisible union *alone* entitles to visible sacramental communion. This is affirmed on one side, and denied by the other, who maintains that professional union is essential to sacramental communion. The former I maintain; the latter I deny.

I. I shall prove, that sacramental communion upon catholic principles, is supported from Scripture.

- II. From authentic facts, to be agreeable to the faith and practice of the church of Christ, from the day of Pentecost to the present time, with a few party exceptions. 1st. from facts in the primitive christian churches, 2d. in the time of the reformation, 3d. from that time to this.
- III. Answer objections.
- IV. Shew the consequences of sectarian and anti-sectarian communion; in relation to a particular church; to the church at large; and the surrounding world.

William. "I stand prepared, thy single arm to mine. I trust in heaven; the God of battles stimulates my arm, and fires my soul, with ardour not its own."

D. D. I shall prove, that sacramental communion upon catholic principles is supported from Scripture. (1)

There is no point more fully settled in the word of truth, than this: the church of God is one; "*as the body is one and hath many members and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ; for by one spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one spirit: for the body is not one member, but many.*" (2) All this lively analogy between man's natural body and the body

[(1) Plea page 9,

(2) 1. Cor. xii. 12, 14.

of Christ, is minutely handled at large by the apostle, to reprove the vain glory, so natural to our circumstances. As if all would claim to be the children of Abraham, or the peculiar people of the Lord, which naturally led them to schism, saying; I am of Paul, I am of Apollos; whereas, as believers, they were all of Christ and but one body, though they had many members. Their union with the body is the foundation of all the virtue, beauty and excellency of all the members, of the efficiency of the members in mutual co-operation, communication of interests and sympathy: so that all the members should have the same care, one of another: if the apostle so sternly reprehended their divisions, as inconsistent with the unity of the church, although they continued to hold communion together, what would he have said, how would he thundered forth his indignant rebuke, had they carried their contest so far, as to burst the bounds of communion, and by that act virtually to disown each other as members of the body of Christ? (1)

William. That the church of God is one, is readily acknowledged, and that she is under divine injunction to recognise, and acknowledge one God and Father of all in Christ Jesus. by professing one faith. one baptism, and mutual fervent love among themselves; and that schismatical

disputes, and vain glory, is a transgression before God, and injurious to the cause of Christ and the peace of the community, and that there is an awful woe, pendent over the head of that man, by whom offence cometh, so dreadful, that it had been good for that man he had not been born, if he should die in the spirit in which he lived. But the apostle says likewise by the spirit, that offences must needs come; and there must also be heresies among you, that they, which are approved, may be made manifest among you. But do all or any of these acknowledged truths deliver the Dr. from his premunire? If offences come from lusts, and such as are inconsistent with an open, pure and genuine profession of the christian system, there cannot be a reciprocation of social confidence; but they are at open rupture among themselves, either in secular or spiritual matters: they cannot sit in a judiciary court: they cannot agree to walk in the same way, nor be governed by the same rules. One says, your creeds and confessions are all repugnant to christian liberty or evangelical privileges; your articles are damnable heresy; by advocating absolute and unconditional predestination, you make God the author of sin; my zeal for the divine character and the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am sure to be saved, forbids me, so much as to eat with you, much more to sit at the same table, and partake of the same body and blood of my Redeemer, who put it in my power to become obedient unto eternal life.

Says his antagonist in reply; I suspect you for a legalist, for by the deeds of the law no man living can be justified; nor can acts of obedience be the cause why Christ became a redeemer to any one. Yet they both profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and acknowledge that they are debtors to him for his salvation. Will these litigants commend themselves to God, and atone for their strife, by sitting down and taking, as my antagonist lightly observes, a FAMILY MEAL with each other at the Lords table, like boxers settling their dispute over the inebriating cup? Has not the Dr. long been taught, and as long acknowledged, that there is a right *coram Deo*, and a right *coram ecclesia*? that the Lord, who inspects his own, finds many of them eating and drinking unworthily, when they come into his presence, not having the preparation of the sanctuary? They may be the children of God habitually, and not actively prepared for so solemn an approach: they may be christians indeed, who cannot give satisfactory proof of it to a faithful watchman, charged as Joshua was: "and the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, *thus saith the Lord of hosts, if thou wilt walk in my ways, and shalt also keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts; and I will give thee places to walk among those that stand by;*" or Jeremiah, "*therefore thus saith the Lord, if thou return, then will I bring thee, and thou shalt stand before me; and if thou take forth the pre-*

cious from the vile, thou shalt be my mouth: let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

I say, a conscientious divine may find children of God, who have so little of godliness about them, as to make it a duty to keep them back, until the evidence in their favor will make it more manifest, that they are entitled to so high a communion, although they belong to the same church, and are amenable to the censure of her courts. The incestuous person was only suspended till he gave evidence of repentance; Peter was restored after his conversion. If there had been in any of those a dissention in articles of faith, it would have been impossible to admit them consistently with those high orders, "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" "take heed to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you the overseers—warn the unruly—thou shalt not see sin upon a brother—thou shalt in any wise tell him his fault—and there remember thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift, and go, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then offer thy gifts. If he will hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother—but, if he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican," altho he is thy brother by an in-

visible relation. If all matters less than a naked profession of faith in Jesus. must be sacrificed to universal benevolence without any adjustment of difference, and all come into communion, upon this general plan, the chief of the pastor's care is dispensed with: all peace making, brother keeping, and church government will be buried in the same grave, and all criminal laws about clean and unclean, become unintelligible jargon. What will hold good in individuals, will hold good in large bodies. Dissention between the pragmatistical servants of Abraham and Lot, drove the two brothers to right and left: Paul and Barnabas contend and part. Paul withstands Peter to the face, because he was chargeable with dissimulation, which, if it had passed without censure, would have had apostolical sanction, and been eternal condemnation to our bible.

Because the Galatians. in justification, mixed their virtues with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, their circumcision with grace, and their ceremonies with the order of divine worship, hear how Paul thunders: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed, from him that called you unto the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and would prevent the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you; let him be accursed. And as we said before, so say I

now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be *accursed.*”

Does my antagonist allege, that such a man as Joshua, the high priest keeping the charge and the courts of the Lord's house, as he received them, consistent with his office, would have admitted all such to sit down with him, and with each other, at the Lord's table? No, I know he would not, for he acknowledges that communion presupposes union. But apply the case in hand, to an event which took place a few months past, and is frequently happening. James M'Chord, a member of the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Kentucky, publishes a book of nineteen errors in divinity, principally to support him in one damnable heresy, denying that Jesus represented the elect in the day he laid down his life for his sheep, &c. He is indicted by our court, and suspended. He appeals to our Synod in Philadelphia, and the sentence of the inferior court is ratified. He turns round to a Presbytery of the general assembly in Kentucky, and they receive him, upon his own terms, and he has now a congregation. Will my opponent sit down with James M'Chord, or with the members of the Presbytery who received him? has he become pure by the transfer? Or will he hold communion with a people, holding error, which it would be unlawful for him to hold, in his own church? But, was it

for the Corinthians not communing together, that Paul reprimanded them? No, it was for their communing together, while there was dissention among them. The Lord did not reprove the Israelites for their not offering sacrifice, but for their offering it without a due preparation, according to the sanctuary. (1)

I, Paul, certify unto you, if a man be circumcised, Christ profiteth nothing. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat, who serve the tabernacle. From all which it is manifest, that professional union is essential to sacramental communion, and that the profession be according unto a form of sound words, and that, upon the principles of invisible communion alone, it is impossible for one branch of church government to exist one hour.

D. D. The members of the church of Christ individually and collectively are under a moral necessity to recognise each other's character and privileges, and dare not deny the tokens of such recognition, under the awful penalty of being accountable for their usurpation.

William. I believe, the judge of quick and dead shall and will recognise all his members, and consequently will not deny them the tokens of such recognition; but if we had the gift of discerning spirits, which we have not, and could search the heart, as he does, I do not believe it would be at

1 Psal. 50 Chr. xv. 15. The Lord our God made a breach upon us, for we sought him not after the due order.

all times justifiable in us, to suffer all elect believers to the communion of the Lord's table. If we debar them for want of the preparation of the sanctuary; we only do, as God does with many of his dear children, when he hides his face from them, till they seek him early. If they absolutely refuse a due submission to the order of the church, although they were his children a thousand times told, they ought to be debarred for their obstinacy, and that church can well account for their usurpation before their Lord and master, "*a froward heart shall depart from me.*" (2) Moses was excluded the goodly land of Canaan for words spoken unadvisedly. And we must try them, who say they are apostles and are not, and we must not receive all for gold that glitters.

D. D. Sir, it must be acknowledged, there are more true christian churches, than belong to our denomination: by what authority do we debar them from our communion?

William. If their not belonging to our denomination is purely because of local distance; with consent of parties and sufficient certification of character, I know not that I would be litigious. But if they are living in the midst of us, and are bound to recognize us as brethren in Christ but will not, because of some peculiar tenet which they avow and we disavow; so that we cannot incorporate in one body,

like the Redeemer's coat, without seam from the top throughout; it is a dangerous absurdity in them to apply and in us to indulge. The most perfect bonds of brotherhood have temptations sufficient through the subtilty of the serpent to wound the cause by dissention; much more, when there is but a mere cursory interview. *His love is but one*, and every little flock, however small, ought to be in perfect unison, without which the pleasure or profit of christian fellowship is awfully marred. Large numbers, not of us, will soon go out from us, and the report of such concerning us, will not be very much to our honor: they will rend us, to build their own church. This is as natural as to gather our own harvest. I say, let them alone, till they come in by the door, and give themselves first to God, and then to us; till then, we cannot have a parochial charge over them, and what have we to do, to judge another man's servant? If they do not love us well enough to continue with us, they will hate us bad enough to be spies, and reproach us for our simplicity, and then we will mourn at the last. If they do not love the house well enough to keep within the outward court; they are not worthy of the inward. The sin will lie at their own door. Our duty is, to make our light so shine, that they will fall down with us, and worship with us, and from the heart believe that, God is in the midst of us. Then we will do them good and not evil, by

admitting them to enter into an everlasting covenant with us, not to be forgotten, *in all things well ordered and sure.*

DIALOGUE II.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

D. D. From facts in the primitive christian church, (1) I will acknowledge, that any thing added to the system of revelation is unlawful, injurious and ought to be rejected with abhorrence and detestation by all, who call themselves christians.

William. Upon this concession, which I am glad to hear from the mouth of my antagonist, I am willing to meet him; live or die.

D. D. Perfectly agreed. "Let us therefore, treading in the steps of the christian heroes, carry our enquiries back in order to ascertain, whether the catholic communion, for which these pages plead, or the sectional communion, so to speak, which characterises many christian denominations receives the most countenance from the faith and practice of the church of God through ages past. We shall

[(1) Plea, page 25.

confine our views to the facts in the apostolic age—to the primitive church immediately following—the times of reformation—from that to this.

I. Facts from the apostolic history, for those we must go to the New Testament. (1)

Peter preaches; the people cry out, “men and brethren what shall we do to be saved?” the apostle replied, “repent. and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Let us view the bearings of this transaction. It appears therefore, that on the first precedent for admission to sealing ordinances, and that set under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the only qualification was faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. as the Saviour of sinners by the blood of the cross. He enjoins on them a change of all their erroneous notions concerning his person, his kingdom and his works; and to receive the truth, in its simplicity—repent. On the supposition of such a repentance, he commands them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.

William. In all this the Dr. reasons well, if, as he appears to do, he understands the abridged terms, faith and repentance, to imply all things contained in a good confession. Protesting openly and avowedly, against all corruptions of the ordinances of the son of God then and there abounding, and receiving and avowing Christ the only begot-

(1) Plea, page 27.

ten of the Father, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, clothed with all power in heaven and earth, the only way, the truth and the life. the lawgiver, the king and the judge; and professing all subjection to the institutions of his grace, I think, would entitle a primitive saint to the communion of the church visible. Now the principle is perfectly the same; that neither the lapse of time, nor the encrease of corruption ever varied a relation between Christ and believers to this day. When the converts then embraced the gospel, it had not been perverted by the inventions of men and devils to destroy its original simplicity. But before the death of the apostles, the wicked one had sowed plenty of tares among the wheat, to call forth the valour of the faithful apostles. The divinity of Christ was denied by men; in defence of which, John wrote his gospel. And that every word might be established at the mouth of two witnesses, Paul as ably defends his Godhead, his person. as God-man, his atonement, his magisterial dignity, his sitting at the Father's right hand, till his enemies, who denied his right of reigning over them, should be made his footstool. To whom swore he, that they should not enter into his rest: but to them who believed not? Jesus said unto Marth, I am the resurrection and the life; he that liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die; believest thou this?

Again, whom do you say that I am? the rest says; thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. Christ announces his right of communion, with, "blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my father only: thou art Peter. and on" this article of thy confession, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And who is he, that overcometh the world; but he that believeth, that Christ is the son of God?" All which demonstrate, that there were many articles in their faith concerning this simple system; and he, who broke one, could have faith in none, as they were all given forth by one shepherd. But in the apostles' day, there sprang up anew another damning heresy. "Not submitting to the law of righteousness, which was by faith, but going about to establish another way, they attained not to the the law of righteousness." (1) The apostle of the gentiles raises the standard of truth, and fells the stern monster; and dooms the legalist to perdition, making salvation by grace essential to communion, invisible or visible. *By the deeds of the law, no living creature shall be saved.* If not, they must be gentiles: if so, *the things they sacrifice they sacrifice to devils, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.* (2)

Another damning error sprung up among the

(1) Rom. ix. 2 1Cor. x. 20.

Gallatian churches, after their fair christian profession, *who run well*, who could have plucked out their eyes, if it had been possible, and given them to the apostle. But there were some, who troubled them, who taught, that except a man should be circumcised and keep the Law, he could not be saved. To refute this error, Paul writes them an Epistle, condemns the heresy, and anathematizes the professed believers. "But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And he repeats the revelation, because the words were most certain and ought never to be forgotten. Again, "if ye be circumcised, Christ profiteth you nothing." Again, "we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat, who serve the tabernacle." Thus there sprung up another, who said the resurrection was past, and destroyed the faith of some. Some, who saw his miracles and believed, turned away backward. Others denied the resurrection of the dead. Paul refutes their error and makes it a negative term of communion. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." Another essential error, that took place amongst them, was the disorderly partaking of the supper: he made this a term of communion. "He, that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Again, there were others, who received not the

truth in the love of it, that they might be saved; “and for this cause God sent them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they might be damned, who believed not the truth; but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (1) Another evil took place: “there crept in grievous wolves, not sparing the flock;” (2) these became christians by profession: they had sheep’s clothing, but they “came not, but to steal, to kill and destroy;” but he will require his flock at their hands. Think ye, these believers in Christ Jesus ought not to be debarred. I know he will feed them, but I know it will be with judgement; “he will miserably destroy these husbandmen.” &c. Others would privily bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction; and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of; and through feigned words make merchandize of you, whose judgement now of a long time lingereth not; and their damnation slumbereth not. And that they may be manifest, they walk after the flesh, in the lusts of uncleanness, and despise *government*; presumptuous, self willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities—beguiling unstable souls, cursed children. I think the apostle debared all such christian believers. These, from their character, all professed faith in the scriptures,

[(1) Thes. ii. 10, 11, 12 2 Acts xx. John x.

and in their language, in Christ Jesus, and by the Dr's observation, they should have been admitted to communion in the church.

It is true, that in scripture sense, they denied the father and the son, in as much as they made void his counsel, to establish their tradition and their own precepts, which they framed when they sat in the throne of God, showing that they are Gods by instituting forms of worship, which neither they nor their fathers knew. Are not these professed christians debared from communion with God? or will God have fellowship with such workers of iniquity? And are not his watchmen bound to part the precious from the vile? No, says my opponent, if they profess with their mouth to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of sinners; you are bound upon your peril to recognise them, and take a family meal with them at his table. But so said not Paul, "for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: and no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." Therefore it is no great thing, if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. (1) No, no, said the apostle of the catholic profession; all these sectarian peculiarities must yield to the commanding power of love. If they send up their name to

(1) 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15.

you, with a note that they wish to commune with you, you are to make no more enquiries concerning their church or their standing; you have no standards to try them by: the Westminster confession of faith was never designed "as a term of communion for the private christians, nor even for the reciprocation of ministerial fellowship, as is plain from their absolute silence about such a requisition." (1)

Upon the whole, these are but a specimen of the errors, which sprung up in the apostolic age, and these are written, that we may have divine precept, to know how to rule the church of God, and keep ourselves pure. It is true, they had not formed themselves into distinct incorporations, for their mutual encouragement in vice and opposition to truth, as they have done since; which gives no sanction to their deliberate and settled enmity, but was only an aggravation of their guilt, as it would be of ours, to conform to them or encourage them; having seen the mighty works of God revealed against such. What he might long bear in them, would be blasphemy in us. He bore long with the Amorite, before his cup was full for destruction: but his wrath waxed hot, and his indignation rose quick against his Israel when they learned the way of the heathen and conformed to their manners. By their deeds they could commit more

sin in an hour, than all Canaan would do in an age, and entail death on their posterity, as Adam did on his. There have many inventions arisen against the purity of doctrine, government, worship and discipline of the head of the church, since that time; but not one of them, which the Redeemer hath not sufficiently testified virtually against; to warrant us to set forth as his authority, to debar such from the visible communion of saints; so that we have not one article in our reformer's creed, as received by us, but is necessary to keep the house of God clean. Take any one of them away, and let as many as will, come in at the breach; and it will be like the letting out of water, or the breaking up the fountains of the great deep; till the woman and her seed would be drowned with the flood from the mouth of the dragon, and we would be very unlike her, clothed with the sun, and the moon under our feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon our head; or like her son, for whom she travailed in pain to be delivered, who ruled all nations with a rod of iron. There is no solitary duty nor solitary sin; every duty embraces heaven; and every sin embraces hell. Therefore, I say, although there are denominations who are clean, but not all that God may wink at, and who hold in their embrace many of the Lord's people, not fully taught, whom in mercy he may spare, and afford time to reform; yet if we should wilfully decline into their grade, it would be damnation to us. Where much

is given, much is required: where little is given, the less required. But we are not their judges; God judges them who are without: we must hold up to them the standards, with a—"whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely," whether they are individuals, or churches, many or few. Contend with them who contend with us: *let them return unto us* (but, while we have a "thus saith the Lord") *let us not return unto them.* He will bear with impunity in a reforming people, what he will not bear in a degenerating people. And now let this reply be for a reply to all the Dr's. matters of fact, similar to the one advanced, and it will save me a fresh refutation.

D. D. The scriptural details might be prosecuted further: but it is superfluous. They are all of one complexion, nor is there any hazard in asserting without qualification, that there is not, in all the New Testament, one solitary doctrine or fact, which so much as implies, or can be made by any tolerable interpretation to appear to imply, that the Lord Jesus has authorised the exaction of any term whatever for the whole fellowship of his church, other than visible christianity." (1)

William. I am sorry, that to be candid is to be severe. The Dr. hitherto made invisible union alone the terms of admission, and that all invisible members were bound to recognise each other and

grant to them the signals of union. Now the Dr. has boldly and unblushingly renounced, that Jesus Christ has made invisible christianity a term of communion, and insists there is not any other but visible christianity. He formerly denied visible christianity, and now denies invisible, and leaves us without any. But my opinion is, that the legitimate terms are neither wholly visible nor invisible, but 1st. invisible, 2d. professional, 3d. visible: the first, with God, "*believe with thy heart;*" 2d. with the judiciary, "*confess with thy mouth;*" 3d. with themselves, "*shew me thy faith by thy works;*" and that all three are necessary to a right partaking of the Lord's supper, to fulfilling of all righteousness, and to a regular standing in the house of the Lord.

DIALOGUE III.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

Same Persons.

Second class of facts is furnished by the testimony of the primitive church from the days of the apostles to those of the fourth century.

Dr. G. [A member of the Sanhedrim] Sir, I

expect Elder William has never perused the unanswerable labor of D. D. upon catholic communion; how the saints lived in union, for near four hundred years.

William. Sir, I did, and much regretted the loss of time, looking for something all the way, which might favor his pretensions, and found not one syllable. In the first place, as long as they continued in union; it was impossible for any one of them to commit his offence. There could not be a precedent, if it had been unlawful to depart from their example. But had the Dr. been as careful to exert his talents to warn us of danger as a good shepherd ought to have been, he would have had recourse to that very period to have depicted the utmost danger of following their example in the very thing he commends. It was just owing to their holding communion without union in the principles of truth, that they let in all imaginable corruption, which provoked the most high to give up their outer courts, to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles for a thousand two hundred and sixty years. (1)

(1) Johnson on the revelations, most infallibly calculates this to be, from the year seven hundred and fifty six unto the year one thousand nine hundred and ninety nine. I wish this book was better known. To give the reader a sample, to induce him to procure the book, I shall state an abstract out of it.

Rev. 13, 20. Here is wisdom ect. He tells us the prophetic style is partly hieroglyphic, partly symbolic, and partly explanatory of both. This verse is of the latter kind, as the 17 chapter from the 9 verse to the end. Then in plain language, he tells us, the year the beast shall commence his reign, is the vulgar year 666, but in the solar year as we calculate 657, but John wrote in the year 99, add these,

The apostle in spirit informs us, that Anti-christ was then in the world, but was not deposed from church communion: no, not by the authority of the son of God, sending an angel from heaven with the most alarming threats, and these very threatenings are as much ours as theirs, if we practice as they did. “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear, what the spirit says to the churches.”

Let us see, how we will meet our God. The church of Pergamos had in her communion, though she professed faith in Jesus and proved it by her works, in the midst of a hot persecution, resisting unto blood, striving against sin; yet was deficient in the article of church government. She bore and forbore, until she involved herself in guilt. Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, in your communion, who, contrary to the plain revealed will of God and the conviction of his own conscience, used stratagems, and instructed Balac to ensnare the children of Israel, and drew them into the sins of idolatry and fornication with the daughters of Moab. In like manner, these temporising christians, in opposition to the known will of God, (1) go into the practice of feasting upon sacrifices that are offered to the

you have 756, the year Stephen was invested by Pepin king of France, with secular dominion: these added to 1260 vulgar, reduced to solar 1243, will make 1999 the end of Anti-christ. The millenium will commence in 2000 years, from the birth of Christ.

℥ (1) Acts xv. 29.

honor of heathen idols, and committing fornication, as though they were no crimes. Yea, and what is still more heinous and provoking, there are some of you, that openly espouse and maintain the corrupt principles of the Nicolaitans, which are so directly contrary to my holy nature, will and word, that I myself have them in the utmost abhorrence. “But though I mention these many good things, for your encouragement and the honor of my grace in you, I must, nevertheless, sharply reprove you for a few others of a contrary nature, that you may not be lifted up with pride, or think yourself perfect; and especially for one great offence, in which you are exceedingly to blame; because you too much connive at, and shew countenance to a set of wicked persons, under an infamous ringleader, who take to themselves the character of inspired leaders; (1) but are really of the same vile spirit and temper with that infamous woman Jezebel, who slew the Prophet of the Lord, and seduced king Ahab to idolatry, and practised whoredom and witchcraft, (2) and these pretenders to a spirit of prophecy are tamely permitted to broach their errors, and to corrupt and draw away my professing people to the like sins of idolatry and uncleanness, and by all arts of subtilty and cruelty to seduce them into acts of fornication in a literal, as well as a spiritu-

1 See Calvin's institutes, book 1 chap. ix. and xxi, 25 and 2d. Kings .ix 22:

2 1 Kings, xvi. 31. xviii, 4--13

al sense, and in eating of such meats, as have been offered up and devoted to fictitious Gods and their images, both which are contrary to my orders about the purity of manners and worship." (1)

But as contrast will illustrate, let us see them who have obtained a good report from their invisible, infallible judge. now in heaven.

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; these things saith he, that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candle sticks.”

Paraphrased by Guyse. “I am thoroughly acquainted with, and approve of your works of righteousness, and the pains you have taken to maintain and propagate my pure gospel and the interest of my kingdom, and your bearing all the persecutions that come upon you for my name’s sake, with holy fortitude. constancy and patient hope of deliverance, in due season: and I with pleasure observe your zeal for my glory, and against sin and error, that you cannot be easy with those, nor permit them to continue *in church communion*, who broach corrupt doctrines, and practise immoralities: and, to shew that your zeal is according to knowledge, you have closely enquired into the principles and manners of those, who arrogantly assume to themselves the honor of apostolic commission; and you have proved they are not what they vainly pretend

* Guyse’s paraphrase on Rev.ii. 20.

to; and have really found them to be mere impostors, that have no truth or sincerity in them. And, to your further commendation, he says, I take notice that you have bravely born up under the opposition of false apostles, and have been patiently resigned to the will of God under all the troubles you have met with from them; and have laid yourself out with great diligence, from a principle of love to me and my cause, to stand your ground against all contradiction, and have hitherto so constantly persisted therein, as not to sink, or be discouraged, under the weight of the heaviest of your trials." (1)

The angel of the church of Smyrna excited another lively model, no doubt left for our example in government. V. 9, "I am perfectly acquainted with, and take a pleasing notice of your works and labours of love for my name's sake; as also of your enduring severe persecutions with christian courage and patience; and I behold with tenderness and sympathy the extreme want, to which you are reduced by the violence of the times, and which you meekly submit to, as being poor in spirit: but thou art rich. I observe with indignation, the false, hypocritical and blasphemous pretences of those, who call themselves *Christian Jews*, as if they, like the ancient church of Israel, were the only covenant people of God; who maintain Jewish

(1) Rev. ii. 23.

rites and ceremonies which are abrogated under the gospel state. But they are so far from being the only, or even any, true members of my church, that they belong to it merely in name and profession, and are in reality devoted to the service of the devil, and do his work, under his influence, in propagating iniquity and error, and in persecuting my people. Now, can the Dr. after these testimonies, stand up and plead, that all the lesser matters of the law must yield to the all powerful principle of love to those, who say they are christians, and are not? For my single self, I know I would rather bear the indignation of those who defame my character. *If I yet preach circumcision, why do I suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.* (1) "God forbid therefore that the offence of the cross should be taken away, which thing would come to pass, if we should preach that, which the pride of this world and its members would gladly hear, viz: the righteousness of works. Then should we have a gentle devil, a favorable world, a gracious pope, and merciful princes. But because we set forth for the benefits and glory of Christ, they persecute and spoil us, both of our goods and lives."

Barnard, considering this thing, saith, that the church is then in its best state, when Satan assaulteth it on every side, as well by subtle slights, as

(1) Gal. v. 11. Luther on the text.

by violence, and contrariwise, that it is in its worst case, when it is most at ease—and beautifully illustrated it by the song of Hezekiah, *behold, for peace I had great bitterness.* (1) applying it to the church, living in ease and quietness.

D. D. I am sorry to find the imbecility of Wm's arguments. Had I searched the Bible for defence, I could not have found a more irresistible evidence to establish my position. I grant all the charges tabled against the Asiatics; but did their impurities in government or practice, rend their churches from top to bottom? No, it never interrupted their communion, nor have we one jot of authority from the commissioned angel, to excommunicate those gross offenders: and therefore it is our indubious authority for holding communion with such.

William. This was not the time to make laws: if it had been for the first time enacted, there had been no transgression for the time past: but the sentence implies transgression. The law was well known, and given by the Holy Ghost to the general assembly at Jerusalem; where the apostles were the members.—“That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from fornication.”

D. D. Grant there was a violation of law, but not of that magnitude as would justify a suspension

(1) Isa. xxx. 17.

from the churches' seats; much less excommunicate them from her privileges.

William. Small sins, if small there be, will damn a soul, and seclude it from Heaven: and the judiciary, who gives countenance to any sin against God, cannot be innocent.

But of all charges tabled, there was none less offensive, than eating meat offered to idols, as the idol was nothing, and we are commanded to eat that which is bought in the shambles, asking no questions: but it is evil for that man, who eateth with offence. "But I say, that the things, which the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to devils and not to God, and I would not, that ye should have fellowship with devils; ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?" This is that same Holy Ghost: and at the same time the faithful are underrated beneath the name of christians by those most benevolent of all the human family, at the expence of divine regulations, who would not shut the door for nought. I say they must be left behind, because they cannot run with them to the same excess of latitude. It is an easy matter to enlist all the world against the righteous, whose souls are vexed every day with ungodly sinners. A heathen monarch made a decree that all his dominion should be of his own religion, under the pretence of promoting harmony

in his vast dominions. It carried, with all but the righteous, and this was sufficient justification for their destruction. Paul would not eat meat, while the world stands, if it would offend a weak brother's conscience. Now, I would wish to know, in how many things, not only the little ones would be offended, but strong Doctors, by communing with all those who call themselves christians, who never confirmed their profession by faith or practice. We must take into our bosom all who deny and dishonor the Lord's song, put in the mouth of Christ's bride to praise him upon the day of his espousal, and the gladness of his heart, and adopt in its place the fascinating whims of a thousand poetasters emulating the eternal spirit, and one another to be sung in the church forsooth. Who employed them to make Psalms? or what promise is there to a Psalm maker in all the Bible? I cannot write without cursing their pride from the bottom of my heart, and all their substitutes together: let them read their doom in the 29th of Isaiah, which I have commented elsewhere, and they may see it literally fulfilled in the revival of Kentucky. Did ever he receive such provocation from the Egyptians or did they receive such tormenting plagues? That it was a testimony of divine wrath, is now manifest, as it never bettered the character of an individual, nor indeed could; for it is impossible to be saved without the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, and he cannot, nor never will co-operate with a mean of worship he never

appointed. Will he have fellowship with the workers of iniquity, setting at nought the word of God, to establish their own precepts? He has surely sent them a strong delusion to believe a lie, who received not the truth in the love of it: he has surely poured upon them a spirit of deep sleep and closed their eyes, their prophets and rulers, till the vision of all is become as the words of a book, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, read this I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed, and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, read this I pray thee, and he saith I am not learned, (1) and so there is none, learned nor unlearned, to read nor sing the word of God. But they have the same apology, the catholic church had for keeping the common people from reading the scriptures, because they thought they did not understand it, and they were determined they never should.

Now, if Cain received seven fold, how much severer punishment, think ye, will we receive, if we go into all the latitude of their frenzy, with our eyes open! but let us be separate, that we partake not of her plagues.

2d. We must take into our embrace all the tribes of the Armenians; they are all professed christians, and say they cannot be saved but by Christ Jesus. But they say in their confession, that their obedi-

(1) Isai xxi.

ence is the reason Christ became a Redeemer to them: that a man may be regenerated, justified, adopted and sanctified; die and be damned.

I pity them, and recommend, them to read Luther on the Galatians! he excels in cutting us off from a dependence upon the Law in point of justification, but to me is somewhat ambiguous about the extent of Christ's purchases.

3d. We must take into communion the Baptist church, who acknowledge justification by grace through the righteousness of Jesus, &c. They differ with us in principle, only in point of baptism, church government and the morality of the Sabbath. To establish their principal difference with us, they are shut up to the necessity of denying, that the covenant made with Abraham was the covenant of grace, and that the sign of circumcision was not a seal of the righteousness, which is by faith, but the seal of a secular inheritance, and consequently there was no seal of a spiritual church, till the New Testament dispensation. How they understand a chapter of the Old Testament, nor where they find a foundation for the new, I know not: but what is more deplorable they deny the doctrine of federal representation! Hence they are under no more obligation, to train their children up in the way they should go.

4th. We must take into christian fellowship our old persecutors, the Episcopalians, who drenched the earth with the blood of our worthy reformers,

because they refused conformity to their rites and ceremonies, which made void the counsel of God. Yea, we could not exclude any, that belong to christendom. Now, will the Doctor affirm, that the primitive christians, with such jarring sentiments, did commune together, after granting that communion presupposes union?

He attempts to prove the unity of the primitive church, by her common faith, her common institutions and brotherly love. Now, I say again, suppose the church had one common faith, which no one in his senses will deny to be the truth, from the beginning to the end of time; 2d. suppose they had common institutes for all who communed together, was not this essential to their constitutional existence? And suppose they had brotherly love, which exceeds ours, although this I call in question; as I believe common faith, with common institutions, with equal influence, will produce equal affections. He quotes a number of the fathers, to establish his propositions, which need no proof; they are so many essentials in the christian system, and this he acknowledges, notwithstanding his tedious quotations. "This is so evident, that an attempt to set forth its proofs at large, would be altogether impertinent." But did all, who wore the christian name, profess said unity in faith and practice? Let any man read the lives and doctrine, as stated by Dupin, for the first three centuries, and he will find, from the days the apostles fell asleep, till the zenith

of Anti-christ, as heresies abounded in their day, it increased after their death with an equal ratio. Did the true church admit their adherents to commune with them, because they held the head by a single profession? No, the Doctor being witness, they did not. "It is also certain, that as heresies, corrupting any cardinal principles of christianity, arose in the church, her public profession met them by an open and decisive assertion of the injured truth. This necessarily enlarged, by degrees, the number of articles in her creed, as well as the score of her ministerial instruction." (1) In all this, I shall leave it to wise men to judge, if he gained a single point, towards establishing catholic communion, or where the primitives did not set the example, which our worthy reformers practised, and the associates with a manly bravery executed, before the recent breach of bounds. But he thinks to gain something, by his bill of exceptions. "But her maintenace of the faith was always pointed and brief. She never launched out into wide discussion; never pursued principles to their remote consequences; nor embarrassed her testimony by numerous and minute applications." (2) Can he, by this assertion, fix a censure upon the secession? He acknowledges, with the encrease of heresy the primitives enlarged their creeds: had we enlarged with the encrease of heresies; how large must ours have

(1) Plea, page 42.

2. Item.

been? No man who understands and does according to our simple creed in our shorter catechism, but is blessed, and cannot be denied privileges in our church, upon his submission to our government and discipline, which, with respect to private characters, is very simple.

DIALOGUE IV.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

Same Persons.

D. D. We proceed then to enquire by what the primitive church considered her unity as liable to be broken.

“It may not be amiss to begin ~~after~~ the good old way, and shew negatively what she did not reckon as breaches of union. In this predicament she comprehended all vanities of opinion and observance, which do not subvert the foundation of evangelical truth and order, all which ~~do~~ not impeach a man’s claim to the character of a sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus, whaterve they were. Within these limits, they did not in her judgement dissolve the bonds of her union: by none of them was it impaired—not by a difference in rites

and customs in worship—not by imperfection in moral discipline—not by diversities in the form of government—not by dissonant views on subordinate points of doctrine—not by a difference in rites and customs in worship.—That there were discordant practices even in the apostolic church itself, is clear, from the records of the New Testament, and equally clear that they were not allowed to interrupt the harmony of her communion.

A great part of Paul's argument, in his first epistle to the Corinthians C.xi. concerning the decorum which the sexes ought to study in their modes of dress when engaged in public worship, rests upon the habits of society. He winds up his remarks after giving his opinion on the question of propriety, at that time among the Corinthians, by saying "*if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.*" "A contentious man it is Calvin's comment, "is one who wantonly stirs up strife, regardless of the prevalence of truth. From the words of the apostle one thing is plain; viz. that matters of secondary moment relating even to the worship of God, are no justifiable cause of "contention," among christians." (1)

William. I would recommend the Doctor to examine some sound commentators for the meaning of the text, upon which he builds with so much latitude.

If any man seem contentious, we have no such *custom*, neither the church of God.

Now according to the Doctor, it matters not how contentious, how many or how few there be of this character, however regardless of the prevalence of truth, however much they may overturn, confound and turn order upside down, we have no law to prevent them from communing with us, at the Lord's supper. Then all Paul labored in nineteen verses, was to shew that catholic communion could not be interrupted by any such irregularities. Was I upon equal footing, I would alledge Paul was better employed upon the other side, demonstrating irregularities, which were just causes for excommunication. The Holy Ghost, in matchless condescension bearing with the infirmities of human nature, calls into aid the force of argument, the laws of nature, the form of the man and the woman, the length and shortness of the hair of their heads; to shew God never intended that the woman should usurp authority over the man, or that they should assume the office of teacher or speaker in the church, but keep silence with their heads covered, to betoken their subjection; because the spirit knew how intent the woman would be to shake off the yoke. *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee, not less so than the man; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground.*

And however this might be borne with at home,

it would make horrid confusion in the house of God. He likewise knew, that, let the prohibitions be enforced with all the authority of God, and the treble argument from the law of nature, it would be all too little with her now who had transgressed the first covenant and ruined herself, her husband and her posterity; to restrain her in the present privation. He is under the necessity of making it an absolute term of communion, in a very singular manner, thus: but if there should arise any such wild enthusiastic sectarians, they are not to be acknowledged as christians by you nor any of the churches of God, they are strictly by divine authority hereby debarred from communion with every orderly church of God. We have no such custom nor any church of God. (1) Now I think a man contentious who wantonly stirs up strife, and regardless of the prevalence of truth, who would wrest all law, order and divine authority, to escape punishment for his transgression, rather than make a candid confession of his sin and guilt.

D. D. If my construction appears too bold, and broad for my opponent, it shall be confirmed by St. Paul himself. He cannot forget the noted testimony of apostolic liberty: a dissension arose in Paul's day among the christians, concerning meats and days. He, to prevent the sacrifice of one party to the rashness and vanity of the other, tells them,

1 Pool's Synopsls, Guyse's paraphrase.

they might both serve God acceptably. *He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks.*(1) This was Paul's advice concerning disputes about the religious distinction of meats and days; and I think it perfectly conclusive to my purpose.

William. Paul puts one in mind of an ingenious peace-maker, who found two brethren who strove together, and intending to set them at one again, says; sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? This he said, to quell their passions for the present moment, and give them an opportunity for reflection, having a confidence in his ability, and that he could judicially decide between them. So said Paul; not that there were two ways, right in reality, or that he allowed both to continue under the influence of their respective opinions; but, that this scripture may be properly understood, it must be interpreted by scripture.

The occasion of this momentary indulgence never had before been, nor ever more shall be, until the end of time and was never designed as a precept for posterity. Paul complained, that too much indulgence was taken from that quarter. (2) How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage! Ye observe

1 Rom. xiv. 6. 2 Gal. iv, 10-11.

days, and months, and times, and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (1)

The greatest achievement, that was ever enterprised by prophet or apostle, was to set aside the divine establishment, which had been in full force and virtue in law, from Moses to Christ. under the awful penalty, that he, who spoke against Moses' law, died without mercy: yet this, Paul, the apostle and servant of Jesus Christ, fearing neither the law, nor the penalty, nor the executioners of law; achieved, to the glory of God, by the sword of his mouth. In the midst of this most astonishing, and of all others the most interesting revolution, which shook the heavens, that the things which could not be shaken might remain; it was little wonder, among those who firmly held fast the things which could not be shaken, some would be strong and some weak Paul's attempt is, to support the weak, and to warn the unruly, and regulate them into one mind, jointly fitted and framed without seam throughout.

2d. What he adopted, in the room of the divine law abolished, was the law of Christ, to which he invited the Hebrews: let us go on to perfection, which, when perfected as a system in its divine simplicity and sublimity, by the two witnesses who stood before the God of the whole earth, was seen in heaven under the similitude or sign of a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon, the

1 See Luther and Guyse upon the place,

levitical priest-hood under her feet in its abolished state.

3d. We would remark, that some of the articles, which with my opponent, as he interprets scripture, are matters of indifference, and that one in particular, of which we are now discussing, our heroic apostle makes a very dangerous matter in religion; and that, although he had for the moment calmed their minds, till he might make way to their hearts, if they did not come to the knowledge of the strait and narrow way, and laid stress on their abolished ceremonies, they would surely perish in their sins. "Let no man therefore judge you in meats or drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ," and so on, to the end of the chapter. (1) For comment, I recommend a favorite commentator, John Guyse, upon the place. Paul calls every thing, which had a relation to the alter, strange doctrine. "Be not carried about with divers, and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing, that the heart be established with grace, not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. (2) See Owen on his exposition of the first.

By this time, I hope, I have wrestled with my brother and prevailed; and that he will now believe with me, it is a dangerous thing to hold any

1 Col: ii, 16-17-

2 Her: xiii: 9;

head but Christ, or submit to any rite but his. If every thing in framing the ark, the tabernacle, the temple, the tables, &c. was to be executed precisely according to the pattern given in the mount of revelation, and every departure was deemed corruption, even to lifting up a tool upon a stone, which should be used for an altar; nor the sound of a hemmor should be heard in building the temple; neither angel, apostle nor pastor shall ever make me believe, it is a matter of indifference, about using abolished ceremonies, rites or customs: much more, rites that were never authorised, though a Calvin should call them good and useful rites, although I intend to deliver him from the imputation suggested. I would think it the direct way to make division, as it ever has done, to the rending asunder the caul and liver of thousands; for, if we cannot harmonise about a few, simple, plain injunctions, enjoined by divine authority, we will never agree about multiplying human precepts: and whether we do or not, it is the direct way to get a curse, and not a blessing. If he was cursed, who continued not in all things written in the book of the law to do them: how much sever punishment must we expect, if we tread under foot the blood of the covenant, by which we are sanctified? And no man adds to the order of Gospel worship, but sets at nought the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. If no man can call Christ, Lord, but by the spirit, no man can add to, or take from, the laws of the house

of God, but must merit the plagues threatened; or have his name erased from the book of life; (1) and no man ever loved the brotherhood, who would jeopardise divine favor, and all the penalties threatened. Such a pretension to love, is quite as false and deceitful: as artful and desperately wicked. I would as soon credit the serpent's love to Eve, as the man, who pretends to love me, and at the same time would entice me to follow strange doctrines or precepts of men, which have never profited them who have been occupied therein, so much as to say to God, we have done, as thou hast commanded, or to do thy will O God! I take delight: and how will they answer when he shall interrogate, who hath required this at thy hand? I did not command it, neither entered it into my mind. In vain will they apologise, and assert in the presence of God, "it was only in secondary matters, in the worship of God;" so long as it is written he that is not faithful in little, will not be faithful in much, and a little leaven leavens the whole lump. Saul obeyed in killing the Amalekites; but in the secondary matters of killing the sheep, he disobeyed, and got no credit for the holiness of his design. "To sacrifice to the Lord, thy God, in Gilgal. And Samuel said, hath the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold! to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams; for

(1) Rev. xii. 18. 19.

rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness, iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." In obedience, the less the matter, the greater the credit, remember the box of ointment and the two mites. It is integrity he eyes. He needs nothing; but what is done to the least of his, is done to him; remember the cup of cold water, and the mill stone.

D. D. Mr. Chairman, if my opponent will not submit, that there may be good and useful rites, which have no sanction from the head of the church; nor yet that they may be used as matters of indifference, I would wish to know how he would end the dispute concerning circumcision, which was warmly debated in Paul's day: some for it, and some against it. I hope he would not venture a contest with the inspired apostle, who cried that circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the commandment of God is every thing: and again, in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*. And as many as walk according to this rule; viz. that it is a new creature (1) in Christ Jesus, which contains the pith and marrow, the vigour and glory, of our good confession; peace be on them and mercy! circumcised or uncircumcised; laying stress upon this

[1] Plea 52. 53.

custom or laying none: I have no quarrel with them, nor ought I to have any." For my part, I am set for the defence of the gospel, and will not descend to these petty conflicts. Sage and hero! every man, in whose heart the love of Jesus reigns, would fly to kiss thy lips for giving so right an answer. (1)

William. If the Doctor means what the apostle means, I have no quarrel with him, nor any other of his sentiment. But then his meaning will not avail him in his defence. I alledge, the apostle means what he says in the preceding verse: "Is any man called, being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision! let him not become circumcised." For neither of these circumstances makes any alteration with respect to the privileges and benefits of true believers, under the gospel dispensation: no man, since the death of that ordinance, is either the more or less acceptable to God, being found in either way. But the main thing to see to, if, that your faith work by love, (2) and so prove itself to be genuine and sincere, in a conscientious and cheerful obedience to the moral commandments of the law, as become new creatures in their relation to God and man. The matter of all this, is abundantly plain, and many times urged by the apostles. But if the Doctor meant any thing to be of service in his defence,

(1) 1 Cor vii. 19.

(2) Gal. v. 6.

his argument would be, that if any man was called, being uncircumcised, it was a matter of perfect indifference to him and all others, whether he should become circumcised or not, for such religious rites and customs neither made a man better nor worse; that he who was circumcised should not despise him who was not, and he who was not, should not despise him that was; for God would receive the one, who believed it was still binding, as he who did not, and he who did not, as he who did. If my opponent could find this kind of doctrine in his Bible, I confess, it would stagger me at every thing in it. For then I would be compelled to conclude, Christ was no longer a law-giver, king and judge; and that he had ordained the subjects to legislate for themselves, and to be tried, and judged by their own law. "Circumcised or uncircumcised, laying STRESS upon this CUSTOM OR LAYING NONE."

This heterodox sentiment I would recommend the D. D. to expunge in his next, and insert in the room of it, God forbid, that I should glory "or lay stress," save in the cross of Christ. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross creased. I am so far from preaching the necessity of circumcision, (as is slanderously reported of me, because Timothy was circumcised with my approbation, not as an ordinance in the church, but as a scheme of defence.) Behold, I, Paul, say unto you, that if

ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing—ye are debtors, to do the whole law—and ye are fallen from grace. (1)

But let us look into this text in the light of scripture—"is any called being uncircumcised," &c.

Now, from it I prove, there is no such thing as any institution, divine or human, which can possibly be a matter of indifference in the church of Christ.

Let him not become circumcised, is as much a divine command, as, thou shalt have no other God beside me. To become circumcised in this case, is as much an act of rebellion against God, as to say, we will not have this man to reign over us. To be circumcised in this case, is saying, that Christ is not the son of God: as those did, who delivered him up into the hands of wicked men, that he might be crucified: as those, who denied him before Pontius Pilate, saying, he ought to die, because he said, he was the son of God!

✓ (1) "This place is, as it were, a touch-stone, whereby we may most certainly and freely judge, of all doctrines, works, religions and ceremonies of all men. Whosoever teaches, or shall devise, any work or religion, or observe any rule, tradition or ceremony whatsoever, with this opinion, that by such things they shall obtain forgiveness of sins, righteousness and life everlasting, may hear in this place the sentence of the Holy Ghost, pronounced against them, by the apostle, that Christ profiteth them nothing. Seeing Paul durst give this sentence against the law and circumcision, which were ordained of God himself, what durst he not do against the dross and chaff of men's tradition."

If the Dr. would pay due respect to Calvin's institution, or the authority from which he speak B. iv. chapter x. sec. 23. he would rectify his plea and commit it to the flames.

Again, with respect to human precepts: the church is either authorised to enjoin religious precepts, customs or rites upon the people; or she is not. If she be, the people are bound, by divine authority, to observe them, and it cannot be a matter of indifference, if she be not authorised to enjoin religious precepts &c. and she arrogates that power without authority, it is a blasphemous sacrilege in her, and as many as submit to it are accessory to their depth of Satan, as they say.

But I must, lest I should give offence to the church of England, drop a remark, although we have not got down to her day. Her clergy, called bishops, will be happily able to avail themselves of any guilt in usurping the above power, for her sacred ministry had neither lot nor part in it. It was all forged out by the King and Parliament. And if it had no divine authority for enforcing obedience, it had that, which was more respected by the lucrative—a secular arm, which made the rebels feel what it was to underrate holy rites, as the cross in baptism, just as much authorised as salt and spittle, chrism and extream unction, and a hundred other things, which are no more contrary to God's word, than the cross in baptism, such as read prayers, and human songs. But if the King and Parliament, or Queen Elizabeth and her Parliament, could establish by their supremacy the common prayer book, in spite of all opposition from the bishop—most assuredly the King of Italy, who

was both king and universal bishop, two natures in one person, had much more power, and if it was criminal for the dissenters to refuse submission to her holy magistracy, it was still more aggravating for our first reformers to decline the laws of his Holiness.

But, as men in high stations put in for high claims, I shall announce my claim. I think the King and Parliament, yea, and the Queen to help them, with his holiness the Pope, and his cardinals, united as the soul of David and Jonathan, could not decree a rite, a ceremony, or custom, in matters of faith so holy or sacred, but I should have as good a right to curse them and their religious rites: as they had to make them. Now. I should hate to have or own a religion, that a good man should have a warrant from the God of heaven to curse, where I had no recourse, but to the mother of abomination for vengeance. Sir, you will bear with my zeal, where moderation would be a sanction of every abomination. From henceforth, let no man trouble me with his good, his innocent and useful rites, lest I should be provoked to say, depart from me, ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell!

D. D. Although William establish the danger there was of marring the gospel by an observation of ceremonial rites among the gentiles, he cannot deny, that Paul did conform to Jewish rites at Jerusalem, and blame Peter for doing the very same

things, which he did at Antioch; consequently Paul did not make such a stumbling block of conformity, as William alledges. (1)

William. Although the apostles were commanded to go first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who had just embrued their hands in his innocent blood; it is likewise certain, that to the Gentiles the gospel was first preached, divested of the ceremonial law. God, who acts like himself, speaking to us as children, did not do violence to his people, by first abolishing their divine rites, but first preached to them the gospel, till they had evidence, the same spirit had visited the uncircumcision which had visited them: by which means their minds might enjoy the most powerful aid to prepare them to bear that, which at present they were not able to bear.

The report of Peter's eating with the Gentiles, was the first official information they had, of any thing that had a bearing that way. The second, a little more express, was the decrees of the general assembly, issued to the believing Gentiles: nor had they as yet received any divine command to abolish their divine institution. When Paul went up at the time alluded to, there were many thousands of Jews who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. But as yet, they were, as they ought to be, all jealous of the law. Paul had run in vain, if he had

1 Plea, page 54:

used the same opposition to them, as he had done among the Gentiles; yea, with all his caution, it cost him bonds to the day of his death. The next official revelation of the mind of God to them, as a nation, was Paul's epistle. When he was beyond the reach of their persecution, when their city, which was called their continuing city, was on the eve of its destruction (an apostolical rendering good for evil) and to be the end of their civil and religious polity; (for nothing less than this could overcome the strength of their prejudice,) Paul, by the aid of infinite wisdom, wrote that most astonishing epistle, to dissuade them from their wonted divine attachment to their wonted divine ordinances. But, as we observed before, this event which, secluded from circumstances, would appear irreconcilable in an apostle, never before took place, and never will again, and so can afford no relief in the present case.

As to the detached scraps quoted from some of the fathers, concerning rites and customs, practised by some churches, and not by others, which occasioned some altercation, and some dissention and some softening expressions, taken hold of by the Doctor, I think, too chaffy for him to bring into view, or for me to take notice of, in the present debate. (1) The improvement, he and I ought to make of these things, is, that however simple these hu-

[1 See the plea from 55 to 63

man rites appeared in the eyes of good men in their day, so they did not make them terms of communion. Their successors, who called themselves christians, but were most wicked enemies to the cross of Christ, (such as extorted tears from the apostles) plead the example of the fathers, for making religious rites, that the children of God could not comply with, and for their non conformity, they made war with them, and prevailed. Let any one look into the history of the church, from the time the apostles fell asleep, till the close of the fourth century; although there were still some to oppose the growth of anti-christ, which was deep rooted in the apostles' days, heresy of every form sprang up, like ill weeds in the clear shining of the sun after rain. Dupin, who writes the history of the ecclesiastic writers upon the present subject, informs us to what a pitch they rose in the fourth century, of which Saint Augustine was a witness.

“The Bishops, Priests and Deacons were obliged to celibacy in the west—many very useful canons were made concerning the life and manners of ecclesiastics. In a word, nothing can be greater or wiser than the laws, which were made at this time, concerning the government of the church. But the ambition of Bishops, and the will of Princes, caused them often to be violated. When christians began, in the reign of Constantine, to perform divine service publicly, with pomp and

solemnity, there is no doubt, but the ancient ecclesiastical ceremonies were then perfected, and that new ones were added, to render the celebration of the holy mysteries more venerable to the people. Some of the chief of them were these. Baptism was administered to infants and adult persons, with many ceremonies: they were dipped three times into the water. Exorcisms and annointings were in use, milk and honey were given to the catechumens. The solemn times for administering baptism were Easter and White Sunday, and also Epiphany, in some churches—after baptism, the Bishop conferred the fulness of the Holy Spirit, by imposition of hands in the Latin church, and by unction in the Greek. The times and degrees of public penance for crimes committed after baptism were settled, by an infinite number of ceremonies. Absolution was not commonly refused for any crime; but penance was never granted twice. The holy sacrifice of the Eucharist was celebrated with ceremonies. The Eucharist was commonly given to the laity in both kinds; but upon certain occasions they gave it in one kind only. The Eucharist was received in the act of adoration: the custom of carrying it to their houses was very rare, and it was commonly spent all in the church, while they were fasting. Singing of Psalms was also used; wax candles were lighted, chiefly during the nocturnal offices; the dead was buried with much

ceremony and pomp; the great festivals were celebrated with much solemnity. Prayer for the dead, was a common practice in the church; which was commemorated at the celebration of the Eucharist. The invocation of saints and martyrs, and the celebration of their festivals, were common in all the churches: the use of crosses was frequent; the sign of the cross was made very often; there were images in many churches; a blessing was given for marriage, but the church never gave it for second marriages, and they even put bigamists under penance for some time. The mysteries were carefully concealed from those, who were not yet baptised. In short, divine service was performed with much decency, modesty, gravity and pomp. Fasting is one of the chief external practices which concern manners; the christians of the fourth age were very religious in observing it. Lent was established in all churches, though it was longer, or shorter, in different places. During the time of fasting, they waited till night in Lent, before they eat any thing; and till three o'clock in the afternoon in other fasts, and, all this time, they abstained from meat and wine, in almost all churches. The monastic state was established in this age, and became very common in a little time. There quickly appeared a great number of monasteries, full of an infinite number of monks, who retired from the world, observed celibacy, lived in obedience, kept excessive fasts, and performed very great austerities. Many virgins were

consecrated to God, and made a vow of virginity, and lived in common under the government of an abbess. The monks and nuns were both under the jurisdiction of their Bishops. There were very few Monks who were Priests: some were taken out of monasteries to be made Bishops; there were also some hermits, who dwelt alone in the deserts. They sometimes undertook pilgrimages to visit the holy places: but although the fathers approved the devotion, yet they feared the accidents which might happen upon it. They did not tolerate superstitious practices, nor any new devotions founded upon the imaginations of private persons. These are parts of the points of discipline of the fourth age of the world: I shall not stay now to observe many more, for my design is, not to make a dissertation upon this subject, which would be longer than all this volume, but only to give a slight idea of the discipline of that time. Neither shall I undertake to collect or abridge what the writers of this age have said of morality, which would be an infinite work! If the Doctor can justify those rites, so far as to conform, I think no wonder he condemned the non-conformists and justified the indulged clergy.

D. D. 2d. The primitive church did not consider her unity as broken, nor a sufficient cause for interrupting her communion as afforded, by imperfection in her moral discipline. Although the order of his house tends to purity, and his servants are bound to execute accordingly, our Lord informs

them, it is not to be looked for, till the final separation of wheat from tares—"nevertheless there have not been wanting in the church of God, attempts to effect what his word pronounces to be impossible. The success of the experiment has been worthy of its wit, instead of its purity, a morbid humour, an unhappy fastidiousness, and finally breaks up and forbids christian fellowship, under the pretence of superior purity. But such causes of disunion—provided nothing sinful be imposed on them—receive no countenance from the judgment or example of the primitive christians. We know that grievous abuses prevailed in several, even of the apostolic churches—they were admonished, re-proved and threatened, by the Lord Jesus himself, through his servants Paul and John; yet there is not a syllable enjoining upon others the disruption of communion with them, nor on the purer part of any of them to withdraw from the more depraved majority. (1)

William. I readily agree with my opponent, that the primary instruction of Christ by his apostles, was to purify the house and keep it pure, that nothing should be admitted that defileth or worketh abomination or makes a lie. There is a woe to that man that eateth with offence. There is nothing our Lord more intensely urged, than that we should guard against throwing a stumbling block

1 See plea page 63-64-65.

in the way of a brother by imprudence, which might tend to grieve or destroy his peace. It is better that a mill-stone were hanged round his neck, and he cast into the midst of the sea, than offend one of those little ones, who believe in him.

I likewise agree, that neither personal nor ecclesiastic perfection is attainable in this life, and that our Lord spake of false teachers, who sowed tares among the wheat. Did our Lord say, that for their immorality in discipline, they should not be liable to a process and even deposition? I think not. For any immorality, but especially for casting poison into the wells of salvation, where the facts can be proved, our Lord never past a law of exoneration from penalty, with a—let them be. But the case is thus delineated: they were such as in a dark time, when watchmen were off their guard, could by subtle ingenuity inject their poison. The sleepy, dull watchmen could not properly discriminate, (unless they had more of the spirit of those who govern the invisible church) between those who said they were disciples, and those who were of the synagogue of Satan; lest such watchmen as they were, going to work, would root up the wheat also with the tares.

But again, where the case is not too ambiguous for human judgment from the word of God clearly to convict, it is the indispensable duty of the watchmen to put away that wicked thing from among them, as a little leaven would leaven the whole.

lump. First, in point of character, the whole church sinks to a level with whatever is judically approved. 2d. It becomes precedential for the remnant. 3d. It becomes an offence to those, who know the truth, and esteem it above all things in heaven or earth, and their eyes are towards their rulers, as the eye of an injured servant is to his master's hands. If they who are entrusted by God and the church with the holy office, instead of defending them, should wound them, and take away the vail from them, what can the righteous do? Must they continue in the communion of that church, let her disciples be ever so immoral, because they are called christians? I trow not. If we have taken all the legal, prudent and humble steps, becoming the minors to the majority, pleading with their mother, and she grows more cruel and morose, and rules with a lordly severity, expressive of hatred instead of love, and that she cannot be benefitted by such a ministry, it is the duty of the church (for they are the church who adhere to the doctrine of Christ, whether many or few,) to *"purge out the old leaven, to become a new lump; that they may keep the feast, not with the old leaven, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*

It is much more the duty of the flock, to try them, that say they are apostles, and are not, and withdraw from their fellowship: (1) it is much more our

(1) 1 Cor. v. 14.

duty, to live without public ordinances, than support one, who brings not the doctrine of Christ. We may be in our duty, occupying private means in purity, but greatly offend in setting up teachers to ourselves (through an ear itch) in his sanctuary, whom God hath made mean before all the people. (1) For my part, I must confess, I am not so attached to any despotic, that I would not conceive myself warranted to withdraw from *their* communion, who teach, that immorality in discipline cannot be my justification, until she becomes the mother of harlots and abomination of the faith. Had the primitive christians possessed the same integrity, there never had been such a beast of prey.

D. D. I would reccommend William to peruse Augustine's letter to Antonianus, where quoting Cyprian, he says, that before the final separation of the just and the unjust, we are in no manner to withdraw from the unity of the church, on account of the commixture of bad men with good. I do not say that I am to deny the communion of the Donatists to be of the church of Christ; because some, who were bishops among them, are convicted by ecclesiastical and civil processes, of having burnt the sacred volumes; or because they did not carry their point in the trial by the bishops, which they craved from the Emperor; or because on their ap-

peal to himself, they received from him a sentence of condemnation; or because some of them throw themselves headlong over precipices, or rush into flames, which they have kindled for themselves, or, by terrifying threats, compel others to massacre them, and court so many spontaneous and furious deaths, that they may be revered as saints and martyrs; or because drunken bands of male and female vagrants flock to their sepulchers, and there, by day and night, revel in wine and wickedness, and corrupt themselves by the most flagitious enormities; let all that rabble pass for their chaff, nor be any prejudice to their wheat, if themselves adhere to the church of God.

William. Sir, I have read the father's sentiment with pleasure, but was astonished to find it quoted, in defence of the present argument. Did the venerable father attempt to maintain communion with a church, who sanction such outrageous immoralities, by suffering such offenders to pass with impunity? If he did, I would curse his doctrine, though he were in heaven. But to impute this to the father, would be the height of injustice. He only says; "I do not say I am to deny the communion of the Donatists to be of the church of Christ, because some, who were bishops among them, were convicted of such offences." The very quotation says as much, that the church had tried them, who said they were bishops, and were not, and had found them liars. The very thing for which we

Lord commends others, the father says, he cannot deny them to be the church of Christ. See his last sentence, "let all that rabble pass for their chaff; nor be of any prejudice to the wheat, if they adhere to the church of God." Here the Doctor has brought forth what he promised us in page 45. To interdict a minister of the gospel with suitable credentials, from preaching in any particular church whatever, on the pretence of its being unlawful to receive, and to join with him in any ministerial communion, would have been held in abomination. But Augustine and Cyprian acknowledged, the Donatists were the church of Christ, severed from the mother church, and not in communion with her; "worship from worship, sacraments from sacraments." Then the church of Christ, called the Donatists, were held in abomination. Quere—would they hold communion with a church, they held in abomination? (1)

1 There was a certain woman in Rutherglen, about two miles from Glasgow, who, by the instigation of some, both ministers and professors, was persuaded to advise her husband to go but once to hear the curate, to prevent the family being seduced; which she prevailed with him to do. But she going, the next day after, to milk her cows, two or three of them drop down dead at her feet, and Satan, as she conceived, appeared unto her; which cast her under sad and sore exercises and desertion; so that she was brought to question her interest in Christ, and all that had formerly passed betwixt God and her soul, and was oft tempted to destroy herself, and sundry times attempted it. Being before known to be an eminent christian, she was visited by many christians; but without success; still crying out she was un lone, she had denied Christ, and he had denied her. After a long time's continuance of this exercise, she cried for Mr. Cargil, who came to her, but found her distemper so strong, that for several visits, he was obliged to leave her as he found her, to his no small grief. However, after setting some days apart on her behalf, he at last came again to her, but finding her no better, still rejecting

Again, he says in his proposals, part 2d, that sacramental communion on Catholic principles, is agreeable to the faith and practice of the church of Christ, from the day of Pentecost to the present time, with a few local and party exceptions. Then, I suppose, this is one of his exceptions. But I would be informed, what time the church has all been in one visible communion, from that day to this.

D. D. Varieties of opinion and practice, with respect to the modification of her external order, were not considered by the primitive church, as inconsistent with her unity. That there were such vanities; that the government of the church gradually altered from the apostolic form, and sooner in some places than in others; so that there were in actual existence, at the same moment, different forms of government in different parts of the church; all dissentients from the Hierarchy agree. (1) The result is, that different views and practices in the article of her government, were not deemed by the primitive church to be inconsistent with her unity

all comfort, still crying out that she had no interest in the mercy of God or merits of Christ, but had sinned the unpardonable sin, he looking in her face a considerable time, took out his bible, and naming her, said---"I have this day a commission from my Lord and Master, to renew the marriage contract betwixt you and him; and if you will not consent, I am to require your subscription, upon this bible, that you are willing to quit all right and interest in, or pretence unto him!" and then he offered her pen and ink for that purpose. She was silent for some time; but at last cried out, "a salvation is come into this house; I take him, I take him, on his own terms, as he is offered unto me, by his faithful ambassador." From that time her bonds were loosed.

—with her common communion: nor a justifiable cause of interrupting it.

William. I shall meet the Doctor upon his own ground: I shall grant him his premises. In the space of three hundred years from the death of the apostles, the divine institution of church government was completely altered, so that there were but a few traces of her original beauty. which was not exchanged for anti-christian episcopacy: and that, gradual as it was, it did not degenerate uniformly, at all places and times alike: and that it was effected in opposition to the most direct interdiction of him, who knew to what evil they would be prone and to what degree they would carry their pernicious purpose; (1) and that this change of government, with their exorcisms, charms and spells, rites and ceremonies, to cast out devils, brought forth the monster, the mother of harlots, and the abomination of the earth, who shed the blood of the saints, till God gave their enemies blood to drink. (2)

(1) Mark the admonitions of omniscience—call no man master. for one is your master in heaven, and ye are brethren: I, your master, have washed your feet: ye ought to wash one another's feet. Whosoever of you would be chiefest, shall be servant of all. *Mark* x. 35 to 47, *Luke* xxi. 24 to 30. *Math.* xviii. 2 to 6. *Mark* x. 15. *Luke* xv. 17. As all these authorities are oppugnant to episcopacy, if the fathers did not make it a term of communion, it was their sin; but for a complete historical refutation, I recommend a perusal of the *Plea*, and a book entitled *Sermons to Doctors of Divinity*.

(2) All the records of this country mention the multiplicity of rites and ceremonies in the christian church. Several of the causes that contributed to this, have been already pointed out, to which we may add, as a principal one, the passion which now reigned for the Platonic philosophy or rather for the popular oriental superstition, concerning demons, adopted by the Platonists and borrowed unhappily from them by the christian Doctors. There is no the least doubt but

I will grant that all this never made a breach in her communion. Now does the Doctor bring forth her darkest color, her blackest side, her greatest crime, which she bewailed with tears of blood in the days of her reformation? I say, will he present her fall, her acknowledged guilt, for his justification in holding communion with the remnant who repented not of their deeds; but to this day use her episcopal order to persecute the saints?

Whatever we might expect from a blind Papist, who holds the church infallible, I would surely expect better things from the sons of reformation. It would be an easy matter to demonstrate from the word of God, that as he gave the outer court to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles: that it was in the outer court the Devil erected his battery. Few were the institutions God gave man in innocence. He ordained marriage for his help, the Sabbath for his rest, and two trees for the extensive signs and seals of his covenant of life. God said eat not, lest ye die. The father of corrupt ceremonies said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die; for God doth know, "to whom I appeal",

that many of the rites now introduced into the church derived their being from the reigning opinions concerning the nature of demons, of operations of invisible beings: hence the use of exorcisms, spells, the frequency of fasts, and the aversion to wedlock: hence the custom of avoiding all connections with those who were not as yet baptised, or who lay under the penalty of the dominion of some malignant spirit: hence the rigor and severity of that discipline and penance that were imposed upon those who had incurred by their immoralities the censures of the church." Mosheim cent. 3d part, ii. chap. 4.

that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. The very same lie he tells every one who receives institutions at his hand, making God a liar. God said, thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image: the serpent heard this from the mount, and soon tempted Aaron, and all Israel, to make them a golden calf, to worship, and they offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their hands, and God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven. *Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God Remphan*, of whom he said, ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Along with idolatry there is an inseparable connection with persecution. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before, of the coming of the first one; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law, by the disposition of Angels, and have not kept it. God said I am your king; but the serpent persuaded Israel to ask a king, and they said now make us a king to judge us, like all the nations—and the Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people, in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. They have forsaken me and served other

gods. Samuel solemnly protested against their designs, and shewed them the manner of the king that should reign over them. Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel: *and they said nay, but we will have a king over us; that our king may judge for us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.* God gave them prophets; the devil gave false prophets, and was a lying spirit in their mouths. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so. God sent apostles: the devil sent those who said they were apostles but were not, but where, Jesus made ministers, as he said to Saul, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, but rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister:* but either men or devil make doctors. God made presbyters or bishops, for they are both one: but the devil made them arch-bishops, cardinals and popes.

God said of his ordinances, thou shalt not add thereunto nor diminish therefrom. The devil adds all the black arts of exorcism, necromancy, magic spell, fascination, rites and customs. By these the pure instructions of grace are made null and void. God gave a book of psalms and commanded them to be sung to the honor of his son: the devil made hymns, whims, songs and sonuets, till the words of the Holy Ghost are held in the most abject contempt, and all who do them honor.

D. D. “The same thing is to be said of differences in subordinate points of doctrine.

By subordinate doctrines are meant all those, which may either be believed or doubted, without sacrificing any vital principle of the christian religion. To draw the line of distinction, between the essentials and non-essentials of our most holy faith, is at all times a delicate and difficult task; but that a distinction exists, no man of sober sense will deny. All the members of the human body belong to its perfection, and have their peculiar uses: yet a finger or a toe does not hold the same place in the system with an arm or a leg, nor an arm or a leg the same place with the head or the heart. A man may lose a limb, and yet be active, useful, honored and happy. No one thinks of disputing his humanity on account of such a privation: but cut off his head, or cleave his heart, and there is an end of the man. Thus also in the system of revelation, all the very least of its truths belong to its perfection: not one of them may voluntarily be renounced, nor any contrary error be knowingly embraced; because he, who does either, resists the obligation to receive and obey the truth, just as he, who keeps the whole law and yet offends in one point, is guilty of all. The entire authority of the law-giver is in every precept. Sin therefore, which is the “transgression of the law,” whatever precept it may happen to infringe, strikes at the principle of obedience; and is ready, as occasion shall offer, to assume any and

every form of transgression, to violate all the precepts of the law in succession, when impelled by adequate inducements. It is upon this ground that living in the commission of any known sin, however small it may appear, proves men to be destitute of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In like manner resistance to any of his truths, when perceived to be truths, argues the predominance of the spirit of falsehood—a spirit, which, as opportunity should serve, would not hesitate to relinquish every truth of his most holy word. Hence no christian can surrender the least tittle of that truth, which he believes to be the testimony of his God, nor do any act which implies such a surrender. Thousands of martyrs of Jesus, might have saved themselves from the wild beasts or the stake, would they only have thrown a handful of insence on a heathen altar. No motives can justify the sacrifice of a known truth: such a sacrifice might end in eternal ruin.

On the other hand, mistakes concerning particular truths may consist with the general power of truth over the heart. Some perish because they do not follow out their professed faith, and others would perish if they did. In judging for ourselves every one must make sure work, by keeping on the safe side, not wilfully rejecting any truth nor adopting any error. In judging others, we must go every length which the charity of the gospel dictates; i. e. every length consistent with our attach-

ment to and support of truth; and which does not rank among matters of forbearance a clearly vital doctrine of christianity. This would not be charity, but treason and murder. If a man, from whatever cause, renounce the obviously vital doctrines of the gospel, he is not, he cannot be, a christian. These doctrines, therefore, must be the basis of all christian communion; and maintaining these doctrines pure and entire, "holding the HEAD" Christ Jesus, as saith his apostle, his followers may and should have open fellowship with each other, on the ground of their common faith; and ought not to refuse each other on the ground of their inferior differences. Should any ask, how shall I distinguish an essential from a subordinate doctrine of the gospel; you are not under the necessity of nice and subtle discrimination; you are in no danger of mistaking a man's arm for his finger, or his head for his foot; or of supposing that they are equally important to his life. Whatever degrees of mistake may be reconciled with union to Christ, it is not, it cannot be, a matter of doubt, among those who have tasted his grace, that blaspheming his divinity; rejecting his propitiatory sacrifice, and the justification of a sinner by faith only, in his mediatorial merit; denying the personality, divinity renewing and sanctifying virtue of his holy spirit; and similar heresies, invalidate every claim to the character of his disciples. Such was the judge-

ment and practice of the primitive church. The basis of her communion was laid in the substantial doctrines of the gospel, as summed up in her creed. This she required to be adopted and professed by all, who offered themselves to her fellowship. It contained then her terms of communion; consequently, agreement in opinion, about which christians might differ without impugning any of these doctrines, made no part of those terms, in other words, she did not consider such differences as violating her unity; and how numerous they were, no one need be told, who has looked into her history. (1)

William. I remember the Doctor said, much time might be saved by letting the scripture sit in judgement and deliver its own verdict; but I have never found the scripture, which speaks about essentials and non-essentials in our holy faith. I expect the Doctor found none either; when he applied to fingers and toes, legs and arms, head and heart. I do not know that a naked similitude proves any thing, or if it does, it may prove every thing. To illustrate a passage in scripture, a similitude may be proper: but to introduce a complication of tropes, when there was nothing to prove, but what the figures prove, is an odd way of teaching divinity. I might return with more propriety his images

(1) Plea, page 99-111.

(2) Plea, page 9.

against himself. "If thine eye, thy right hand or foot offend thee cut it off, it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched." If my attachment to human precepts, which make void the counsel of God, is as dear to me as a right eye, I ought to cast them from me, rather than offend my God and the children of his people. The words, for I cannot call them the doctrine, of essential and non-essential have been as injurious to a holy life as any other anti-scriptural phrases. There is no such thing as subordinate points in divinity, which a man may believe or not believe with equal divine approbation. If it is but a jot or tittle, the Holy Ghost was pleased to reveal, it is an object of divine faith, and requires our faith in it; or he had revealed it in vain. We have no knowledge how much may depend upon what we conceive to be subordinate points. The eating an apple is but a little matter between Almighty God and man in his primative glory, but it cost the life of the son of God and all the human family, the groaning of the creature made subject to our vanity, and the final dissolution of all creation. But upon this subject the Doctor has said many good things, (as above;) If he had followed out of his principles, he had never erred.

2d. When the Doctor drew his line of distinction between his essentials and his non essentials; he

summed up his essentials in the apostels creed: then of course, what is not contained in it, is non-essential. Now if we credit Dupin and many worthy fathers whom he quotes (1) the apostles never made the creed attributed to them. There was nothing more customary among designing men in the four first centuries, than to impute some supposititious doctrine to the most venerable fathers after they were asleep, being in the habit of revering the traditions of the apostles. If the apostles did not write the creed as it is certain they did not, it would be illiberal to say that good men composed it and gave it the present title; but it would be congenial with those times that some worthy martyrs left it in manuscript, and that the persecutors, who were wont to worship the bones of those they beheaded, for the name of the Lord Jesus, might have profanely fixed the title to it. Be that as it would, it answered a valuable purpose; to shew us the necessity of a confession of faith, and that the ancients thought them necessary. For, as far as it went, it served as a testimony in favour of the person of the Lord Jesus, to which there was a general assent among all churches, till the days of Anti-christ's reign, and is their *bond of union to this day*. Had it been a perfect formula adequate to all purposes, the christian churches might have been more harmonious at this time. When it was compiled it answered the time, in

(1) See Dupin p. 8. upon the Liturgies, falsely attributed to the apostles.

which the divinity and official character of the Lord Jesus was the principal thing, the christians had to contend for. But it became infinitely short of an adequate standard, when it was equally the professed creed of the persecutor and the persecuted. For, although it bore an honorable testimony in favor of the first commandment, it said nothing of the other nine: although it bore testimony of the object of worship, it said not a syllable concerning the means of worship, (the principal thing the martyrs suffered about,) nor the manner of worship, nor yet the time. It was as vague concerning the second table. The sovereigns claimed more than their due, contesting for superiority with their equals and made their inferiours vasals of their lordly dominion. They, who professed adherence to this creed, shed the blood of his dear saints by thousands, because they would worship God only in the way he had appointed in his word. No nation ever exceeded them for uncleanness, rapine, and bearing false witness. By their love of filthy lucre, they engrossed the wealth of all nations; and still they maintain that they keep pure the apostles' creed. Although all authors agree, the terms of church communion was simple, till heresy compelled them to enlarge, we are far from believing it was confined in the limits of said creed: witness the ancient canons and constitutions. (1)

(1) See Dupin, page 14.

Besides, the liturgies, that were falsely attributed to the apostles, (2) shew that they had them at a very early date, and ever saw the necessity of a professional union preceding communion.

But to close my reply to the Doctor's negatives, I propose to shew, that a standard ever was. and will be essential to the existence of church communion: 2dly to prove, that the apostles' creed never was and never will be sufficient for such a standard: and 3dly, to shew some characteristics essential to membership in a well organized church.

First, upon the necessity of a standard.

First let us look for evidence into the garden of innocence. God promised to man eternal life, if he yielded perfect obedience to all his commands, subjoining a threatening of death if he transgressed in the least point. Now, the conditions stated in the covenant were the proper standards, in which we observe two things, the law of the covenant, and the observance of that law. The law of the covenant was two-fold, the law of nature, and the symbolical law. The law of nature, the relicks of which we have to this day, was inscribed in the heart of man, by which he was fully competent to discern the immutable difference between right and wrong. This law in innocence was not weak, as after the fall; but was a command given unto life eternal; this was the covenant of life, and, had he observed it, would have produced the very

(1) Plea, page 8.

same life promised us in the gospel. It was meat and drink to this life, to behold the glory of God in the volume of creation, while he was dressing the garden, but more especially, his holding fellowship with God in the revelations he enjoyed, for he had those in abundance, and every discovery he made of God in either, approximated him to his God, endowed him with additional delight in God, and an increase of power to meet his enemy. This was the vegetation of the seeds of life he received from his God in creation. Thus there was nothing in the things that were seen, but commended to him the invisible glory of the eternal Godhead; he enjoyed much of the brightness of that glory in revelation, he could not be taught in the mirror of creation; such as the persons of the trinity, such as the sweets of social fellowship with the eternal three in one and one in three. Now the nature of this law was, to love God. In loving God, he loved the chief good, and in proportion to the intensity of his love, would be his zeal to do the will of God. Thus every moment he stood he was rapidly progressing into the life promised, and in proportion as the innocent beings progressed in divine acquisitions, they would enjoy the second table, to love one another as themselves; for as God cannot see his own image without loving it, believers cannot see the image of God in one another without loving them. Thus there appears from the distinct law of nature, a standard flowing

from the nature of God and innocent man; so that they could not be what they were, without it. And while thus a solid foundation for communion with God and each other, and without it no more power of fellowship than between things animate and inanimate.

Equally might we establish the same point from the symbolical law, how minutely man's will was solved in the will of his God. Though he was created lord of creation, he would not without leave eat an apple, and perfection of submission was the genuine essence of his delight. It is even so between the father and the son. The son doeth nothing but what he seeth the father do.

2d. What shall we say of Abraham? the promises God made to him employed all the good things contained in the gospel, of which we cannot now speak. Abraham believed God, and his faith in these promises made the things promised, his-equal to all righteousness. But does he leave him without any constitution, system, code of government, or mean of worship? No! he gave him, in summary, virtually all required of the church to this day. I say in summary; that he should forsake all other gods, and take the Lord God Almighty for his shield and exceeding great reward; that he should go out not knowing whither he went, by which he should express his implicit confidence in the divine counsel, and divine protection. By such great and precious promises his faith grew,

which excited him to go in quest of a better country than the visible inheritance he had sworn to give his posterity. And he gave him circumcision, a token of the covenant in his flesh, highly figurative of his misery by nature, his expiation of sin by the cutting off the Messiah, his putting off the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of the heart in regeneration. As Witsius suggests, they were taught by it to apply to secret devotion, as it was performed in secret.

3d. The mortification of their lusts. They were to live alone, and not to be numbered among the people. A circumcised person, say the Jews, has withdrawn himself from the whole body of all nations. 4th. Their cheerful willingness to submit to the command of God, however difficult, grievous and painful, and however improper, foolish and ridiculous in the eyes of the world; not to account their reputation, nor even their life, dear in comparison thereof. Again, that whatever ceremonies God may add, then or thereafter, he that is circumcised should be considered as a debtor, pointedly to observe, and that every deviation should be reckoned among their transgressions, however apparently good; because a ceremony made by a creature cannot have any certain, divine, mystical signification, to communicate to us his will, as one made by God himself, and must be an encroachment upon the divine prerogative. Therefore, if found in our possession, it should be esteemed as

Laban's stolen gods hid by Rachel in the provinder for asses.

These mediums of approach to God in the observation of his institutions alone, were exemplified greatly with the increase of Abraham's family at the giving of the law by Moses, and sealed to the people by circumcision and the passover, with every prohibition neither to corrupt, add to, nor diminish therefrom, but to observe all things according to the pattern showed in the mount, subjoining the most awful penalties. (1) That we need not dilate upon particulars to establish that the Israel of God were not left without a compleat system of worship according to the times previous to the coming of the promised seed; we hasten to the testament given with better promises, that although there was a change of the law, and of the priesthood, it was only a change, and not an explosion of all they enjoyed as church regulations. When the things which could not be shaken remained, that remnant with some difference of administration was a compleat system of law, government, and worship, suited to the times, and was that perfection to which Paul invited the Hebrews, saying, let us go on to perfection, (2) and was that woman clothed with the sun (3) who brought forth a man child

1 Deut. xii. 32, Prov. xxx. 6, Ezek. xxxiii. 5, Rev. xxii. 18.
Owen on the text.

2 See Johnson on the Rev. Some and indeed all the commentators I have seen, have not made proper distinction between finishing their testimony and the time of their prophesy, and conclude they are yet to be slain.

to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The flood the dragon poured forth from his mouth, to drown the woman and her seed, and the smoke of the bottomless pit to darken the sun and the air, were the swarms of Platonic ceremonies called the image of the beast, imposed by the see of Rome as her instituted mean of worship; the counterpart of which was the testimony furnished by the witnesses in the dawn of the reformation, the sight of which provoked the enemy to make war against them in the reign of the emperor Charles the fifth, when the contending parties agreed to settle their debate by the council of Augsburg. It was three years and a half till it was finished. During this period there was a suspension of public ministry of the gospel and all hostilities. At this time the witnesses were said to be dead: their resurrection and being set upon their feet was the liberty of conscience and the enjoyment of a free investigation of truth: this was a pouring out of the fifth viol upon the throne or seat of government of the beast, the papal hierarchy. Now is it plain that the Holy Ghost predicted the creed which should be finished at that time. The adherents were called or named by Daniel the holy people, saints of the most high God, the very name given to the same people in the revelation of John: and is a proof by prediction, that in the times of reformation from popery, there would be some faithful witnesses, to stand before the Lord of the whole earth, a testimony for truth,

and that by the blood of the Lamb, and this testimony the saints should overcome and possess the kingdom.

But an author, in sermons directed to Doctors of Divinity, after saying many excellent things against titles and distinctions among brethren in the ministry, upon these words, "but be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren," likewise advances most irresistible arguments against the civil powers' undertaking to establish the church of Christ. Had he not been too much elated, and quit when he was done, he had done essential service to the public; but attempting to root up the tares, he roots up the wheat also. He goes on to discard all constitutions, creeds, and confessions except the Bible. I shall with your leave, sir, mention a few abstracts of what he advances in his fifth sermon, and as I think it has poisoned a number of Doctors, I wish to meet it with a reply.

He says, "that sort of power which is coercive belongs to the kingdom of this world, and can have no place in the kingdom of Christ."

In explaining the nature of this society of which Christ is the head, I shall for the edification of the Doctors, first enquire what is her confession of faith; without any further introduction, I shall affirm, that this society hath the scriptures for her confession of faith, and nothing else. The whole record, which God hath given concerning his son, as the

true Messiah and Saviour of the world, is the only confession of the christian church. The scriptures of the Old and New Testament are profitable for all things, to make the man of God perfect. They are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness: what more can be necessary? All other creeds or confessions are unprofitable! For they must be proven agreeable to the word of God, before any christian can believe them, which plainly intimates as much as that the scriptures might serve the purpose without them.

2d. It is something strange considering the imperfection of human understanding, and increase of knowledge, that any number of men not inspired, should be supposed so wise, as to be able to compose a formula of faith, sufficient to serve to the latest posterity. (1)

3d. In all things pertaining to this life, people are fond of dealing at first hand, as supposing it the best and the most profitable method: and it is amazing how they should conceive that religion is better at second hand than other things of less importance.

4th. It is a sad reflection on the first churches, that they were so easily satisfied with regard to

(1) The author says, that they who subscribe the Westminster confession differ in judgement. Some say assurance is not in the essence of faith, and some that it is. I say both are or may be right; the assurance of sense may not be where saving faith is, but the assurance of faith is contained in its essence.

their creed, when they were pleased with the scriptures only, when so much more was necessary. For, till the favour of pvinces and temporal emoluments were connected with religion, we read of neither creeds nor confessions, except the bible.

5th. The composers of the articles have paid but a poor compliment to Jesus Christ and his apostles, when they engaged in their ecclesiastical patch work, for it supposes in the first instance, that Christ was either not willing, or not wise enough, to give his church a complete model and form for christian worship; and for this cause hath left it to the good pleasure of church guides, to cut and carve as they shall think proper. This is pure and undefiled popery.

6th. These articles and confessions do not answer the end for which they are said to be contrived, for there is no true uniformity, where men are not of the same mind; and it is no evidence that people are of the same mind, when they subscribe articles merely to serve their own interest." Men subscribe to calvinistic doctrine, and preach what they please.

7th. "Churches, who will have articles to impose on their members, may find enough of them in the New Testament, ready composed to their hand by Christ and his apostles, and infallibly right and unalterable. The apostles demanded a confession of faith from such as they received into their commu-

nion; but it was short and very plain: Do you believe with all your heart that Christ is the son of God; believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved.

8th. The apostles in their times complained of errors and false teachers; but we do not read that they fell into the humor of creed making, to prevent them. Some idle people, after their decease, were at the pains to compose one and call it theirs; but it could never be made to appear that they had any hand in it. It is, however, abating the story of our Saviour's descending into hell, by far the best of all human creeds extant.

9th. It must argue, that either the scriptures are imperfect of themselves, or so obscure that they cannot be understood by the common people, when there was such necessity of creed-making.

10th. It must be reasonably supposed, that the common faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith delivered to the saints, is the gospel revealed in the scriptures—what the apostles preached, and left by divine direction in their writings; for at the same time creed-making was not come in fashion.

11th. To confess the scriptures to be the word of God, and declare our readiness to believe and observe whatsoever is pointed out there for our faith and duty, according as we can understand it, is all that christians can reasonably require from one another."

There is not an argument advanced by the above author, but will equally operate against preaching the scriptures. But faith comes by hearing—but neither preaching creeds nor confessions written according to the scripture, has any tendency to enable us to live, without the use of the word of God. They do not make void the law: yea they establish the law. The Westminster confession of faith does not make void the counsel of God by the tradition of men, interfering with the worship of God, like the ceremonies of read sermons, read prayers, and human psalmody. A genuine confession of faith lays no obligation on the present or future generations to believe it, because divines have composed it from the purest motives. The mind of man is left perfectly free, whether he will seal it or neglect it. He is perfectly at liberty to compare it with the scripture and approve or disapprove. The true church assumes no lordship over the conscience. His people are a willing people: what their hands find to do, they do it with all their might—as becomes the ground work and pillar of truth, and the oracles of the living God—a stability in faith resembling the immutability of divine revelation. If an enlightened believer examines a systematic creed containing the doctrine of divine revelation fairly stated in order, he cannot withhold his cordial approbation. He will upon the first opportunity, from motives of the purest love to truth, and unfeigned regard to all the

commandments and ordinances of God, as the medium of his sanctification, gladly embrace the occasion to declare the manner he understands the scripture, as distinct from another, who professes faith in the scripture but greatly errs, not understanding them nor the power of God. By this means he makes a better profession than the other: and thus it has a tendency to separate the pure from the impure, the precious from the vile, and collect a church, who believes the same things, speaks the same things, into unity to hear and receive the same gospel, and commune together in all church ordinances.

Suppose the extinction of all creeds among two hundred jarring denominations, all professing the christian religion; how would the spouse know where to feed her kids? or how would order be preserved in all the churches of the saints? It is easy to make light of the best things when we have them plenty, when if they were removed would be inevitable destruction. If creeds were of the quality of exorcisms and spells, called ceremonies to beautify and adorn the worship of God, as Dupin recommends them; they who receive them at the hand of the manufacturer might be said to receive them at second hand. If a divine comes publishing glad tidings with the sound of his master's feet behind, acknowledging himself merely a voice in the wilderness; and that he is not worthy to stoop down and loose the latchet of the shoes of him that comes

after him; not speaking of himself, nor seeking his own glory, but the glory of him who sent him; is it receiving at second hand? No. If I am duly affected, I feel the master, not the servant, I look beyond the watchman before I find him.

It is just so in the articles of a confession having its internal evidence. Nothing else is aimed at than an adjustment of pure revelation of the divine mind in that natural order we are forced to receive them, when we conceive of them with advantage. For there is in the system a perfect order of first, middle, and last things, which God was pleased to leave for his servant to collect and adjust, for reasons we cannot now speak of, such as to prevent our formality &c.

Did Stephen pursue no order in his last sermon? yea, one would think, that when he was full of the Holy Ghost, he had the bible in his eye, that with an intuitive glance he could speak the scriptures in a word. How powerful are right words! whereas the words of the foolish are, vain. How would the reformers shock off the papal yoke without a standard? Wickedly do men reproach the servants of the living God; who laid down their lives, not counting them dear unto themselves, that they might bear an honest and faithful testimony to the truth contained in it. We enjoy that with ease, which cost the blood of thousands, and halt between two opinions, whether we had not better discard their testimony than profess it: while the apostles were

in the church, and those who overlived them, their decrees superceded the necessity of all other formal decisions. But whenever Constantine established the christian religion, and the christians had to go out and be numbered with the nations, God saw the danger his church would be in. He sends an Angel from the east, having the seal of the living God, (the engraving of which was, the Lord knoweth them that are his: and let them that name the name of the Lord Jesus depart from iniquity) saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in the forehead. And I heard the number of them which were sealed, one hundred and forty and four thousand. These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins, i. e. they did not corrupt themselves with the whore of Babalon, they did not partake with her in her sins, but their song was the song of Moses and the Lamb—and no man could learn that song, but the 144,000 which were redeemed from the earth; in all which you have symbolically represented the chartered church of Jesus Christ, enjoying the municipal laws of her incorporation. The same idea we have emblematically represented by the reed like unto a rod measuring the temple of God, and the altar. The word *reed*, and *cannon* are the same, and we know how often the true church was distinguished by the canons. Now who will deny they had a testimony of distinction, and who will condemn the order of infinite wisdom.

Did Christ leave his servants to cut and carve at pleasure? Whatever he did with the dragon whom he restrained, he did not so with his faithful witnesses. When they met, they met in the name of the Lord Jesus, and he was in the midst of them to bless them. That which they bound on earth was bound in heaven. Witness the power they possessed, and let their works bear witness. "The council of Nice, of Constantinople, the first of Ephesus, that of Calcedon, and others like them, which were held for the condemnation of errors, we cheerfully receive, and reverence, as sacred as far as respects the articles of faith which they have defended. Whatever edicts have been issued by men respecting the worship of God, independently of his word, it has been customary to call human traditions. Against such we contend, and not against the holy and useful constitutions of the church which contribute to the preservation of discipline, or integrity, or peace." (1) When the apostles demanded a confession of faith, from such as they received into their communion, viz: "*do you believe with all your heart, that Christ is the Son of God,*" who should come in the flesh, and this being the only point that was now called in question, as in many instances may well be supposed that in all things else they maintained the received faith, viz: that they believed in the promised Mesiah, through whom

(1) Calvin iv. 10. 11,

alone they expected salvation; as the disciples did before they knew that he was the Christ, when Peter confessed with his mouth, thou art the Christ, and Jesus pronounced him blessed. In others they saw the signs of the Holy Ghost upon them, and who were they, that they could resist God? Others had the gifts of discerning spirits. Besides believing in him was a frank acknowledgement of all the doctrine he taught, before it was corrupted by the device of men and devils. All we ask, is nothing more than Jesus did, when he purged the floor of false glosses, when he laid his foundation upon a rock, and we are assuredly warranted to do this, "try the spirits, whether they be of God." The angels are not to be exempt from our examination, neither the good nor the bad. It is not owing to the imperfection, nor obscurity of the scripture, but the ignorance, pravity, and wilful perversion of holy writ, and the cursed hypocrisy of laymen, priests, prelates and pontiffs, which binds the elders to take such good heed to the flock.

Creeds, like preaching and praying, are not at all times equally needful: they are called for upon occasions, some more, some less. Nor need they be equally minute or equally numerous, nor uniform in all kingdoms provided there is no more contrast in them than the four Evangelists. When the church was in Abram's family, the ordinances were few and simple, but when it was in Abraham's family in the days of Moses, the law was added,

because of transgression, till the promised seed should come. Stripped of legal ceremonies in the primitive days of christianity, her ordinances were few and simple: *“but when Kings become nursing fathers, and Queens nursing mothers,”* the civil and the ecclesiastic powers killed her with kindness, and drowned her with ceremonies, and bound heavy burdens upon her shoulders, and griveous to be borne; more oppressive than tyrant hard hearted Pharaoh had been to their fathers, for they compelled them to worship the image of a beast. Now it was, the enemy came in like a flood and the spirit of the Lord, seeing the affliction of his people, lifted up the *standard*. And we are confident it needed all the height, the length, and the breadth of our Westminster confession, to prevent any thing unclean, that works abomination or making a lie, from entering into the holy city. *“Yea twelve foundations, twelve gates of pearl, and an Angel at every gate.”*

D. D. Having seen what the primitive church did not view as inconsistent with her visible unity, let us now enquire, by what, in her judgment, it was liable to be broken. This effect might be produced three ways by schisms within her bosom: by the renunciation of fundamental truth; and by withdrawing from her communion, (1) or, which

1) Plea, page 112.

was the same thing, the setting up of separate and restricted communion.

On the last the Doctor observed: (1) "if custom, which reconciles men to both absurdity and sin, had not familiarized the spectacle of evangelical churches alienated from, and often arrayed against, each other; my soul shudders in the name of the Lord Jesus!! it would be inconceivable how the idea of one catholic CHURCH can be dis severed from that of one catholic COMMUNION. That union should not be a basis of communion: that "particular churches, which are members of the catholic church," (2) as parts of one whole, should in their church capacity have no fellowship with each other, though they constitute but one body—nay that such fellowship should be unwholesome, unholy and unlawful; although, as parts of one whole, they have the very same means of life, health and vigour, is so desperate an assault upon the sense of consistency—such a leviathan of a paradox, that the faculties of poor human nature sink beneath it."

William. I do assure you, sir, the Doctor alarms me, he is got into such a flaming frenzy at our supposed absurdity, and unpardonable sin out of which he eloped yesterday; I had liked to have conceived he had made another change to day, and just commenced a flaming, raging, ranting enthusiast, and that it would be altogether in vain to reason

(1) *Plea*, page 1-2.

2 *Confession of faith*; chapter xxv. 4.]

with him any longer. I am inclined to think his Hopkinsian wine has turned sour upon his stomach, as he now vomits vinegar and gall. "We have made so desperate an assault upon the sense of consistency—such a Leviathan of a paradox, that the faculties of poor human nature sink beneath it." But what have we done to make a wise man mad? Seceded from the Roman Catholic church, and formed a separate restricted communion, according to the commandment, "come out from among them and be ye separate, touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." That same command has neither waxed old, nor decayed, nor yet vanished away, and is binding upon the conscience of every good man every day of his life, "but if custom had not made it familiar, it would be a desperate assault upon the sense of consistency, a Leviathan of a paradox that poor human nature would sink beneath it." I know it is natural and very customary for an unregenerated preacher to be restless in the church of Christ, for he could not rest if in heaven, to rack his invention, to devise some divisive course, to ease his yoke, and amuse his empty mind with some vain or mercenary designs. An Egyptian could rate high in his own eye, when he could effect an uproar, and lead out

But the Doctor said evangelical churches, all christians wish to be called evangelical.

into the wilderness 4000 men that were murderers; so those in the gall of bitterness, and bondage of iniquity, cursed children, love to set themselves at the head of a party, with some cursed innovation, by which they may rise to fame, and be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi, "the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will you do in the end thereof. Like people, like priest I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel, there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled." (1) But there is no such thing as an evangelist indeed, well directed by God, leaving a true evangelical church and casting himself out of her bosom. (2) This would be to deprive himself of the kingdom of heaven. Much less will he ever disturb the peace of God's house, with innovations upon her comely order. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these commandments, and shall teach men so to do, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." But I may leave a church whose corruption bids fair to be her ruin. If the leaders of a church may decline till they become the synagogue of Satan, (3) if such, am I bound to continue in that degenerating church, till I am the last believer in it? Must I abide in the place of breaking forth of children, until there are no children to

¹ Jeremiah v. 31 Hosca iv. 9, vi, 10, Mala. ii. 9, Jude 12.
Ephs. iv. 4. Psalm. civ. 4-5.

³ Confession xxv. 1-5.

² Acts iv. 32

break forth? The Scripture says, he is an unwise son, he should not. (1) If I do not then it is catholic leaving catholic. Is this the abomination which makes the Doctor's soul shudder, and take his name in vain? If so, it must shudder for me. While I believe that my tarrying in such a church is sinning against God, wronging my own soul, and setting a baleful example before others; a sin not to be atoned for by sacrifice: it is a sinning knowingly and wilfully, and the nearest and surest way to seal my final destruction. It has often happened in the first ages of christianity, that councils have met, whose decrees were not orthodox, yea so heterodox as to prove Christ was not in the midst of them, and that they could not have met in his name. If not, no good man had any right to be with them. "It is now about nine hundred years ago, (says Calvin) that the council of Constantinople, assembled under the emperor Leo, decreed that all images placed in churches, should be thrown down, and broken in pieces. Soon after, the council of Nice, which the empress Irene convened in opposition to the former, decreed that they should be restored. But if the accounts of historians be true, and credit be given to the acts themselves, that council not only admitted images, but determined that they should be worshipped. In the sixteenth century a council met at Westminster.

1 Hosea xiii. 13.

er and decreed that God should be worshipped in no other way, than that he had appointed in his word. (1) About 30 years ago, a grand council met in Philadelphia, and decreed or allowed images, instead of divine precepts, to be used in all the churches under their care, as more suited to their day. In the year 1799, a council met at Green Castle, and ratified the former. The same council met in 1816, and annulled her own and ratified the latter. (2) A few years passed and, two American Doctors met, more accomodating than all before them, and decreed it was no matter which way christians worshipped, if they observed the apostles' creed, and held the head, by saying that we believe in Christ. I shall leave these things without comment, that their nakedness may be seen; only that christian must have been as crooked as the crooked serpent, who kept pace with the church in all these traverse meanderings. But how was the promise made good, that he would be with his church to the end of the world? Calvin answers the quere: he may forsake the ministry, and be with the people. When the shepherds forsook their flock, the principal shepherd fed them: judgment begins at the house of God. Then I had better be with the people without a minister, than with the ministry without the church of Christ. But, far be it from me to sow

1 Calvin's institutes, B. iv. chapter 2.
 2 See the Minutes of Associate Reformed church.

2 Westminster confession, sins forbidden in the 2nd commandment.
 3 See the Minutes of Associate Reformed church.

discord among chief brethren. They are the excellent ones of the earth. My soul, come thou into their assembly! Mine honour, be thou united with such! May I live with them, and my latter end be like theirs!

D. D. None of the ancients blundered in this style. Orthodox or heterodox, they agreed in one point, viz: that different communions exclude the idea of unity. Hence, on the one hand, the Novatians, Luciferians, Donatists, who set up restrictive communion, acted upon the avowed principle that the catholic church, from which they withdrew, had ceased to be the church of Christ. And on the other hand, they, who condemned the separatists, held that by the very fact of their separate communion, they threw themselves out of the church of God, and ceased to be a part of her. The ground, then, upon which they both stood, is this, that two churches, refusing communion with each other, do thereby renounce their relation to each other as parts of the whole. To give at full length the proofs of what is here advanced, would be to transcribe a large portion of the works of some of the early fathers. It is assumed as incontrovertible by both Cyprain and Augustine in their respective controversies with the Novatians and Donatists; and frequently asserted in the most formal and unqualified manner.

William. I would be inclined to try the spirit, though an angel from heaven, who would announce

a sentence so illiberal with respect to the churches. Upon the Doctor's principle, neither of them belonged to the invisible kingdom, because they did not commune together. If they had, would it have made them invisible members? If so, it is a pity they did not. Or did their illiberal sentences excommunicate them from the invisible communion? If so, heaven is not worth having. But I have no such opinion, neither had the man whom the Doctor quotes. I refer him to his own quotation of these same men. (1)

"I do not say I am to deny the communion of the Donatists to be the church of Christ, because some who were bishops among them are convicted, by ecclesiastical and civil processes of having burnt the sacred volumes &c."

It is true he quotes these famous authors as if they had contradicted themselves. But let him mark the distinction after having shewn from the scriptures the visible unity of the church, Cyprian thus demands, "does he, who sets himself against the *church*, cherish a confidence of his being in the church?" Now the church he alluded to was neither the mother church nor the separatists; but the true church of Jesus Christ. This appears by a following sentence.—"Nor can that man attain to the rewards of Christ who loves the church of Christ."

(1) Plea, page 70.

Now can he say that these things were said of the Novatians, when at the same time, he tells us concerning them, that they were not accused of unsound doctrine, but only carried their ecclesiastical discipline to an extensive rigor; and charged the mother church with laxness in dealing with the lapsed? Did Cyprian say all you Novitians must be inevitably damned, because the reasons you assign for leaving the mother church, will be only your condemnation?

Mosheim suggests no idea of the Donatists' deciding the spiritual state of the mother church they left, but that they considered themselves very unjustly aggrieved in the appointment of a bishop set over them: first that Felix of Aptungas, the chief of the bishops, who assisted at the consecration, was a *traditor*, that is, one of those who during the persecution under Dioclesian, had delivered the sacred writings and the pious books of the christians to the magistrates in order to be burned, and that having thus apostatised from the service of Christ, it was not possible that he could impart the Holy Ghost to the new bishop. A second reason for their sentence against Ceccilianus (the imposed bishop) was drawn from the harshness and even cruelty that he had discovered in his conduct, while he was a deacon, towards the christians, confessors and martyrs during the persecution above mentioned, whom he abandoned in the most merciless

manner, to all the extremities of hunger and want, leaving them without food in their prisons, and hindering these, who were willing to succour them, from bringing relief. To these accusations they added the insolent contumacy of the new prelate, who refused to obey their summons, and to appear before them in council to justify his conduct. There was none of the Numidians who opposed Ceocilianus with such bitterness and vehemence, as Donatus bishop of Cæsee nigra; hence the whole faction was called after him. The Donatists having brought this controversy before Constantine the Great, the Emperor in the year 313, appointed Melchiodes bishop of Rome to examine the matter, and named three bishops of Gaul to assist him in this enquiry. The decision was in favor of the new bishop.

Notwithstanding the severe persecution they met, they flourished till they had four hundred bishops, and were charged with nothing criminal, but their heavy censures upon the catholic church for laxness in government and too much rigor among themselves. (1)

Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, a man remarkable for his prudence, the austerity of his character, and the steadiness of his resolution and courage, was banished by the Emperor Constan-

(1) Mosheim, cen. 4, v. 1, 392.

tine, for having defended the Nicene doctrine concerning the three persons in the Godhead. He broke the bonds of fraternal communion with Eusebius bishop of Vercell, in the year 363, because the latter had consecrated Paulinus bishop of Antioch; and he afterwards separated himself from the whole church, on account of the act of absolution she had passed in favor of those who, under Constantine, had deserted to the Arians. It is at least certain, that the small tribe that followed this prelate, under the title of Luciferians, avoided scrupulously and obstinately all commerce and fellowship both with those bishops who had declared themselves in favor of the Arians, and with those also, who consented to an absolution for such as returned from this desertion, and acknowledged their error; thus of consequence they dissolved the bonds of their communion with the whole church in general. (1)

It has been an old song, the church and the authority of the church, and as old, if a man declined her authority, he declined the head of the church: but against the above we do not find such illiberality. "For soundness and piety they appeared nothing inferior as yet." Had the Novatians, Donatists and Luciferians been thus treated, they had been in company with their successors. Thus all who would not follow the mother of Harlots: thus the Presbyterians who would not follow the Epis-

(1) Mosh. cent. 4, p. 375.

copalians; thus the secession, by the establishment, (1) and thus the burghers by the anti-burghers, (2) and this is what the Doctor is harping on, for mile periods, bringing us forward a quantity of quotations from books, which come through the devouring flames of Anti-Christ, where every thing wrote which militated against their order was judicially condemned to be burned. Had we all that was precious among them, and time and talent, to be masters of their history we might find much to please and much to displease, and be better capable of forming a judicious opinion in matters of debate: but now it is too late to arraign them at our bar, and model our church government by the relicks we have; we might as well "say in our heart, who shall ascend into Heaven, that is to bring Christ down, or who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring Christ again from the dead," as if we discarded the next verse. But what is it? "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and thy heart, that is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

(1) See Baxter's life, Wilsons defence.
 Mine on the subject.

(2) See Ralph Erskine

I would advocate this position, every officer has his commission, and every deviation from it is a forfeit of it. Christ received his, from his father and the Holy Ghost; he finished the work his father gave him to do, and was justified in his resurrection. The spirit called the comforter, received his commission and mission from the father and the son, and is every moment executing it to the utmost perfection. Angels have received a charge to minister to the saints, and we are authorised to try them, if they deviate; their office is forfeited, and they are accursed. Moses and Aaron were commissioned, and they both forfeited their commission, were disgraced, and their commission taken from them. (1) Nadab and Abihu transgressed and judgement was speedily executed. Moses gives the interpretation. “And Moses said unto Aaron, *this is that the Lord spake saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.*” So all the officers in church and state under the Old Testament were strictly limited without any discretionary power, much less any legislative authority. The apostles were as strictly bound up to every law and tittle of the institutions of Jesus their Lord and Master as Christ was to the will of his father.

(1) Num, xx, 12, 25 and xxvii, 14, Duet. xxxii, 51.

Now the legions of bishops who called councils out of number, had no authority but ministerial. If they deviated from that, they forfeited their authority, and as such could not be called the church, as a private member, I am as much bound to follow them as they were to follow Christ, while they exhibit to me the perfect model.

But if I have a warrant to try the spirits, whether they be of God: I surely have as good a right to try those who say they are apostles, and if they are not within the limits of their authority, it is my sin to follow them. "*Call no man master,*" as to their or any other invisible relationships with Christ, I have no more to do with it than Peter had with the death of John. That remains fixed by an eternal decree, among the "*secret things which belong to God.*" Now I ask, would it be in any point to our purpose, to sit in judgement upon the mother church and her separatists? We should find their contest was not about doctrine, but who should be bishops, as above. Now what have we to do with the detached scraps of censure, reverberating between them? We were not in any personal league with either of them we are free, let us not entangle ourselves, but do as Calvin recommends from supreme authority, who first delineates the true mother church, from whose embrace we ought not to decline, on account of lesser incidental infirmities in her ministration and practice, so long

as the word is preached and the sacrament administered in purity, i. e. as we receive them from the Lord Jesus; but that her character as such may be the more conspicuous and distinctive. He next compares her with a false church, with whom it is equally dangerous to have any connection. But to these subjects we will have recourse in order.

D. D. Sir, I would know if William read in the Plea, how the primitive church from the 2d to the 4th Convention, maintained their union by their ministerial and christian communion as opportunity offered.

William. As to the union of the church there is something very ambiguous: what one man might call the church of Christ, another would call a synagogue of Satan. Sometimes it is taken for the invisible, sometimes for the visible. Now if he means the latter, it must have such visible marks of being his, that a man may safely set to his seal, as none else but the house of God, the gates by which the just may enter in the ground work and pillar of truth; it contains the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Christ Jesus the chief corner stone. The word and sacraments administered in purity. This is the only church which Christ can recognize as his, and all the one we ought to acknowledge. Now among the visible professors of this church there ought to be a perfect uninterrupted sacramental communion according as God

cast their lots in their particular connections. But every church alone is subject in point of discipline to the courts with whom they are visibly incorporated. But consistent with our present imperfections, this is not to be expected at all times among true believers. There was a time when Peter, and his Master consistent with established order could not sit down at one common table from the time he denied him till the time of his restoration, and of course no disciple could. There was a time when Peter and Paul could not, when the latter impeached the former with dissimulation, and thereby rebuked him, by whom Peter stood corrected. There was a time when it would have been unlawful for Paul and Barnabas to have sat at one communion table, when the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other. There was a time when the churches at Corinth were not duly qualified to commune together; when Paul heard of their contentions. “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.” (1) How severely he reprehended their first emotion of making distinction among brethren, both here and in the 3d chapter? “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? For whereas there is among you

(1) Cor. 12.

envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? Again, they were not worthy, when they communed together so disorderly that they eat and drank damnation to themselves; or in the Asiatic churches, when they had with them those who held the doctrine of Balaam or Jezebel. It is not to be expected they were more pure or more orderly after the death of the apostles; they tell us expressly by the spirit, that Anti-Christ was then in the world. The primitive historians give us early accounts of great dissensions and grievous heresies, which broke out among the christians. By an analization from the summet of the mother of abomination to the seed from whence they sprang, we will find it was generated from a male and female. The one was the assumption of power, which first manifested itself in a bishop claiming some preeminence above a presbyter, which distinction was taken and granted, contrary to our Lord's most positive interdiction, "be ye not called master, for one is your master, and all ye are brethren." The other was a blasphemous assumption of legislative authority, attempting to set aside the institutions of the Lord Jesus to make way for their accursed impositions upon the fair bride of Christ, (1) of troops of rites, ceremonies, exorcisms, traditions, and usages, from Jews and Pagan Gentiles, they gene-

(1) See Calvin, book 4, chapter 10.

rally pretended were left for their imitation by the fathers; but it was only the father of lies. From these two sprang a world of iniquity, and to this day there are thousands, and tens of thousands, to nourish the infernal progeny. Now if any advocate for these abominations, from that day to this, in heart approves, much more in life justifies, such high treason against our rightful lawgiver, he as such, was or is an Anti-Christ; his religion arose out of the smoke of the bottomless pit, and will without speedy repentance inevitably conduct its abettors to the same perdition,(1) and none of these ever could be estimated worthy of life eternal, nor a sacramental communion with a true worshipper. The union, the Doctor says, "was preserved and evinced chiefly, first, by an inflexible adherence to the great truths of the gospel as summed up in her creed. Here was her one faith with which she admitted no tampering. Now this is the one creed acknowledged by the Roman church to this day, although, as Dupin has stated, there are four different forms of this creed, and as many creeds as authors. Besides, there is not one syllable in it relative to government, worship or discipline.

2d. "By her members conformity to the customs and usages of any particular church which they might happen to visit." This is a miserable reflec-

(1) See Calvin, book 4, chap. 10.

tion upon the purity of the ancient church; but he has left it without proof.

3d. "By respecting and supporting discipline, wheresoever, and by whomsoever within her pale inflicted. A person censured by one church was of course excluded from every other." As to the law I do not presume to judge. If there were all that wisdom and prudence becoming the officers of Christ's courts, there would be less need for such a law: transgressors would not pass with impunity, nor the innocent find an occasion to flee for justice. But a church of Jesus Christ may be very unhappily fixed with a majority of officers, too severe in discipline, as the African church was, who refused to admit penitents, although God should forgive them. In this case I am of the opinion a true church ought to be moved with compassion. See Calvin, (1). "when the sinner gives the church a testimony of his repentance, and by this testimony, as far as in him lies, obliterates the offence, he is by no means to be pressed any further; and if he be pressed any further, the rigor is carried beyond its proper limits. In this respect, it is impossible to excuse the excessive austerity of the ancients, which was utterly at variance with the directions of the Lord, and led to the most dangerous consequences. For when they sentenced an offender to

(1) Inst. book 4, chap. 12, 8.

solemn penance and exclusion from the holy communion, sometimes for three, sometimes for four, sometimes for seven years, and sometimes for the remainder of life; what other consequence could result from it, but either great hypocrisy or extreme despair? Likewise when any one had fallen a second time, they refused to admit him to a second repentance, and his exclusion from the church to the end of his life, was neither useful nor reasonable. Whoever considers the subject with a sound judgement, therefore, will discover their want of prudence in this instance.

“4th. By holding ministerial and christian communion with all true churches as opportunity served. That is to say, every church received into communion, as fully as her own immediate members, ministers and private christians from any and every other church under the whole heaven, upon evidence of their good standing! which evidence, when they were not sufficiently known, was furnished by letters of recommendation.”

William. As above we have shewn the improbability of this sweeping association from sacred writ. Let us now pursue the subject into church history and see whether a Doctor might not be liable to err, and if possible save him by correction. I shall show in two or three instances, when it was practicable, and many in which it was not. When Christ was born, the Jewish church, the only one, was divided

into three grand divisions, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essones. There is frequent mention made of the two former in the sacred writings, but the knowledge of the rites and doctrines of the latter is to be derived from Josephus, Philo and others. Among these, one of the main points of controversy was, whether the written law alone was of divine authority; the Pharisees added to this law another which had been received by oral tradition. This the Sadducees and Essenes rejected as of no authority, and adhered to the written law as the only divine rule of obedience. The Pharisees were of opinion that rewards and punishments extended both to the soul and body, and not limited to this life. The Essones differed from both; and maintained that future rewards and punishments extended to the soul alone, and not to the body, the prison of the immortal spirit. These differences, in matters of such vast consequence, between these famous sects, produced none of those injurious and malignant effects which are too often seen to arise from religious controversies. The Sadducees enjoyed the favour and protection of the great. The Pharisees on the other hand were extremely high in the esteem of the multitude, and hence they were both secured against the attempts of each other, and lived in peace, notwithstanding the diversity of their religious sentiments. The government of the Romans contributed also to the maintenance

of this mutual toleration and tranquility, as they were ever ready to suppress and punish whatever had the appearance of tumult and sedition. We may add to all this, that the Sadduceen principles rendered that sect naturally averse to all sorts of altercation and tumult. Libertinism has for its object ease and pleasure, and chooses rather to slumber in the arms of a fallacious security, than to expose itself to the painful activity, which is required both in search and in defence of truth." (1) Under these prosperous circumstances the church enjoyed a catholic or universal communion. Did Jesus come to cherish this peace of the church? I tell you nay, but rather division. (2) But with the Doctor's leave I shall state an extended communion such as I can approve of. It was immediately after the day of Pentecost and it is recorded for our standard to the end of time. When the whole christian church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread and prayer, when they were all of one mind, and continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people; and the Lord added to the church such as should be saved; and the number of their men was about

(1) Mosheim, cent 1, chap. 2, 8.

(2) Luke 12, 51.

five thousand, (exclusive of the women.) This is the way to build the church of Christ, and enjoy the happiness of the bride in the day of her espousal. Although it may be attended with much offence, as in days of old their envy appeared against Moses, it may offend an older brother and expose to much persecution, but not more for the sake of spiritual liberty than our Americans have repeatedly done for the sake of natural; of which we have never repented. If a few churches would singly aim at the same purity, I believe there would daily be added to them such as should be saved, and would soon be in favour with all the people. Men would see and know, that God was in the midst of them; but when we admit, without testimony, of knowledge, purity of design, and a life becoming the gospel, we gather as many foes to the cross of Christ and his gentle discipline, as breeds such confusion and disrespect for the cause, as confirms the enemy in their faith that we are nothing better than themselves. Thus the wise and foolish virgins go far together to meet the bridegroom. I know we must gather good and bad into the gospel net, if hearing the word; but we cannot be too cautious whom we admit into the holy communion. All attention should be paid to the flock: the weak may be encouraged without admitting them too soon to the communion. Better keep a christian back a few times, than admit the unconverted to

eat and drink judgement to themselves. The godly will improve, and the more especially if they find we are impartial in our administration, and we will be free from much trouble, throwing out the unworthy after they have disgraced the cause and vexed us in a tedious process.

But we shall, after a few preliminaries, show some other instances, in which communion was extended to just limits: when the persecution arose at Jerusalem, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles; God sent them forth in mighty power, and wherever he sent them they were blessed with divine success, and planted churches among the heathen all the world over. Now the order they pursued was this, when they had planted a church upon the foundation, and administered all the ordinances to them, they elected one out of them whom they ordained an elder, presbyter, or bishop, for those names were applied in common to the same office, and so went on from place to place with great prosperity. These they frequently visited, and when they could not, they wrote them Epistles, which we have to this day; now part of the canon of divine revelation. When the apostles fell asleep, these elders, presbyters or bishops, continued fixed pastors in the places where they were ordained. They performed all the duties of their office; some more and some less faithful; some endowed with extraordinary gifts, others with common; but they

were all unlearned, (1) because God had determined, while the ministers enjoyed extraordinary influence of the spirit, there should be as little of art as might be, that their faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Paul was the principal exception in point of literature, and he renounced it in point of dependence. When these presbyters commenced, they preached in private houses, for they had no churches built; they continued preaching in their own bounds, till they became too numerous to hold personal communion in one house: when that came to pass, the said presbyter, if miraculously inspired, did by the authority of God, and by and with the approbation of his people, ordain one or more presbyters, as his colleague or colleagues, and then they formed a presbytery, of which the senior pastor was their moderator, but generally as a note of distinction, he was called the bishop. Christ gave him a still more honorable name, the ANGEL of such a church, as one who had oversight of the whole; but had no præminance above a presbyter except his preceding in presbytery, and performing the act of ordination. Thus the bishops and his presbyters, with the elders, who were only helps in government with the people, formed an independent church, and had no higher court of appeal: and

(1) Mosh. cen. 1, part 2.

thus the church existed during the first ages of christianity, and as such, carries the best evidence of its having apostolic sanction. (1) "It was only in the second century that the custom of holding councils commenced in Greece, from whence it soon spread through other provinces."

Now let us examine how these independent churches communed in those days. We shall take for example the year ninety-nine, while John was in Patmos and the other apostles had entered into their rest. There were then named seven of these independent churches in Asia. Was there any method for their private members to commune together? I trow not. Did a private member discern an error in his own church, he could remonstrate, he could plead with his mother, he could make his sentiments public, and enter his testimony against her error; during which time he might with purity continue in communion till his continuance would be interpreted his approving of her error. But with another church entirely independent of the church to which he belonged, such an attempt would be deemed altogether impertinent: this would be to judge another man's servant. That he should make his sentiments public, and make an honourable defence in his own sphere, cannot be out of order: but that he should enter a process against

(1) Mosh. cen. 1, part 2.

her would be illegitimate. The church of Ephesus is highly recommended for her stability, in the defence of truth, and only blamed for forsaking her first love. These can all commune together with harmony, but our Lord adds another high trait in her character, in which he accords with her—"but this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, *which I also hate.*" Now I ask, would the Ephesians, so noted for purity, do justice to the cause of God and themselves, to leave their own church and go and commune with the church of Pergamos, who at least supinely suffered some of her members to pass with impunity, who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication, and what was so often stamped with a note of divine indignation, "that thou hast also them who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans *which things I hate.*" God and his fair church at Ephesus, hated that thing which the church of Pergamos made no term of communion. If communion presupposes union, as is granted, who would say that these churches were in union? The thing hated by one, and supinely indulged by the other, made as great a contrast as between light and darkness. So we might compare all the churches to whom the several epistles were addressed. There was something reprehensible in six out of seven in

Asia, something praiseworthy in all but Laodicea, some things severely censurable in the churches of Galatia and Corinth. Nothing bloomed in Philadelphia and Thessalonica. The church of Philippi are warned to beware of false teachers: "nevertheless whereunto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing: brethren, be ye followers together of me and mark them which walk, so as ye have us for an example, for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction," &c. The church at Colloss is addressed as an unspotted bride, but exhorted to constancy and to beware of human traditions, "which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh," alluding to the platonic system of philosophy. Now if the pure had conformed to the impure, would they have been addressed as pure by him whose eyes are too pure to look upon sin but with abhorrence? Would the church of Philadelphia conform to the famous church at Ephesus, in forsaking her first love, endangering the removal of her candle-stick? If she had, she had not enjoyed so honorable an attestation from him who dwells in the mountains of spices. He had not caused her to hear his voice, saying, "Behold I will make them of the Synagogue

of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie: Behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have LOVED THEE." Can any man, who ever read his Bible, think that a Church so pure in heart would enter into free communion with such a Church, because they said they were Jews, i. e. they professed to be Jews, or Christians, inwardly; but to the of Church of Philadelphia, known to be of their father the devil? would the praiseworthy Church of Thessalonica commune with the Church of Galatia?

But let us return to the line of Church history, and trace her through another age where we will again enquire concerning Church communion.—The Bishops and Presbyters in their independent Churches, had found it written by Paul, that a brother should not go to law with a brother, and that before the ungodly: that if they were to judge angels and men, they might find wise men among themselves to judge less matters. The Bishops, modeling after Moses, a lawgiver and a judge, thought none more fit for their office than themselves; forgetful of what had passed in a council of Apostles, that it was not fit they should leave the word of God and serve tables, took this heavy burthen upon themselves, instead of appointing officers for this purpose, or leaving the litigants to choose their own arbitrators. They took upon themselves ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction,

which thing became a snare to the whole house of Israel.

Another bitter root sprung up in this season. The number of learned men among the Christians, which was very small in the preceding century, grew considerably in this. The most part were philosophers attached to the eclectic system, that is, the Platonic, qualified by Ammonius, holding there was some good and some bad among all men; that the good had been taught in Egypt by Hermes, and that it was brought by them to the Greeks where it was obscured, but was preserved in its purity by Plato, who insisted that all religions of all nations should be restored to their original purity, and reduced to their primitive standard, and that this was the design of Christ's advent to our world. He considered the universe and the Deity as constituting one great whole; as also concerning the eternity of the world, the nature of souls, the empire of providence, and the government of the world by Demons. To this coalition he added a rule of life, which carried an aspect of high sanctity. He permitted the people to live according to the laws of their own country, and the dictates of nature; but a more sublime rule was laid down for the wise. They were to raise above all terrestrial things, by the towering efforts of holy contemplation, those souls whose origin was ecclesiastical and divine. They were ordered to extenuate by hunger, thirst,

and other mortifications, the sluggish body which restrains the liberty of the immortal spirit. Mosheim, from whom I have abstracted, says this new species of philosophy, imprudently adopted by Origen and many other christians, was extremely prejudicial to the cause of the gospel. So hence it was that the Christian Doctors began to introduce their subtle and obscure erudition into the religion of Jesus. Hence early in the second century the Bishops were cloathed in a triple character: they were divines: they were learned philosophers: and they were the magistrates over their own parishes, and they claimed a preeminence over their fellow presbyters.

We have in this period made visible that Antichrist was then in the world, but resembling a bitter root just shooting above ground, not yet matured into his future hardihood. The stone fallen from heaven had began to embitter the waters: that he who drunk of the waters died: the flood began to be poured from the mouth of the dragon to drown the woman and her seed, but none drunk of it but the seed of Antichrist called the earth. For in a little time their philosophy became a most noxious evil which darkened the sun and the air. They tried their diversified talents upon the person of Christ, till they philosophised him out of his divinity and left him little more than they assumed to themselves. They then arrogated the dignity of

framing an immense load of ceremonies in order to add pomp to their worshipping assemblies. Says my author, "it would be endless to enumerate all the pernicious consequences that may be justly attributed to this new philosophy, or rather to this monstrous attempt to reconcile falsehood with truth, and light with darkness. Some of its most fatal effects, were its alienating the minds of many in the following ages from the Christian religion, and its substituting in the place of the pure and sublime simplicity of the gospel, an unseemly mixture of Platonism and Christianity. Hence early beginnings of that unhappy contest between faith and reason, religion and philosophy, piety and genius, which increased in the succeeding ages, and is prolonged, even to our times, with a violence that renders it extremely difficult to be brought to a conclusion." But the learned being bishops and magistrates, they joined by degrees to exclude all the illiterate, such as had been the ministers of the former age, from the sacred office; and the innocent people, who loved the truth in its simplicity, were debarred from the unlearned, and confined to assemble with the learned. Their learning was the mixture of Christianity with their vain philosophy: their error came in like a flood. The opposite side of the question was not, however, without defenders; and the defects and vices of the learned philosophers *contrib-*

acted much to increase their number. ()* I shall furnish one specimen of the doctrine taught in this age by the christian philosophers. Christ had taught his disciples simply, that the souls of good men were, at their departure from their bodies, to be received into heaven, while those of the wicked were sent to hell. Plato had taught, that the souls of heroes, of illustrious men, and ancient philosophers alone, ascended after death into the mansions of light and felicity, while those of the generality, weighed down by their lusts and passions, sunk into the infernal regions, from whence they were not permitted to emerge before they were punished for their turpitude and corruption. This doctrine was seized with avidity by the Platonic Christians, and applied as a commentary upon that of Jesus. Hence a notion arose, that none but the martyrs entered into a state of happiness immediately after death. Others were assigned an obscure prison till Christ shall come again, or until they shall be punished. This doctrine became a source of innumerable errors, vain ceremonies and monstrous superstitions.

Another erroneous practice was adopted by them, which proved a source of numberless evils to the Christian Church. The Platonists and Pythagoreans held it as a maxim, that it was not only lawful, but even praiseworthy, to deceive, and even to

(1) Mosheim, 2d Cent. part 2, chap. 1.

use the expedient of a lie, in order to advance the cause of truth and piety: and the Christians were infected from both those sources with the same pernicious error.

A third source of evils sprung up in those days near akin to the former. Both Jews and Heathens were accustomed to a great variety of pompous and magnificent ceremonies in their religious service, and they considered those rites as an essential part of religion, and looked upon a religious worship not adorned with such, as little better than Atheism. To remove this prejudice against Christianity, the bishops thought it necessary to increase the number of their rites and ceremonies, to render public worship more striking to the outward senses.—Thus Gregory allowed the Christians to dance, sport and feast at the tombs of the martyrs, upon their respective festivals, and to do every thing which the pagans were accustomed to do in their temples during the feasts celebrated in honor of their Gods; hoping that in process of time they would return of their own accord to a more virtuous and regular course of life, when they had made the experiment and found the futility of such wild devotion.

In like manner the comparison of the Christian oblations with the Jewish victims and sacrifices produced a multitude of unnecessary rites, and was the occasion of introducing that erroneous notion of the Eucharist, which represented it as a real sacri-

fice, and not a commemoration of that great offering that once was made upon the cross for the sins of mortals.

Passing by the heathen mystic divinity and the custom of teaching their religious doctrine by images, actions, and signs, which the Christian Doctors adopted, as of necessity, to teach the illiterate, such as administering milk and honey, which was the ordinary food of infants, to such as were newly received into the Church to shew them they must behave as new born babes in simplicity and innocence; these corruptions soon bred a troop of heretics, of which it is not my present design now to speak.

Now I challenge the world to say, that all these jarring and dissonant principles of the pure and the impure ever did, or ever could, blend in one communion without disposing with all revealed order. Suppose representatives from each persuasion had met in one assembly and they had judicially approved of each other's sentiments, and sealed their decree with a sacramental oath, swearing fealty to each other; could they have taken a stand more odious to the head of the Church? Could they have made a more ridiculous appearance? Could they have gone further to drown the woman and her seed? Would it not have been drinking of the flood poured out of the mouth of the dragon? Would it not have been drinking the waters made bitter, of

which many died? It was drinking of Plato's cup, that Arias became the fallen star called wormwood. Says Johnson on the Revelations, would it not have been the righteous justifying the wicked, and the wicked justifying the righteous, and each condemning his own principles, and speaking lies from the least to the greatest at one table, and that to the Holy Ghost? (1)

Now although this harmonizing system could not be as universal as the Doctor suggests, yet it vastly exceeded any justifiable bounds, as will appear by a few remarks on the general state of the Church in the third century, under their sure government by Councils and Canons, which made way for a growing Hierarchy.

The vigorous efforts of the above philosophers to establish their system, which had for its object the conciliation of all the diverse denominations into one body, by holding out that their system was of a divine origin, taught by Christ but corrupted by his apostles; which they had gathered up from Pagans, Jews and Christians, and adorned with their essential rites, usages, customs, exorcisms and spells, to cure diseases and cast out devils; and all managed by the most profound men in their nation, as Origen, Ammonis, Porphyry, &c. that they procured the favour of princes: that near the half of this century the Church enjoyed much tranquillity, while their bishops were many of them sunk in

(1) viii.. 8.

luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance, and addicted to many other vices that cast an undeserved reproach upon the holy religion of which they were the unworthy professors and ministers. In the mean time the terms of admission were made so easy to all men that the Christians increased in number with an incredible rapidity. But for their peace they had great bitterness;(1)for while they were drinking out of the sacramental vessels, the hand was wanting MENE, MENE, TEKEL UPHARSIN. Their universal benevolence and extended harmony in a day of prosperity, did them little good in a day of adversity. They betrayed one another, and violently persecuted each other. Many of the Platonic conciliatory philosophers joined issue with the bloody minded Emperors and were the principal incendiaries. Nothing better could or will be the fruit of such unhallowed connection. The first of these persecutions was directed against the chief bishops, because they had been high in favour with the preceding Princes. The second against all Christians, because they become more numerous, as Pharaoh said, "The children of Israel are more and mightier than we."

I shall enforce the truth of the above assertions by a few abstracts taken from Mosheim's Church History on the third Century.

(1) Isa. xxxviii, 17.

"The famous question concerning the excellence of human learning was now debated with great warmth among the Christians. The cause of letters and philosophy triumphed however by degrees. This victory was principally due to the influence and authority of Origen, who having been early instructed in the new kind of Platonism already mentioned, blended it unhappily with the pure and sublime tenets of a celestial doctrine, and recommended it in the warmest manner to the youth who attended his public lessons. The fame of this philosopher increased daily among the christians, and in proportion to his rising credit, his method of proposing and explaining the doctrines of christianity gained authority, till it became almost universal. Besides, some of the disciples of Platinus having embraced christianity, on condition that they should be allowed to retain such of the opinions of their master as they thought superior, these christian philosophers preserving still a fervent zeal for the doctrines of their heathen chief, would naturally embrace every opportunity of spreading them abroad, and instilling them into the minds of the ignorant and unwary." (1)

"*Caracalla*, the son of *Severus*, was proclaimed emperor in the year 211, and during the six years of his government, he neither oppressed the christians himself, nor permitted any others to treat them with cruelty or injustice. *Heliogabalus* also, though in other respects the most infamous of all princes, and perhaps the most odious of all mortals, showed no marks of bitterness or aversion to the disciples of Jesus. His successor, *Alexander Severus*, who was a prince distinguished by illustrious virtues, showed them, in many ways and upon every occasion that was offered to him, the most undoubted marks of benignity and favour; nay, he is said to have gone so far as to pay a certain sort of worship to

(1) Chap. 2, part 2. sec. 5,

the divine author of our religion. This, his favorable inclination towards christians, was probably owing at first to the instructions and counsels of his mother *Julia Mamaea*, for whom he had a high degree of love and veneration, *Julia* had very favourable sentiments of the christian religion; and being once at Antioch, sent for the famous Origen from Alexandria in order to enjoy the pleasure and advantage of his conversation." (1)

"From the death of Severus to the reign of *Maximin*, the condition of the christians was in some places prosperous and in all supportable. But with *Maximin* the face of affairs changed: this unworthy emperor, having animated the soldiers to assassinate *Alexander Severus*, dreaded the resentment of the christians, whom that excellent prince had favoured; and for this reason he ordered the bishops, whom he knew that *Alexander* had favoured and always treated as his intimate friends, to be seized and put to death. During his reign the christians suffered in the most barbarous manner, for although the edict of this tyrant extended only to the bishops and leaders of the christian church, yet its shocking effects reached much farther as it animated all orders against them." (2)

This storm was succeeded by a calm, in which the christians enjoyed an happy tranquility for many years. The accession of *Decius Trajan* to the imperial throne, in the year 249, raised a new tempest, in which the fury of persecution fell in a dreadful manner upon the church of Christ; for this emperor, either from an ill grounded fear of the christians, or from a violent zeal for the superstition of his ancestors, published the most terrible and cruel edicts; by which the praetors were ordered, upon pain of death, either to extirpate the whole body of christians without ex-

(1) Cent. 3, part 1, chap. 1, sec 1,2,
sec 1.

(2) Chap. 2, part 1

ception, or to force them, by torments of various kinds, to return to the pagan worship. Hence, in all provinces of the empire, multitudes of christians were, during the space of two years, put to death by the most horrid punishments, which an ingenious barbarity could invent. Many christians by profession, not dismayed at the prospect of death, but at the aspect of those dreadful and lingering torments, which a barbarous magistracy had prepared to combat their constancy, fell from the profession of their faith, and secured themselves from punishment, either by offering sacrifices, or by burning incense before the images of their gods, or by purchasing certificates from the pagan priests. In the mean time, the platonic philosophers, whom we have described, exhausted against christianity all the force of their learning and eloquence, and all the resources of their art and dexterity, rhetorical declamations, subtile writings, and ingenious stratagems. Those artful adversaries were so much the more dangerous and formidable, as they had adopted several of the doctrines and institutions of the gospel, and with a specious shew of moderation and impartiality, were attempting, after the example of their master Ammonius, to reconcile paganism with christianity, and form a sort of coalition of the ancient and the new religion. Their principal art lay in drawing a comparison between Jesus Christ and some of their ancient philosophers, as to mighty works: and as there are no opinions, however absurd, and no stories, however idle and improbable, that a weak and ignorant multitude, who are more attentive to the pomp of words, than to the truth of things, will not easily swallow; so it happened, that many were ensnared by the absurd attempts of these insidious philosophers. Some were induced by these perfidious stratagems to abandon the christian religion, which they had embraced: others, when they had heard that true christianity (as it was taught by Jesus, and not as it was afterwards corrupted by his disciples) differed almost in nothing from

the Pagan religion, properly explained and restored to its primitive purity, determined to remain in the religion of their ancestors, and in the worship of their gods!! Others treated Jesus and the ancient philosophers with the same respect. Such was the example of Alexander Severus, who paid indiscriminately divine honors to Christ and to Orpheus, &c." (1)

Now did every church receive into communion as fully as her own immediate members, ministers and private christians from any and every other church under the heavens, &c?

Now the Doctor has established his assertion, or he has not. If he has, it is to me imperceptible. If he has not nor never could, it must be a notorious, false slander upon the bride of Jesus Christ, that she, as such, played the harlot with every one that pleased to come in unto her, called christians. It is manifest, from the Doctor's own acknowledgements, that thousands, rather than corrupt the pure, instituted ordinances of their Lord and Master, preferred standing at the burning stake till the blood boiled in the vessel at the cistern, and papilled through the skin. While some members were burning to a coal, others shouted the high praises of the Lord Redeemer, with whom they suffered, bearing an honorable testimony for truth. Has the Doctor knowingly and wilfully asserted a falsehood against the true church of Christ, in order to make her an example of his transgression? Or if it were

(1) Part 1, chap. 2, sec 8, 9, 10.

true, would it be a justification for his whoredoms? If she were guilty, it must have sunk her beneath being an example, at all events her practice could be no legal precept.

Let the Doctor read Rankin's second process page 22.

PART II.

DIALOGUE V.

Same Persons.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

From facts in the time of reformation.

Doctor: Sir, I shall lead William to the protestant churches from the reformation downward, and this shall furnish our 3d. class of facts. (1) He shall see a coincidence in judgement between the primitives and reformers, with respect to immoral discipline, different rites of worship, different views of external order, and subordinate doctrines, both agreeing that they are not sufficient grounds of disunion among christians nor of their excluding each other from the most tender and ample fellowship in the things of God.

In the case of the reformers, this is the more worthy of notice; as a proof of their having imbibed the pure spirit of the gospel, seeing they did not, like the first heralds of the cross, issue from one nation and one spot, with simultaneous commissions; but were of different countries, language,

(1) Plea 142.

habits, prejudices, many of the mabsolutely strangers to each other, yet all drawing their doctrines out of the one well of salvation, the holy scriptures: and they did declare themselves very abundantly, both in word and deed, upon the subject now before us, viz. sacramental communion on catholic principles. Their adversaries the papists, from whose communion they had separated denied their whole claim to the character of christian churches. To repel such a charge it was neccessary to determine from the word of God, what constitutes the true church; to give its distinctive marks, and shew that they belonged to it themselves. In doing this, they fixed upon such characteristics as are common even at this day, to all the churches of reformed christendom, which have not lost the faith of the trinity, and the atonement; they are summed up in two heads: 1. the pure doctrine of the gospel: 2. the right administration of the sacraments. What is meant by the pure gospel and the due administration of the sacraments, must be ascertained from the confessions themselves.

William. For argument's sake and brevity, I shall grant the above; but maintain that the power of the most august councils never could to this day reconcile them together, (notwithstanding nothing could have been more to their honor or safety, their interest, their peace, and their comfort, than such a combination:) although if they had, communion

upon catholic principles had been utterly impracticable, nor does any historian give the least item, that such a communion was ever moved or even thought of. The farthest advance they ever could make, was to recognise each other as churches of Jesus Christ, and this they might do with a safe conscience, when they could not exchange communion. Nothing could have been more to their honor or a better protection against the reproach of their enemies. It had, as far as we weak mortals can conceive, been good and pleasant for brethren to have dwelt together in unity; it would have given additional evidence that they are the disciples of Jesus; it had been fulfilling his last will and testament, *that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*; or a better protection against their enemies. The Papists reproached them that there was as great division among them, as there was between them and the Romans from whom they had detached themselves. Calvin had heard it and partly believed it to his sorrow. "I wish" says he in a letter to Cranmer, "it could be brought about" that men of learning and dignity from the principal churches might have a meeting, and after a careful discussion of the several points of faith, might hand down to posterity the doctrine of the scripture settled by their common judgement. But among the great evils of our age, this also is to be rehearsed, that our churches are so *distracted, one from ano-*

ther, that human society scarcely flourishes among us." He says he would cross ten seas if it was only to give aid to one, viz. England, to accomplish an union of churches in other respects widely asunder. To their interest nothing would have been a greater terror, nor more painful grief to their common foe, whose principal hope was founded in their divisions, that they would do as they often did, fall out among themselves and persecute each other, until blood should touch blood. Tell it not in Gath, that there were more who embrued their hands in each others' blood than interchanged communion with each other. Do not say among the reformers: yes, among the reformers, and to the credit of religion, for many came out with them, who were not of them, who cruelly persecuted the faithful, because they refused to commune with them. (1) Now would it not have been to the interest of their cause if they had attained to unity? Yes, as much better, as wisdom exceeds folly, or purity impurity. But although it is, and ever will be the desire of every gracious mind, it never will be until the prophets see, eye to eye, and until the kingdom is restored to Israel, the time and season of which he has put in his own power. To begin to bring it about by such heterogeneous qualities, would be just as prudent as

(1) Mosheim, John Knox, Nei's history of the Puritans, the Scotch worthies, Livingston's life, Baxter's life, Blair's life, all concur in this awful reflection.

Abraham harkening to the advice of Sarah, to accomplish the promise that in him and his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed, or as Moses slaying the Egyptians to bring about deliverance to Israel; or as some of Israel's presumptuous children moved to take the land of promise, when God was not in the midst of them; (1) and as novel as foreign to the purpose, if previous to judiciary union, their peace. Nothing was ever more congenial with true godliness than peace with God, peace with ourselves, and all men, but especially the household of faith. It is the immediate result of holiness to be spiritually minded, which is life and peace, and the works of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever; and my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in a sure dwelling, and in quiet resting places. (2) But good men would rather meet a Goliath of Gath, than connive with an enemy for sake of peace: Calvin says "I would not be understood to patronize even the minutest errors, or to express an opinion that they ought to be cherished in the slightest degree by flattery or connivance." (3) I love the character of Melanethorn: a spirit of intrepidity, ardor and independence, animated all his words and actions, and he looked down with contempt upon the threats of power, the frowns of fortune and the fear of death.

(1) Num. 14, 40.

(2) Isia 32.

The truth is that in this great and good man, a soft and yielding temper was joined with the most inviolable fidelity, and the most invincible attachment to truth:"(1) and their comfort next to the comfort of the comforter, is the sweetness of genuine fraternal affection, especially as fellow labourers with him in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; but Satan hinders. There is and must needs be, a thorn with the rose, lest these delights should exceed, and we should be swallowed up in one another, rather than in him: on the other hand the worst foes are those of our own household, a brother offended, when brothers betray brothers in the ministry of the gospel, it is the nearest imitation that a professed disciple can make, to Judas with his master; and shall meet the same reward. If ever I be guilty of this I say with Job, (2) let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. But I said if they had harmonized their confessions which was next to impossibilities, after they had formed their respective constitutions, and sworn to support them, especially while there was more in their way than Papal ceremonies, that many of them were more attached to than any point in theology. There was the all important doctrine of predestination, formerly debated between Pelagius and St. Augustine, the dispute concerning the bread and wine in the eucharist, though they

(1) Cent, 16, sec. 1 Mosh.

(2) 31, 22.

had all renounced transubstantiation: Luther was doating upon consubstantiation, an idea more obscure but not much purer.

But to do more justice to the subject let us state the different creeds of the reformers, in which we have evidence sufficient to prove them churches of Christ, i. e. clean, but not all clean. They needed an Aquilla and a Priscilla as well as Apollos, to teach them the way of God more perfectly. And see if it was possible without increasing their guilt, (unless they had increased their purity) to have set in visible sacramental communion.

Luther in a letter to a troubled conscience, while he admits the preordination, and foreknowledge of God, nevertheless from what the prophet Ezekiel says *Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should turn and live?* he argues that God chose and seriously decreed from eternity the possibility of the salvation, and everlasting happiness of all men, and hence he concludes that the general promises of a gracious God ought by no means to be limited. (1) This same doctrine I have seen in his comment upon the Galatians. It was not a transient sentiment with Luther: he stands charged with making great commotions in the church concerning grace and free will, which he had set in motion where his sentiments were condemned, and where the

(1) Milner abridged by Townsend p. 708.

decisions of Augustine were solemnly approved, and warmly defended by Michael Baius, doctor of Leuvain, (1) equally remarkable upon the account of his piety and the extent of his learning.

2d. Luther appears to head a novel sentiment which he termed consubstantiation or impanation. Milner upon the subject says, he maintained in the most inflexible manner, that after consecration the body and blood of our Saviour are substantially present together with the substance of the bread and wine.(2) To help the imagination in so difficult a subject Luther observes, "that God might have many methods which he had not condescended to lay open to us, whereby two things might be in the same place at the same time; or one thing exist in another without any gross corporal sort of union, like that which the sacramentarians supposed. The scripture speaks of children being in the loins of their parents, trees and fruits, also existed in seeds and kernels. There was likewise positive proof that Christ came to his disciples through doors that were shut. There is nothing wanting he added, of an express testimony to the ubiquity of Christ. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man who is in heaven," which words plainly de-

(1) Mosh. cen. 16, sec. 3, part 1. (2) If any one suspects this for a truth, let him read John Owens sermons delivered before the Parliament of England.

monstrate, that Christ's body was present both in heaven and earth and in fact every where at the same moment," (1) a monstrous figment.

In this he made the shadow of a remove offtransubstantiation: as in the third place he did from Roman episcopacy. The supreme rulers of every Lutheran state are clothed also with the dignity, and perform the functions, of supremacy in the church. Mosheim his advocate, reasons thus, as had been done of old; that as the scripture is silent upon church government, (2) it becomes the chief magistrate to form the government of the church in his dominion, the liturgy and the ceremonies; that nothing is more inconsistent with that subordination and concord, which are among the great ends of civil government than imperium in imperio, i. e. two independent sovereignties in the same body politic; hence the genius of government as well as the spirit of genuine christianity proclaims the equity of that constitution, that makes the supreme head of the state the supreme visible ruler of the church. Such a system would, as it naturally did, bring forth all the principal power and practice of persecution, which proved its illegitimacy. "A confederasy is formed at Frankfort, to defend their religious privileges by the sword, but Luther refused comprehending in it the follow-

(1) Milner. page 493.
history 34, page v. 1.

(2) Cent. 16, sec. 3, part 2, Mosh. Nial's

ers of Zuingle among the Swiss, together with the German states or cities which had adopted the sentiments, and confession of Bucr. (1) After Luther paid the last debt of nature, these human heads of the church of Christ soon found the power they possessed; and quickly the secular arm is made bare to enforce their articles of faith. Some of the Lutherans corrupted the corrupt system of Luther concerning the body of Christ till they gave it some specious of ubiquity; others were more inclined to support the doctrine of Calvin. The contest rose till Augustus et ceteri summoned the most eminent doctors of both the contending parties to meet at Altenburgh in 1568, and there to propose in an amicable manner, that it might appear how far a reconciliation was possible. But their hopes were blasted, wise men are called to compose a form of doctrine in which all the controversies that divide the church should be terminated and decided, and that this compilation, as soon as it was approved by the Lutheran princes and consistories, should be clothed with ecclesiastical authority. Pencer and other disciples of Melancthon made public profession of the doctrine of Calvin in the year 1571, they published a work entitled *Stercoma*, if not directly to oppose Luther's sentiments, as much as his corrupted Andrewal, and his colleagues supporting the ubiquity of Christ's body. But by the influence of the prince and his

(1) Mos. cent. 16, sec. 1.

prætors, he committed some of them to prison, sent others into banishment, and engaged a certain number, by the force of the secular arm, to change their sentiments. Pucer who had been principally concerned in moderating the rigor of some of Luther's doctrines, felt in a more especial manner the dreadful effects of the elector's severity; for he was confined to a hard prison where he lay in the most afflicting circumstances of distress, until the year 1585, when he obtained his liberty. (1)

We shall next examine the peculiarities of the sentiments of Zuingle the Swiss reformer, who appears to be called of God previous to Luther, so that he refused to be called a Lutheran.

On original sin he has these wild imaginations, "sin is properly a transgression of a law, and where there is no law, there is no transgression. Our great ancestor sinned, but which of us meddled with forbidden fruit. There is then no denying that original sin, as it exists in us, the descendants of Adam, but it is not properly sin, it is a disease, it is a condition. It may be called sin, but it is not so in strictness of speech. Thus a perfidious enemy, when taken in war deserves to be made a slave, his children also become slaves: but the fault is in the father, the children are not to blame, yet they suffer for the sin of their father, and if you choose to denominate their state of slavery, sin, because by sin

(1) Mosh. 16, cen. sec. 3, part 2, page 380, &c.

they were brought into that state I shall not object. It is however in this sense that we are by nature the children of wrath."

2d. He allows that such ceremonies as are not founded in superstition nor contrary to the word of God may be tolerated, till the day star shall become more and more bright; but that even these had better be abolished, provided it can be done without giving offence.

3d. He calls Seneca a most holy man, and hesitates not to conclude that he was in possession of saving grace. In his exposition of his faith addressed to Francis, first king of France, he addresses him as a most pious king, assuring him, that if he governed his kingdom as David, Hezekiah, and Josiah did, he may hope to see the Deity in his perfection and enjoy him forever; and that he may hope also to see and join the assembly of all holy, wise, faithful, brave, virtuous men, that ever lived since the world began, and among these, the two Adams, the Redemer and the redeemed Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, the virgin Mary, David, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, likewise Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, Aristides, Antigonus, Numa, Camillus, the Catos, and Scipios, his own predecessors, and as many of his ancestors as have departed in the faith.

4th. In competition with Luther, upon the Eu-

charist being warned of God in a dream, (as he says, and as many a good man has) of the 12th of Exodus, he proceeds to compare the Jewish passover as directed in the Old Testament, with the Lord's supper, as commanded by Christ himself in the new. With great perspicuity he points out the analogy between the two expressions: "*It is the Lord's passover,*" "*and this is my body,*" and powerfully contends that the former must necessarily be taken figuratively, and the latter cannot possibly be constructed otherwise. (1)

But before we leave the Lutherans, I must beg leave to introduce an abstract from Mosh. v. 4, page 395. The Hungarians and Transylvanians were engaged to renounce the errors and superstitions of the church of Rome, by the writings of Luther and the ministry of his disciples. But some time after Matthias, Davoy, and other doctors, began to introduce in a secret manner the doctrines of the Swiss churches in relation to the Eucharist, as also, their principles of ecclesiastical government. In 1550 this doctrine and those principles were propagated in a more open manner by Szegedin and other calvanistic teachers, whose ministry was attended with remarkable success. This change was followed by the same dissensions that had broke out in other places on like occasions, and grew into an open schism among the friends of the refor-

(1) See Milner upon his life.

mation in these provinces, which the lapse of time has rather confirmed than diminished. After the publication of the famous form of concord which met with violent opposition, many German churches of the Lutheran communion dissolved their original bonds, and embraced the doctrine and discipline of Calvin. In ninety-five the princess of Anhalt, influenced by the counsel of wolfgang Amelin-geous, renounced also the profession of Lutheranism and introduced into their dominions the religious tenets of Geneva; this revolution, however, produced a long and warm controversy between the Lutherans and the inhabitants of the principality.

The doctrines of the Calvinists or Reformed church, more especially those that relate to the Eucharist, were also introduced into Denmark, towards the conclusion of this century, for in this kingdom the disciples and votaries of Melancthon, were extremely numerous, and they had at their head Nicholas Hemmingius, a man eminent for his piety and learning. But the views of this divine and the schemes of his party, being discovered much sooner than they expected, by the vigilant defenders of the Lutheran cause, their plans were disconcerted and the progress of Calvinism was successfully opposed by the Lutheran Ministers, seconded by the countenance and authority of the sovereign.

It must not however be imagined, that the different nations that embraced the communion of the

calvanist church, adopted at the same time without exception, all its tenets, rights and institutions. This universal conformity was indeed ardently desired by the Helvetic doctors, but their desires in this were far from being accomplished.

The English, as is sufficiently known, rejected the forms of ecclesiastical government and religious worship, that were adopted by the other reformed churches, and could not be persuaded to receive, as public and national articles of faith, the doctrines that were propagated in Switzerland, in relation to the sacraments of the Lord's supper and the divine decrees.

The protestants in Holland, Bremen, Poland, Hungary, and the Palatinate, followed indeed the French and Helvetic concerning the eucharist in the simplicity of their worships, and in their principles of ecclesiastical polity, but not in their notions of predestination.

From the conflicting, and rather painful review of the infirmities of the German and Swiss churches, &c. which we have been compelled, from the nature of our debate, though with regret, to expose to view, let us turn our attention to him, who has justly been termed the illustrious triumvirate of the REFORMATION.

Calvin published the first specimen of his institution 18 years after Luther did his. He arose a father in Israel: he rose like a bright and morning

star: on beholding his glory the astonished nations proclaimed his fame. Who is this, who looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners; his neck like a tower of David, built for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men! His lips are like a thread of scarlet, and his speech is comely. He rose in the east, rejoicing as a strong man to run his race: he put on his armour; he was clad with zeal, as a cloak: he thundered his ire, and flashed lighting in the face of kings, who shed the blood of the innocent. He defied the host of papal dominion, and established his throne in Geneva. How beautiful were his feet on the mountains, publishing peace, proclaiming everlasting salvation to nations! Thousands and tens of thousands received his glad tidings with joy unexpressible and full of glory. He was all light, and in him there was no darkness: he was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. The language of his institution betrayed him the servant of the most high God: he was the first and the last Calvin. Since the angels of the New Testament fell asleep, multitudes of petty instructors have wrested his words to support their corruptions, because his fame was great in Israel; but in vain have they attempted to darken his council with words without knowledge. My antagonist has attempted to make him the patron of his iniquity.

D. D. I am able to prove from his own words, he was the great apostle of the catholic communion, and that it was his continual practice to exemplify his principles, by holding sacramental communion with all who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, of whatever nation or denomination under the sun, and moreover, that so generous and unbounded was his charity, he signed the Lutheran creed, while his adherents in the German dominions went by the name of crypto-calvinists, because upon the pain of death they durst not acknowledge their principles, because the Lutheran church was established and her principal rites and ceremonies were coerced by civil authority.

William. Sir, the great patron of our faith under God Almighty has not left the world depending upon his successors to defend his character against such slangs. I shall let him speak for himself. But previous to the introduction of the following quotations, I propose to select his leading designs upon this subject, in which he had so deeply interested himself.

1st. There can be no doubt but that as much as possible he laboured to be at peace with all men, upon the principle of gospel holiness, that he laboured as much as lay in his power to bring all the churches to the unity of the spirit, the bond of peace, yea, to such a unity that there would be no jar in point of principle to prevent sacramental communion, but being too well acquainted with human

nature to look for such a glorious event in his day, as our Lord said "there must be also heresies among you" for this emphatical reason, that they who are approved by God, as faithful and true in his eyes, may be honored and publicly recognised as martyrs for truth, and their testimony received by the present and future generations in the eyes of the saints. But not expecting to attain to the first, he aims at a second, not incompatible with the first, to promote, by counsel and conference, by public preaching and private conversation, such a conformity, that they might enjoy a federative connection, that they could recognize each other as churches of Jesus Christ, as distinct from the church of Rome, every one retaining his entire independence in government, discipline and communion; and upon this principle, no doubt, many might have acknowledged confession of each other's churches, as churches of Jesus Christ, where it was impossible for them to have sealed them by the highest act of communion, where there must be a recantation of their own principles or so base a compromise as can never be approved of by God or man. Of those who have tried such a union there never was an instance, but brought upon them the odium of both sides, and most frequently originated sectaries. Verily they have their reward; they sought the favor of men, and lost the favor of God and man. (1)

(1) See the history of Durus Mosh.

Well I know Calvin never did, (as the Doctor surmises without proof,) offer to sacrifice his principles for the sake of social communion. When the general assembly, the associate reformed, the associates, and the low Dutch church, held a council by delegation once a year in North America, did they commence their union by sacramental communion, or did they hold it out as an object of immediate design, or had they not laudable objects by comparing the points of dissension and furthering terms of reconciliation? (1)

But to proceed. The disputers on the four grand points of divinity, predestination, the eucharist, episcopacy and ceremonies, kept the church like a boiling pot, overflowing with abundance of scum many years. I shall exhibit Calvin's sentiments with respect to each, which will demonstrate how impossible it was for him, to reciprocate sacramental communion with his opponents, first upon the doc-

(1) It is worth a remark, that this council was dissolved at the instance of the Doctor, who alledged, it was in vain to hope for reconciliation with a church so gross, that they had suspended one of her members from the holy ministry for his attachment to Bible Psalms, and that that said Doctor should be a guide to a party that resuspended that same minister for no other cause.

It is true the deeds were too atrocious to be expressed in so many words, but the circumstances were as plain in the last as in the first. There never was a church that had an idol in it, but he who would not bow down and worship with her, must go into the furnace. Therefore I shall make no confederacy with such, and in the name of the head of the church, I command all the faithful to come out and be seperate.

trine of predestination, second in point of glory and dignity of what God, by scripture, requires us to believe concerning him, and therefore cannot possibly be ranked among the Doctor's matters of indifference.

“Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which he hath determined in himself, what would become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is fore-ordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestined either to life or to death. This, God hath not only testified in particular persons, but hath given a specimen of it in the whole posterity of Abraham, which should evidently shew the future condition of every nation to depend upon his decision. ‘When the Most High divided the nations, when he separated the sons of Adam, the Lord’s portion was his people; Jacob was the lot of his inheritance.’ The separation is before the eyes of all: in the person of Abraham, as in the dry trunk of a tree, one people is peculiarly chosen to the rejection of others: no reason for this appears, except that Moses, to deprive their posterity of all occasion of glorying, teaches them that their exaltation is wholly from God’s gratuitous love. He assigns this reason for their deliverance, that ‘he loved their fathers, and choose their seed after them.’ More fully in a-

nother chapter, ‘The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; but because the Lord loved you.’”

“We must now proceed to a second degree of election, still more restricted, or that in which the Divine grace was displayed in a more special manner, when of the same race of Abraham God rejected some, and by nourishing others in the Church, proved that he retained them among his children. Ishmael at first obtained the same station as his brother Isaac, for the spiritual covenant was equally sealed in him by the symbol of circumcision. He is cut off; afterwards Esau; lastly, an innumerable multitude, and almost all Israel. In Isaac the seed was called: the same calling continued in Jacob. God exhibited a similar example in the rejection of Saul, which is magnificently celebrated by the Psalmist; ‘He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim; but chose the tribe of Judah:’ and this the sacred history frequently repeats, that the wonderful secret of Divine grace may be more manifest in that change.”

“But I advise my readers to adopt no prejudice on either side, till it shall appear from adduced passages of Scripture what sentiments ought to be entertained. In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all

determined, both whom he would admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit: but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, judgement. In the elect, we consider calling as an evidence of election, and justification as another token of its manifestation, till they arrive in glory, which constitutes its completion. As God seals his elect by vocation and justification, so by excluding the reprobate from the knowledge of his name and the sanctification of his Spirit, he affords an indication of the judgement that awaits them."

"If they make a transition to persons where the inequality is more offensive to them, the example of Christ at least ought to deter them from carelessly prating concerning this sublime mystery. A mortal man is conceived of the seed of David: to the merit of what virtues will they ascribe his being made, even in the womb, the Head of angels, the only begotten Son of God, the Image and Glory of the Father, the Light of righteousness and Salvation of the world? It is judiciously remarked by Augustine, that there is the brightest example of gratuitous election in the Head of the Church himself, that it may not perplex us in the members; that he did not become the Son of God by leading a righteous life, but was gratuitously invested with this high honor,

that he might afterwards render others partakers of the gifts bestowed upon him. If any one enquire, why others are not all that he was, or why we are all at such a vast distance from him; why we are all corrupt, and he purity itself; he will betray both folly and impudence. But if they persist in the wish to deprive God of the uncontrollable right of choosing and rejecting, let them also take away what is given to Christ. Now it is of importance to attend to what the Scripture declares respecting every individual. Paul's assertion, that we were 'chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world,' certainly precludes any consideration of merit in us; for it is as though he had said; Our heavenly Father, finding nothing worthy of his choice in all the posterity of Adam, turned his views towards his Christ, to choose members from his body whom he would admit to the fellowship of life. Let the faithful, then, be satisfied with this reason, that we were adopted in Christ to the heavenly inheritance, because in ourselves we were incapable of such high dignity. He has a similar remark in another place, where he exhorts the Colossians to 'give things unto the Father, who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints.' If election precedes this grace of God, which makes us meet to obtain the glory of the life to come, what will God find in us to induce him to elect us? Another passage from this apostle will still more clearly express my meaning; 'He.

hath chosen us,' he says, 'before the foundation of the world, according to the good pleasure of his will, that we should be holy, and without blame before him:' where he opposes the good pleasure of God to all our merits whatsoever."

"We have the apostle's authority that the salvation of the faithful is founded solely on the decision of Divine election, and that that favour is not procured by works, but proceeds from gratuitous calling. We have also a lively exhibition of this truth in a particular example. Jacob and Esau are brothers, begotten of the same parents, still enclosed in the same womb, nor yet brought forth into light; there is in all respects a perfect equality between them; yet the judgement of God concerning them is different. For he takes one, and rejects the other. The primogeniture was the only thing that gave one a right of priority to the other. But that also is passed by, and on the younger is bestowed what is refused to the elder. In other instances, also, God appears always to have treated primogeniture with designed and decided contempt, to cut off from the flesh all occasion of boasting. He rejects Ishmael, and favours Isaac. He degrades Manasseh, and honors Ephraim."

"It must also be remembered, that to the land of Canaan was annexed the pledge of the celestial residence; so that it ought not to be doubted that Jacob was ingrafted with angels into the body of Christ, that he might be a partaker of the same

life. While Esau is rejected, therefore, Jacob is elected, and distinguished from him by God's predestination, without any difference of merit. If you inquire the cause, the apostle assigns the following; 'For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have compassion.' And what is this but a plain declaration of the Lord, that he finds no cause in men to induce him to shew favor to them, but derives it solely from his own mercy; and therefore that the salvation of his people is his work? When God fixes your salvation in himself alone, why will you descend into yourself? When he assigns you his mere mercy, why will you have recourse to your own merits? When he confirms all your attention to his mercy, why will you divert part of it to the contemplation of your own works? We must therefore come to that more select people, whom Paul in another place tells us 'God foreknew,' not using this word according to the fancy of our opponents, to signify a prospect, from a place of idle observation, of things which he has no part in transacting, but in the sense in which it is frequently used. For certainly, when Peter says that Christ was 'delivered' to death 'by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,' he introduces God not as a mere spectator, but as the Author of our salvation. So the same apostle, by calling the faithful to whom he writes, 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God,' properly expresses that secret predestination by which God

hath marked out whom he would as his children."

"Now let the supreme Master and Judge decide the whole matter. Beholding in his hearers such extreme obduracy, that his discourses were scattered among the multitude almost without any effect, to obviate this offence, he exclaims, 'All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me. And this is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing.' Observe, the origin is from the donation of the Father, that we may be given into the custody and protection of Christ."

"Predestination to those to whom the possession of glory has been already assigned: because it pleases the Lord to conduct his children from election to justification? For hence it will follow, that predestination to glory is rather the cause of predestination to grace, than the contrary."

"It is objected by some, that God will be inconsistent with himself, if he invites all men universally to come to him, and receives only a few elect. Thus, according to them, the universality of the promises destroys the discrimination of special grace."

"What they assume, I deny, as being false in two respects. For he who threatens drought to one city while it rains upon another, and who denounces to another place a famine of doctrine, lays himself under no positive obligation to call all men alike. And he who, forbidding Paul to preach the word in Asia, and suffering him not to go into Bithynia,

calls him into Macedonia, demonstrates his right to distribute this treasure to whom he pleases. In Isaiah, he still more fully declares his destination of the promises of salvation exclusively for the elect: for of them only, and not indiscriminately of all mankind, he declares that they shall be his disciples. Whence it appears, that when the doctrine of salvation is offered to all for their effectual benefit, it is a corrupt prostitution of that which is declared to be reserved particularly for the children of the Church. At present let this suffice, that though the voice of the gospel addresses all men generally, yet the gift of faith is bestowed on few. Isaiah assigns the cause, that 'the arm of the Lord' is not 'revealed' to all. If he had said, that the gospel is wickedly and perversely despised, because many obstinately refuse to hear it; perhaps there would be some colour for this notion of the universal call. The design of the prophet is not to extenuate the guilt of men, when he states that the source of blindness is God's not deigning to reveal his arm to them; he only suggests that their ears are in vain assailed with external doctrine, because faith is a peculiar gift. I would wish to be informed by these teachers, whether men become children of God by mere preaching, or by faith. Surely, when John declares that all who believe in God's only begotten Son, are themselves made the children of God, this is not said of all the hearers of the word in a confused mass, but a particular rank

is assigned to the faithful, 'which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' But they say, there is a mutual agreement between faith and the word. This is the case wherever there is any faith; but it is no new thing for the seed to fall among thorns or in a stony places; not only because most men are evidently in actual rebellion against God, but because they are not all endued with eyes and ears. Where then will be the consistency of God's calling to himself such as he knows will never come? Let Augustine answer for me: 'Do you wish to dispute with me? Rather unite with me in admiration, and exclaim, O the depth! Let us both agree in fear, lest we perish in error.' Besides, if election is, as Paul represents it, the parent of faith, I retort that argument upon them, that faith cannot be general, because election is special. For from the connection of causes and effects it is easily inferred, when Paul says, 'God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing according as he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world;' that therefore these treasures are not common to all, because God hath chosen only such as he pleased. This is the reason why, in another place, he commends, "the faith of God's elect;" that none may be supposed to acquire faith by any exertion of their own, but that God may retain the glory of freely illuminating the objects of his previous election. For Bernard justly observes, 'Friends hear, each one for himself,

when he addresses them, Fear not little flock, for to you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven. Who are these? Certainly those whom he hath foreknown and predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. The great and secret counsel has been revealed. The Lord hath known who are his, but what was known to God is manifested to men. Nor does he favor any others with the participation of so great a mystery, but those particular individuals whom he foreknew and predestinated to be his own.' A little after he concludes; 'The mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; from everlasting in predestination, to everlasting in beatification; the one, the beginning; the other knowing no end.' But what necessity is there for citing the testimony of Bernard, since we hear from the Master's own mouth, that 'no man hath seen the Father save he which is of God,' which implies, that all who are not regenerated by God, are stupefied with the splendour of his countenance. Faith indeed is properly connected with election, provided it occupies the second place. This order is clearly expressed in these words of Christ, 'This is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which believeth on the Son, may have everlasting life.' If he willed the salvation of all, he would give them all into the custody of his Son, and unite them all to his body by

the sacred bond of faith. Now it is evident, that faith is the peculiar pledge of his paternal love, reserved for his adopted children. Therefore Christ says in another place, 'The sheep follow the shepherd, for they know his voice; and a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.' Whence arises this difference, but because their ears are divinely penetrated? For no man makes himself a sheep, but is created such by heavenly grace. Hence also the Lord proves the perpetual certainty and security of our salvation, because it is kept by the invincible power of God. Therefore he concludes that unbelievers are not his sheep because they are not of the number of those whom God by Isaiah promised to him for his future disciples. Moreover, the testimonies I have cited, being expressly of perseverance, are so many declarations of the invariable perpetuity of election."

"They farther object, Were they not, by the decree of God, antecedently predestinated to that corruption which is now stated as the cause of condemnation? When they perish in their corruption, therefore, they only suffer the punishment of that misery into which, in consequence of his predestination, Adam fell and precipitated his posterity with him. Is he not unjust, therefore, in treating his creatures with such cruel mockery? I confess, indeed, that all the descendants of Adam fell by the Divine will into that miserable condition in which they are now involved; and this is what I asserted

from the beginning, that we must always return at last to the sovereign determination of God's will, the cause of which is hidden in himself. But it follows not, therefore, that God is liable to this reproach. For we will answer them thus in the language of Paul; 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?'"

"The Scripture proclaims, that all men were, in the person of their father, sentenced to eternal death. This, not being attributable to nature, it is evident must have proceeded from the wonderful counsel of God. The perplexity and hesitation discovered at trifles by these pious defenders of the justice of God, and their facility in overcoming great difficulties, are truly absurd. I inquire again, how it came to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of any remedy, should involve so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, but because such was the will of God. Their tongues, so loquacious on every other point, must here be struck dumb. It is an awful decree, I confess; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of man before he created him, and that he did foreknow it because it was appointed by his own decree. If any one here attacks God's foreknowledge, he rashly and inconsiderately stumbles. For

what ground of accusation is there against the heavenly Judge for not being ignorant of futurity? If there is any just or plausible complaint, it lies against predestination. Nor should it be thought absurd to affirm, that God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and the ruin of his posterity in him, but also arranged all by the determination of his own will. For as it belongs to his wisdom to foreknow every thing future, so it belongs to his power to rule and govern all things by his hand. And this question also, as well as others, is judiciously discussed by Augustine. ‘We most wholesomely confess what we most rightly believe, that the God and Lord of all things, who created every thing very good, and foreknew that evil would arise out of good, and knew that it was more suitable to his Almighty goodness to bring good out of evil than not to suffer evil to exist, ordained the life of angels and men in such a manner as to exhibit in it, first, what free-will was capable of doing, and afterwards, what could be effected by the blessings of his grace, and the sentence of his justice.

“Here they recur to the distinction between will and permission, and insist that God permits the destruction of the impious, but does not will it. But what reason shall we assign for his permitting it, but because it is his will? It is not probable, however, that man procured his own destruction by the mere permission, and without any appointment, of God. As though God had not determined what he

would choose to be the condition of the principal of his creatures. I shall not hesitate, therefore, to confess plainly with Augustine, 'that the will of God is the necessity of things, and that what he has willed will necessarily come to pass; as those things are really about to happen which he has foreseen.' Now, if either Pelagians, or Manichæans, or Anabaptists, or Epicureans (for we are concerned with these four sects on this argument,) in excuse for themselves and the impious, plead the necessity with which they are bound by God's predestination; they allege nothing applicable to the case. For if predestination is no other than a dispensation of Divine justice; mysterious indeed, but liable to no blame; since it is certain they were not unworthy of being predestinated to that fate, it is equally certain, that the destruction they incur by predestination is consistent with the strictest justice. Besides, their perdition depends on the Divine predestination in such a manner, that the cause and matter of it are found in themselves. For the first man fell because the Lord had determined it should so happen. The reason of this determination is unknown to us. Yet it is certain that he determined thus, only because he foresaw it would tend to the just illustration of the glory of his name. Whenever you hear the glory of God mentioned, think of his justice. For what deserves praise must be just. Man falls, therefore, according to the appointment of Divine

Providence; but he falls by his fault. The Lord had a little before pronounced 'every thing that he had made' to be 'very good.' Whence then comes the depravity of man to revolt from his God? Lest it should be thought to come from creation, God had approved and commended what had proceeded from himself. By his own wickedness, therefore, he corrupted the nature he had received pure from the Lord, and by his fall he drew all his posterity with him into destruction. Wherefore let us rather contemplate the evident cause of condemnation, which is nearer to us in the corrupt nature of mankind, than search after a hidden and altogether incomprehensible one in the predestination of God. And we should feel no reluctance to submit our understanding to the infinite wisdom of God, so far as to acquiesce in its many mysteries. There is a learned ignorance of things which it is neither permitted nor lawful to know, and avidity of knowledge is a species of madness."

Second, on the Eucharist.

"Others, who perceive it to be impossible to destroy the analogy of the sign and the thing signified, without subverting the truth of the mystery, acknowledge that the bread in the sacred supper is the true substance of that earthly and corruptible element, and undergoes no change in itself; but they maintain that it has the body of Christ included under it. If they explained their meaning to be, that when the bread is presented in the sacrament,

it is attended with an exhibition of the body of Christ, because the truth represented is inseparable from its sign; I should make little objection: but as by placing the body itself in the bread, they attribute ubiquity to it, which is incompatible with its nature, and by stating it to be *under the bread*, represent it as lying concealed in it; it is necessary to unmask such subtilties: not that it is my intention to enter on a professional examination of the whole of this subject at present; I shall only lay the foundation of the discussion, which will follow in its proper place. They maintain the body of Christ therefore to be invisible and infinite, that it may be concealed under the bread; because they suppose it to be impossible for them to partake of him, any otherwise than by his descending into the bread: but they know nothing of that descent of which we have spoken, by which he elevates us to himself. They bring forward every plausible pretext that they can; but when they have said all, it is evident that they are contending for a local presence of Christ. And what is the reason of it? It is because they cannot conceive of any other participation of his flesh and blood, except what would consist in local conjunction and contact, or in some gross enclosure."

Westphel censured, with the utmost severity, the variety of sentiments concerning the sacrament of the Lord's supper, that was observable in the reformed church, and maintained, with his usual

warmth and obstinancy, the opinion of Luther on that subject. This engaged Calvin to enter the list with Westphel, whome he treated with as little lenity and forbearance as the rigid Lutheran had showed towards the Helvetic churches. The consequences of this debate were, that Calvin and Westphel had each their zealous defenders and patrons; hence the breach widened, the spirits were heated, and the flame of controversy was kindled anew with such violence and fury, that to extinguish it entirely seemed to be a task beyond the reach of human wisdom or human power. These disputes were unhappily augmented in process of time, by that famous controversy concerning the decrees of God, with respect to the eternal condition of men, which was set on foot by Calvin, and became an inexhaustible source of intricate researches, and abstruse, subtil and inflexible questions. The most ancient Helvetic doctors were far from adopting the doctrine of those, who represent the Deity as allotting from all eternity, by an absolute, arbitrary, and unconditional decree, to some everlasting happiness, and to others endless misery, without any previous regard to the moral character and circumstances of either: their sentiments seemed to differ but very little from those of the Pelagians, nor did they hesitate in declaring, after the example of Zuingle, that the kingdom of heaven was open to all who lived according to the dictates of right reason. Calvin had adopted a quite different sys-

tem with respect to the divine decrees. He maintained, that the everlasting condition of mankind in a future world was determined from all eternity, by the unchangeable order of the Deity, and that this absolute determination of his will and good pleasure was the only source of happiness or misery to every individual. Passing Episcopacy, which no man in his senses believes was ever sanctioned by Calvin, but if there should, let them look into his institutions upon that subject, we shall proceed to exhibit his sentiments upon rites and ceremonies in the church. Those who hear me will not regret the length of the specimen. I wish the whole of it was wrote upon the hearts of all nations: it would quell the corrupting current of all the abominations of the earth. I wish my opponent was apprized of the danger of the wild gourds, and would, like the sons of the prophets, cry out there was death in the pot. But let us try Calvin's meal, it has had miraculous efficacy.

“But it is contended, that though the ecclesiastical laws should in a hundred instances be unjust and injurious to us, yet they ought all to be obeyed without any exception; for that the point here is not that we should consent to errors, but that we who are subjects should fulfil even the severe commands of our governors, which we are not at liberty to reject. But here likewise the Lord most happily interposes with the truth of his word, delivers us from such bondage, and establishes us in the

liberty, which he hath procured for us by his sacred blood, the benefit of which he hath repeatedly confirmed by his word. For the question here is not, as they fallaciously pretend, merely whether we shall endure some grievous oppression in our bodies; but whether our consciences shall be deprived of their liberty, that is, of the benefit of the blood of Christ, and shall be tormented with a wretched bondage. Let us however pass over this also, as if it were matter of little importance. But do we think it a matter of little importance to deprive the Lord of his kingdom, which he claims to himself in such a peremptory manner? And it is taken away from him, whenever he is worshipped with laws of human invention, whereas he requires himself to be honored as the sole legislator of his own worship. And that no one may suppose it to be a thing of trivial importance, let us hear in what estimation it is held by the Lord. ‘Forasmuch,’ he says, ‘as this people draw near me with their mouth, but their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men; therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.’ Again, ‘In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’ When the children polluted themselves by various idolatries, the cause of all the evil is attributed to the impure mixture

they made by devising new modes of worship in violation of the commands of God. Therefore the sacred history relates that the strangers who had been transplanted by the king of Babylon from other countries to inhabit Samaria, were torn in pieces and devoured by wild beasts, 'because they knew not the statutes or ordinances of the God of the land.' Though they had committed no fault in the ceremonies, yet vain pomp would not have been approved by God; but he did not fail to punish the violation of his worship, when men introduced new inventions inconsistent with his word. Hence it is afterwards stated, that being terrified with that punishment, they received rites prescribed in the law, yet because they did not worship the true God aright, it is twice repeated that 'they feared the Lord,' and at the same time that 'they feared not the Lord.' Whence we conclude, that part of the revenue which is paid to him consists in our worshipping him in a simple adherence to his commands, without the admixture of any inventions of our own. Hence the frequent commendations of pious kings, that they 'walked in all his commandments, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.' I go still further; though in some services of human invention there appears no manifest impiety, yet as soon as ever men have departed from the command of God, it is severely condemned by the Holy Spirit. The altar at Aház, the model of which was brought from Damascus, might seem to be an addition to the

ornaments of the temple, because his design was to offer sacrifices upon it to God alone, with a view to perform these services in a more splendid manner than upon the ancient and original altar; yet we see how the Holy Spirit detests such audacity, for no other reason than because all the inventions of men in the worship of God are impure corruptions. And the more clearly the will of God is revealed to us, the more inexcusable is our presumption in making any such attempt. Wherefore the guilt of Manasseh is justly aggravated by the circumstances of his having ‘built’ new ‘altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said, in Jerusalem will I put my name;’ because such conduct was like a professed rejection of the authority of God.

“Many persons wonder why the Lord so severely threatened that he would ‘do a marvellous work among the people,’ whose ‘fear toward him’ was taught by the precepts of men,’ and pronounces that he is ‘worshipped in vain’ by ‘the commandments of men.’ But if such persons would consider what it is to follow the word of God alone in matters of religion, that is, of heavenly wisdom, they would immediately perceive it to be for no trivial reason that the Lord abominates such corrupt services, which are rendered to him according to the caprice of the human mind. For though persons, who obey such laws for the worship of God, have a certain appearance of humility in this their obedience, yet they are very far from being humble

before God, to whom they prescribe the same laws which they observe themselves. This is the reason why Paul requires us to be so particularly cautious against being deceived by the traditions of men, and will-worship, that is voluntary worship, invented by men without the word of God. And so indeed it is, that our own wisdom, and that of all other men, must become folly in our esteem, that we may allow God alone to be truly wise. This is very far from being the case with those who study to render themselves acceptable to him by petty observances of human contrivance, and obtrude upon him, in opposition to his commands, a hypocritical obedience, which in reality is rendered to men. This was the conduct of men in former ages; the same has happened within our remembrance, and still happens in those places, where the authority of the creature is more regarded than that of the Creator; where religion, if religion it deserves to be called, is polluted with more numerous and senseless superstitions than ever disgraced the worst of paganism. For what could proceed from the minds of men, but things carnal, foolish, and truly expressive of their authors?"

D. D. Nothing can be more clear or consoling than their harmony in all the leading doctrines of the gospel, which are known at this day as the doctrines of the reformation. Around these, christians rallied with one heart and one soul: these were the basis of their union and communion. Nor is there

such a thing as a sectarian note of the church to be found, either among their public instruments of profession, or in any protestant writer of eminence, with whom the author is acquainted, whether of that or of a subsequent age.

William. Miriabile Dictu! What was the meaning of so many confessions, the Argentinens, Bohemic, Wirtemberg, Gallican, Anglic, Helvet, Scotie, compiled between the years 1530 and 1568? what was the reason of so much dissension that made Calvin groan so loudly in his letter to Cranmar, (1) I wish &c.

What was the reason of calling the Synod of Dort, and many others, which was labour in vain, to bring them only to federative union, that they might not as many of them had defiled themselves, had profaned their holy things by civil establishments, by which they put their necks under a yoke of bondage to the kingdoms of this world, that they might not persecute one another.

D. D. Certainly it was to enjoy the truth and the worship connected with it, that they broke communion with Rome. Their very acts declare it to be the communion with each other.

William. This is but a feeble declaration. Calvin broke of and became an advocate for justification by grace. Armenius broke of and became an advocate for justification by works. Were they qualified for communion at the Lord's table?

(1) Plca, page 187, quoted dialogue, page 193.

D. D. If it were not so, and so viewed, they would have been self convicted of having lost the church of God in their zeal to reform her, in as much as they would not have retained enough to erect a church.

William. Does the Doctor mean principles enough? I expect Calvin had enough without Arminius? Or does he mean people enough? One or two entitles to communion: I expect the five on Mount Taber were sufficient.

D. D. They maintained that the one church of God scattered over the whole earth, ought to have but one communion, so that whoever is in communion with one part of the catholic church is by this very fact in communion with every other part, and is to be acknowledged, received, and cherished. Lest I should be thought to exaggerate, let them speak for themselves.

William. Did they all think themselves, their neighbors, so perfectly conformed to the Divine Law, that they were all worthy of assembling at one communion, who professed faith in Christ? Or did they think they ought to be so? But if they actually had the purity, as they were of nations far extended and of language unintelligible one to another, was it practicable, consistent with church government and purity, in the ministerial brotherhood? Or if they were wild enough to think so, did they put it in practice or not, for an hour?

D. D. The Augsburg confession condemns the

the donatists for breaking off from the catholic church, for having bad men in her communion, and even in her ministry, they of course condemn all men who do as they did.

William. And therefore we must commune with bad ministers and men, no matter how nefarious, of any church who profess themselves a church of Christ! Do we not justify the church we commune with, and wish them God speed? Is this obeying the command, "Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest unto your souls:" or is it not the language of rebellion? But they said we will not walk therein, if we offer our sacrifice in all places, will we not be walking in the broad way? If we justify bad men, and bad ministers by communing with them, will we not be healing the heart of the daughter of *his* people, slightly saying peace, peace, where there is no peace? Or what has the faith of a true believer to do with the opinion of the Lutherans, (who were neither Presbyterians nor Evangelists) concerning the Donatists 1500 years ago?

D. D. The Belgic confession:—

William. The Doctor need not stagger me with the Belgic confession. I with avidity receive without exception every jot I ever found in it, it is just Calvin's institution thrown into the form of a confession. Its preface most beautifully delineates the catholic or invisible state of Christ's church, of

which he is the invisible everlasting head. It then proceeds, "We believe that the utmost diligence and prudence are to be used in determining, according to the word of God, which is that true church, since all the sects upon earth lay claim to the same title.

D. D. Some of the expressions are very strong: and to those not acquainted with the circumstances under which they were used, may look as if they required spotless perfection in a true church; or absolute agreements in all views of scriptural institutions. But the reader must not permit himself to be carried away by such a mistake; nothing could be further from the intention of this "good confession." Its object is to show the protestant church to be a true church in opposition to the church of Rome.

William. This is a strange perversion. By what authority did he say the *protestant* church? Did he call the protestant church, taken in all its latitude, to be the true invisible catholic church he had been describing? Did they all come up professionally to the standard character of the *Belgic* church? Or did he not leave some of them without the ranges? Did none of them attribute more to themselves, their institutions and traditions than to the word of God? Did they all submit themselves to the yoke of Christ? Then they brought no precepts of men with them, for no one who believes Christ the son of God, and the alone head of the church, will tempt

his spouse to commit adultery by yielding to the authorities of another Lawgiver, I think the Belgic had her eyes upon all those who with articles of their faith had mingled their worship with the precepts, rites and ceremonies of royalties, till they were conscious they were obnoxious to the censure of pure worshipers simply that they might obtain their indulgence, seeing they worshipped no other God than the God of Israel, such as not administering the sacrament according to his prescription, a touch at consubstantiation as ready as transubstantiation, as persecuting those who aim at holy conformity to his Law. Calvin well knew his followers suffered much from this quarter from protestants.

The simple design of ceremonies is to afford to subjects an opportunity to attest their love and loyalty to the sovereigns who impose them: they are of no virtue nor test of affection to any other. Now they are positive in exact proportion as they are void of reason in themselves to command obedience and derive their authority from the power who enjoins them, and in exact proportion as they are positive are they a test of obedience or disobedience. To meet this plainly, the first that were enjoined were but two, the one to threaten and the other to encourage. Now whether these authorities be divine or human, they are given for the same purpose, and acknowledged in themselves indifferent, yet when enjoined they entirely lose their indifference and are made the essentials of life in propor-

tion to the power and authority of the imposers, and this the world has found in all ages from authority divine and human. Now, that a civil prince should have a right to demand a test of love and obedience from his constituents cannot be denied, especially if he is just, ruling in the fear of the Lord, but that he should impose his ceremonies upon us in things pertaining to God, as if divine authority was in any wise deficient, is the provocation that stirs up his jealousy equal to any violation of divine law, and nothing more ridiculous, falacious or dangerously deceitful, than to make ceremonies matter of indifference, there is nothing cuts deeper. It is expressly by those tests that Jehovah is called a consuming fire. The image is taken from a jealous husband. If he finds his wife more attentive (though in small matters) to a stranger than to himself, will he make it a matter of indifference? I trow not.

The "Plea for sacramental communion upon catholic principles" has favoured us with 36 pages extracted chiefly from the divers prefaces of protestant confessions, in which they, each to the best advantage, recommended themselves for the liberality of their sentiments towards churches and individuals differing from their respective modes: in which they all distinguished themselves from the example they had before their eyes among their immediate predecessors, the Romans. That wherein they differed too far for one communion, they did not take it upon them to excommunicate each other

from the list of Christ's churches, but that they could so far forbear with them, with all their diversities, as to recognise them, in a general sense, churches of Jesus Christ, some more, some less pure, and a great desire of an increase of purity, till they would come to the unity of one pure faith in things becoming Godliness.

But how the Doctor gathered from one or all of them the novel plan of reciprocity of sacramental communion, while they were all of them distinct denominations and independent kingdoms, and all except the Calvinist more or less connected by establishments, and many of them bound by civil authority to observe the rites, and some of them so different in sentiments "that human society could scarcely exist," and others could not, for they were persecuted to hard prisons and to death. Now I say, how the Doctor gathered from these recommendations of their respective confessions of faith, they were all in close sacramental communion? If he had craft enough to make others believe it, I am sure he did not himself, or he would had many more infallible proofs to convince men of sense, but wherein he commits himself, he proceeds to tell of many councils, who assembled for the express purpose of forming a federative union as preparatory for extending sacramental communion, he extols the holy council of Dart as the most famous. This Synod was made up of delegate members commissioned by

governments, civil and sacred: the principal point of debate, was concerning the divine decrees. Some thought that God had only permitted the first man to fall into transgression without positively predestinating his fall. But others went much farther, who maintained that God, in order to exercise and display his awful justice and his free mercy, had decreed from all eternity the transgression of Adam. Those that held the latter sentiment were denominated supralapsarians to distinguish them from the Sublapsarians, who maintained the doctrine of permission. Now it is a notorious fact that the holy Synod condemned the supralapsarians and justified the sublapsarians. They justify the Calvinists and condemn the Armenians. Now a genuine Calvinist and a Supralapsarian are one: a Sublapsarian and an Armenian are the same. So judicious was this Synod to please all parties; but did they in the least degree acquire the renowned name of pacificator? No! they only whet the edge of resentment: (1) every church lost by the attempt: (see Mosheim on the subject.) And rarely have any general council fared better. Men sent by government must go by instruction and have their own honor to support, that they meet like the famous council of Nice, so rude that they need an emperor to prorogue their assembly. If their canons were sound they became a law that men conformed to, not for conscience sake,

(1) See Calvin's institutes.

but because it was a law. If they were unsound, many embraced them to be in favour with princes, and the innocent, who could not in conscience comply, are made subjects for persecution.

Now if the churches in that age could not agree, as they did not then, nor ever have since, about the greatest and most essential doctrines in theology, I ask in his holy name, how could they be in union and sacramental communion. The difference was as wide as if the dispute was, had the Godhead as much divinity in him as a man of common sense, or as he is acknowledged to be by the orthodox? Was he capable of having a design like a man? If he had, that design was one infinite and immutable purpose, concerning all things which have or ever shall have being, in all the relations they sustain to himself and one another. Now the man, who would not acknowledge this is assuredly too ignorant to set down at the Lord's table in any church. I challenge any man of common reflection to look either into the volume of creation, to the sun, the moon, and the stars he ordained to be his servants, or the volume of revelation where he manifests his moral perfections in the communication of his grace, abounds to the chief of sinners in making them partakers of a divine nature, and say the author had no design or purpose. If he had not, he could not be God. Who says there is no God? The fool, the mighty, the noble, the disputer of this world. The good Lord deliver us from such wicked and un-

reasonable men, who have not faith, for he who has not faith in the divine decrees is a wicked unreasonable man. The rod of God to purge the godly, let them have string and they would soon outstrip Cious the emperor, who claimed divine homage. Let them into the church, and you will see the flock scattered by wolves, (1) for only grant he had design, and that he is God infinite, the consequence is manifest, (2) *“but he is in one mind, and who can turn him!”* You have granted every thing that Paul and Calvin plead for on the subject.

But again, if he had no design, how could he have predicted parts of a design? In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die: the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, he shall be a wild man, and his hand against every man: cursed be Canaan a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren, and Babylon shall be a desolation &c. &c. Now did not the words of the prophets take hold upon us? O! Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? Is it not in vain that a man should have the soul and body of a man, who cannot see design in the God that made him? Now they who cannot agree about just principles will never agree about usages, rites, and ceremonies.

D. D. William must have reasoned himself out of his argument, and instead of defending his favourite point, sectarian communion, he had plunged himself into the inscrutable mysteries of pre-

(1) Acts xx, 29.

(2) Job xxiii, 13 v.

destination, a point acknowledged by all parties; too mysterious to be made a term of communion. "At a general Synod held at Tonneins, in May, 1614, they drew the outlines of a detailed plan for uniting the churches of divers nations into one, and the self same confession and doctrine, in which the following are conspicuous features:

I. To avoid the Armenian controversy; for they say that instead of disputes about religion "it were better to lay on the table before the assembled delegates the several confessions of the reformed churches, and that out of all these confessions, there might be framed one, in common to them all, in which divers points may be omitted, the knowledge whereof is not needful to our everlasting happiness, among which the controversy moved by Piscator, (viz. whether Christ's obedience was for himself, &c. (1) and several subtil opinions broached by Armenians, about free will, the saints perseverance, and predestination may, be reckoned.

II. To avoid contentions about ceremonies and church government, which they call quilllets. They were to open with a fast, and close with the celebration of the Lord's supper. On this plan for protestant union it may be remarked:

1st. That it did not contemplate merely the reciprocation of ministerial and christian fellowship in the several churches, for that had been in regular practice among protestants all along, the majority

(1) Mosh. v. 5, page 356.

of the Lutherans excepted. It went much further, even to the organization of the whole protestant interest in a public, federative union, each of the component churches retaining however its own independence and internal order. It was in fact Calvin's plan revived or rather prosecuted, for it does not appear to have been ever abandoned.

William. This is as substantial a demonstration that the churches were in the habitual practice of catholic communion, as when Cardinal Richelieu offered the most easy terms of reconciliation to the reformed church, that the two churches were in christian communion. (1) It is strange to me, the Doctor could not find, in a mount of church history, as many quotations as might have filled up the chasms of 400 pages, without stumbling upon the most irresistable argument to refute his opinion, especially when he gave us the original and the translation. Two things are conceded by the Plea, that sacramental communion is the highest act of communion, and that communion presupposes union. Yet this assembly aimed to go much farther, &c.

Now according to the above concessions, this union ought to have preceeded sacramental communion: but the Plea says it did not, for that had been in regular practice among protestants all along.

But again, how could it be in regular practice before there was any regulations between them? or

(1) Mosh. page 120, v. 5.

how did they arrive at the highest act of communion before they laid the foundation? was not this laying the cape stone first, or beginning where they should end? If they had been in regular communion all along, how did it require, that government should pass a law, if they agreed they should commune together? (1) But again, if the argument answers the design of the disputent, it proves that protestants had always been in regular communion. If I had been searching for proof I would selected it, to prove they were not at that time in regular reciprocal communion, and that they had to commence some of the first outlines of such a fellowship; if they had, as I believe they had, not any such a design. The Plea aware of this construction obviates it, by a point black assertion, without proof but his sacred testimony, *they had always been in regular communion*, and then I know not what he made of his argument, for to me it has neither minor, major nor consequitur in his favor. His cement is rather repulsive than cohesive, and more fulsome than either.

D. D. Then I would know of William what the assembly meant.

William. The design of the assembly is manifest. The clergy, except Calvin and his followers had involved the churches in such a wretched state of distraction by committing whoredom with the

(1) Plca, page 203.

civil powers, to exact more than free will offering of the people, that human society, could scarcely exist. They had sacrificed all the religious and natural rites of the bride, to another husband than her own: that unless she would yield to the base designs of a destroyer rather than her Saviour, she must abide the arbitrary penalty carnal despots would extend at pleasure, even to beheading, and burning what they called heretics. (1) Now, the design of the assembly is to ameliorate their circumstances, by some general federative union, if they should agree but in a few points, and so progress. But they were so much attached to their hobby horse, their mother had rode to death, they nor their seed, breed, nor generation, could be dismounted to this day. I am sorry their conduct compels me to such boldness of speech. But this connection has been the curse of curses: the first born of death, which shed every drop of the martyrs' blood, and no language can set forth the descry of the abominations; nor will hell's torment ever be sufficient to exceed the demerits of their guilt. If the most deformed giant should seize the most delicate mother, and with iron hands should arrest her babe from her arms, and extract the milk from her breast, to feed the lion whelps: it would be no comparison to the horrid deed of bartering away the natural and divine rights of the saints, refined by

(1) See Neal's history of the Puritans, v. 1. page 64.

the blood and spirit of the son of God, till the world was no more worthy of them, into the hands of wicked rulers, who glory in nothing more than to display their power, and make their wrath known against those whose faces show as the face of an Angel, and whose expiring voice cried aloud, *“Lord lay not this sin to their charge.”*

Now, when the church was laying in this nefarious bed of adultery, and princes who set up for the supreme head of the church, and were acknowledged as such, commissioned the clergy to attend the general Synod, and vote as they instructed them, could any man in his senses conceive that the independent kingdoms and churches, as contradictory in articles of faith as in rites and ceremonies, were in and always had been in the regular habit of ministerial and christian fellowship, and all their laity in close sacramental communion, on catholic principles. But it is indecent to triumph over a conquered enemy.

D. D. By what authority does William vilify the divines of the reformation, as being too obsequious to princes?

William. Because, whenever a move was made for calling a council, it appears from the custom of the times it was natural to apply to their highness for liberty, power, or influence, as to the King of Kings. Had they applied to the latter they had not always laboured in vain: “Mr. Salmar after con-

ference with Lord Duplessis to write in their name and by their authority on the subject to the princes and divines of Germany." The brethren of Dauphny, "desiring union with the Germans, they wrote letters to des Gourdon, and de Fontaines, in London, entreating them to co-operate in effecting this holy union, and that princes might be engaged to put forth their authority therein, that so the protestant churches might be united in one and the same doctrine." "This union was quickened by a proposal by King James the VI. to the French churches, for uniting the churches of divers nations into one and the selfsame confession.

But passing this subject, I have a few general remarks to make, in the said prefaces quoted by the Doctor.

Three out of five beg indulgence in the use of their respective ceremonies, that is, I suppose they intended, that those who used different rites or who used no human precepts should not despise them on account of theirs. The request implies guilt of no small aggravation; they were perfectly conscious that it was by the positive institutions of the princes, imposed upon the worshippers, that the Roman hierarchy acquired its nefarious and irresistable power, that made men cry 'out who is able to make war with the beast? for it was purely by such tests of subjection to their lordly dominion, that they acquired the blasphemous arrogance of setting in the throne of God, accounting themselves gods of the

nations. Now, if they brought out with them the same customs which wrought the destruction of their fathers, could they be innocent in their own eyes? No, if they had, they would not have begged indulgence in this matter; after the example of Naaman, the Syrian, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. (1) There is no man nor church of God, who boldly, in defiance of death, maintains the purity of divine Law, will beg indulgence: he is exalted far above that. Lest these assertions should appear too bold, as we are about the core of iniquity by which the serpent taught rebellion and brought ruin to the universe, we had better delay a little, although it should have the aspect of degradation and enquire. There are three words, two of which are confounded, out of which the third becomes the most pestilent and pernicious evil with which we are visited. The word charity is adopted in the room of forbearance: they are both duties enjoined, and both essential to the man of God; but put the one for the other and the whole system is inverted. The word charity in scripture in its native simplicity, implies all that can make a man like God, and is an unlimited grace. It is that divine affection which the man created after the divine image has to the objects of divine love: so that the spirit of God and the spirit of a true believer are congenial in loving the same things, and hating the same

(1) ii. Kings c. v, 18 verse.

things, and was literally practised by Jesus, when he tabernacled with us, and we beheld his glories as the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth. He was anointed above his followers, because he was a lover of truth and a hater of falsehood; and as our head of influence, he constrains us to the same practice. Now put this for forbearance (although true forbearance cannot exist without it,) and it is impossible to work a greater confusion in theology. Forbearance or long suffering is the offspring of charity, yet it is itself far from being charity. It is a limited gracious disposition in the mind, which is charity or charitable. It has for its object the salvation of a weakling in Christ. Where a warfare is carried on between grace and corruption, there is something become visible in both where the flesh wars against the spirit, by which the believer is often foiled, is cast down seven times a day, and seven times a day his mercy lifts him up. Now being a child of God by regeneration but a feeble babe, crying Abba, father, God is to him long suffering and forbears to pour his wrath upon him, for he is not under the law but under grace, and sees in him, as it were, the company of two armies, the one the object of his love, the other of his hatred. His pity makes him bear long with him, but at the same time will not suffer him to pass on without instruction or correction. The keepers of the vineyard being of the same mind with the husbandman, loves the child and will not spare the rod. He will not see sin

lie upon him: he will in any wise reprove him: if the old man proves stubborn, he will persist in his discipline, teaching and correcting, while there is hope. He will not weary in well doing: this disposition is properly called forbearance. Now, put forbearance for charity: as charity is an unlimited grace and "*bears all things,*" it must love all men and bury all infirmities with all zeal for truth, in that unlimited affection called universal benevolence, out of this perversion springs up the word indulgence. It so happened in old times, that he who sat next to the emperor had the principal power of granting it to applicants, who alledged the sentences of censure from inferior courts were too severe. They applied to his sacred highness for a remittance or absolution, which he always granted by an act of indulgence, (as happened last session in the A. R. Philadelphia, without any consession from the criminal condemned in the inferior court and twice in the superior, and instead of a censure, that his triumph might be the greater, they created him the accuser,) which made friends to the extremes of his great and vast dominions, and finding pleasure and security, the merchandize good, it became a staple property, they made a trade of, till they swept the wealth of nations. The rise in the price was the first thing which roused the resentment of Luther. But the present novel system has something contrary to all men, as well as themselves. In old times, the harlot received wages, but the

Jewish harlot hired her lovers, and received no wages; but this universal benevolence, which I oppose, grunts her indulgence without fee or rewards except political, and that they may afford it the better, they have dispensed with the expence of church government, the study of systematical divinity, lest they should find foundation of dissention and the heavier expense of supporting sectarian churches. Now, suppose a man, in the moderate sense of the word charity, should pretend he had such charity for me, that he could esteem and receive me as a faithful minister of Christ. I would consider it a profession altogether hypocritical, or that he did not believe a word of his own system; Are we duly qualified to sit down at the Lord's table and swore fealty to the same articles?

DIALOGUE VI.

Same Persons.

· SCENE, CONTINUED.

D. D. William remembers the act in favor of the Lutheran brethren. Application is made by the province of Burgundy, in France, whether the faithful of the Augustine confession might be permitted to contract marriages in our churches, and to pre-

sent children in our church unto baptism without a previous abjuration of those opinions held by them, contrary to the belief of our churches: he sees how readily it was granted by the Synod.

William. I am my opponent's debtor for bringing to my remembrance an argument well suited to my purpose.

First, There is a hard thing asked and as hardly granted, reducing both churches to great difficulties requiring the interference of a Synod to determine the legality of the thing demanded on the one hand; they require in immunities without conformity, which was an outrage upon the established order, on the other hand, it is granted, if they will bind themselves not to teach their peculiar tenets. Now, in as much as it required the investigation and an act of Synodical authority, it is manifest it was not a matter of common practice among the protestant reformers, (the Lutherans except as above,) for the Lutherans are the applicants rigidly handled and still more lax than good government would justify: for we have but a poor security for chastity, if we take fire in our bosom upon the promise it will not burn. I make a very pitiful sponsor for children I represent; when I bind myself by solemn compact, I never will directly nor indirectly teach the articles of my faith to them that are denied by the church, who receives me unto her communion and as deficient a husband, as a father, to marry a wife, and never let her know my principles. Yet

this is the Doctor's model for intercommunion, and the best he has presented to our view, because accompanied with some preliminaries.

D. D. I have yet some remarks to offer in favor of catholic communion, from the philanthropy of the members of the Synod of Dort. "The first man they place in the pulpit is Dr. Joseph Hall, a high, toned Episcopalian, then Dean of Worcester and afterwards Bishop of Norwich. He preached to them from Eccles. VII. 16 In his sermon he calls the Synod thus composed, a most holy assembly of the prophets. The church of Holland, he salutes as the pure spouse of Christ, and then exclaims; we are brethren, let us also be associates; what have we to do with the disgraceful titles of Remonstrants, Conta-remonstrants, Calvinists, Armenians? We are christians, let us also be of one soul: we are one body, let us also be of one mind. By that tremendous name of Almighty God, by the pious and gentle bosom of our common mother, by your own souls, by the most holy compassions of Jesus Christ our Saviour, aim at peace, brethren, enter into peace, that laying aside all prejudice, &c. we may all come to a happy agreement in the same truth. On these extracts it may not be unseasonable to remark.

1st. The reformed churches, episcopal and non-episcopal had no scruple in those days, of joining each other in acts of public worship, according to their respective usages.

H h

2d. The views and feelings expressed by Doctor Hall corresponded entirely with those of the whole Synod, for they called his discourse most learned and accurate, and when this venerable assembly was breaking up, the members mutually gave each other the right hand of brotherly communion, and parted with embracings and tears. Can a shadow of doubt remain, after the testimony of such a fact? Is it a tolerable question, whether such men, or the ministers and members they represented, would set down together at the Lord's table. As to the church of Holland, it is well known that she practised the liberal communion, of which those illustrious deputies sanctioned the principle, and set the example for her members, before this communicated with the Brownists, the English independents who fled from ecclesiastical oppression in their own country, although by a singular inconsistency the Brownist teachers would not consent to reciprocate the communion any farther than in prayer and in hearing the word, and that in the face of their own protestation, wherein they say we account the reformed churches as true and genuine. We profess communion with them in the sacred things of God, and as much as in us lies to cultivate it: an inconsistency which it is heartily to be wished had stood alone, and deeply to be regretted, has been kept in countenance by the professions and practice of latter days, but which at that time was equalled only by the inconsistency of the government of England, in sup-

porting, cherishing, comforting, honoring the non-episcopal church abroad, and discouraging, harrasing, crushing the very same sort of churches at home."

William. I think my opponent labours hard to bring forth a supposition, and in the mean time introduces as many inconsistencies as he lays to the British and Brownists. For his supposition, has he produced the most distant shade of evidence, that they or the people they represented, then or ever after, communed together? Indeed I do not, as already observed, believe it was the design of the meeting had they settled the point of debate in which they only widened the dissension, it was as we have proved in the nature of things impracticable. If they had united all the protestant churches, in the highest acts of communion, would history have been silent on so astonishing an event? Would they have had government, or would they have had none? if they had, it must have been as massy as the church of Rome: if every individual had an interest in it, they must have had one supreme, and as many grades of inferiors as would protect the rights of the feeblest representee: every culprit could appeal from court to court, till deposed in the supreme, or from the Hierarch obtained absolution as above: if they now reduce them to one independent supreme, then I say they were without government. If they commune in common, this would introduce such absurdities, as the fathers of reformation never thought

of; I as a stranger, admitted where I have no representative, must stand in a very degraded light beneath my fellow citizens of the household of God. When God would degrade to the lowest state of human existence, the descendants of Ham, for mocking his father, that they might learn obedience at the expence of their liberty, they shall never have the honor of a father, they shall never have authority over their own children, they shall never enjoy any representative in the government of any nation above a savage where there is only anarchy. When God would degrade his peculiar people to the lowest state of religious polity for their perversion of law and testimony, by which they fell through the power of unbelief, the sceptre of government should depart from Judah, they should never have a king, a governor, a ruler, or any office in government, nor any representation in any civilized nation. The outward court, measure it not, for it is given to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles; their lives, their property and their rights, just held at the option of the nations among they sojourn. As David said to the king of Moab, let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. We have God bespeaking lodging for his outcast with Moab, let my outcast dwell with thee, Moab, be thou a covert to them, from the face of the spoiler. Till the 3d century, the primitive christians had no representation in civil government, they could drag them

as bullocks without a legal advocate to open his lips in their defence. What armed America with the rage of a bear bereaved of her whelps, but the very suggestion that Britain would lay tribute upon her without first granting her representation? For this reason God has put honor upon government, that men might duly appreciate its importance. Will I have communion with a church, when or where I cannot have any share in the honorary range of government, and solemnly covenant and engage subordination to all the laws and regulations of her establishment? Will I couch to bear burdens like an ass, and let strangers that I know not, exact of me at their pleasure to express the extent of my unlimited charity? Did Calvin or Luther thus lay down the principles of government? Now, what has the Doctor to balance all this? Because Joseph Hall a high toned episcopalian, then dean of Worcester and continued one, for he was afterwards bishop of Norwich, (and if in unison with his colleagues bound to persecute the non-conformists;) called the Synod a most holy assembly of the prophets. I think holy prophets was high enough, without most holy. He called the church of Holland the pure spouse of Christ, and then exclaimed we are brethren, &c. What have we to do with the disgraceful titles of Remonstrants &c. (but he takes good head not to say disgraceful names of

bishops, arch bishops, episcopians and conformists,) we are christians, let us all be of one soul; by that tremendous name, let us come to a happy agreement. What would an impartial judge conclude, but that the dean intended they should, not almost but altogether, be as he was, and he would be as they would be.

I. Inconsistency. 1st. Member "that the reformed churches, episcopal and non-episcopal, had no scruple in those days of joining with each other in acts of public worship, according to their respective usages: because they called the dutch church beloved brethren. And this may be taken an official expression of the views and feelings of reformed Europe; when they parted they gave each the right hand of brotherly communion, and parted with tears." 2d. Member "the English independants," that is the non-episcopalians, "previous to this had fled from ecclesiastical oppression in their own country." (1)

II. Incon. Mem. 1st. He does not pretend to say they communed together over all Europe, before and after said assembly, but modestly, as most fit asks the question concerning the thing supposed: is it a tolerable question, whether such men or the ministers and members of the churches they represented, would not sit down together at the Lord's table?

(1) Plea, page 211,

2nd. Member. As to the church of Holland, 'tis well known that she practised liberal communion. Here he boldly asserts that which he just now made a supposition, and the point of debate which he had not proved; "those illustrious deputies sanctioned the principal and set an example."

3d. Incon mem. "the Brownist teachers would not consent to reciprocate the communion any further than in prayer and hearing the word." Now, compare this with the 1st. inconsistency, 1 mem. and with the last in the paragraph, discouraging, harrassing, crushing the very same sort of churches at home. Again, he bitterly complains the independents were inconsistent, because they could not recognise the church of England the church of Christ, and yet could not go into full communion. The Doctor says, this is an inconsistency which it is heartily to be wished had stood alone, and deeply to be regretted, has been kept in countenance by the professions and practice of latter days. The Doctor regrets it, but no wonder, for by yielding this point, he has to give up his argument of 400 pages. But who art thou, O man, that judgeth another? The Doctor and his satellites, who vowed and swore they would sing no other songs but those contained in the book of Psalms, in any of the Associate Reformed churches, but could sing profane songs as merry as other people, when they got among the churches who were blest with the same libertine principles. This inconsistency was exceed-

ed by none, except his royal highness, the furious Jehu, who abroad could say to Jehonadab, come with me and see my zeal for the Lord, nevertheless when he went home he worshipped his idol calf. (1) But I think without a degradation, I can deliver the independents from their inconsistency. The hour Henry the eighth renounced the papal dominion, he claimed and proclaimed himself the head of the church, instead of the pope or even Christ Jesus, and he and his parliament formed the ceremonies and her articles of faith. This prerogative became an annoyance to the virgin from that day to this. While the bishops were enforcing conformity to the kings, papal usages, such as the surplice, the square cap, prayers for the dead and the doctrine of consubstantiation, the sign of the cross in baptism, the independents refused conformity: but because the reformation had commenced, and in many things was happily progressing, they could perceive in it the hand of God, working their deliverance manifold: they could not oppose it as a reforming work, but cherish it as such, but as it yet needed the knife, they could not join with them in the sealing ordinances: their protestation was, we account the reformed as true and genuine, we profess communion with them in the sacred things of God, and as much as in us lie, we cultivate it. Now, it is an easy matter for me to judge an episcopalian

(1) 2. Kings x, c.

a genuine believer in Jesus, and yet refuse to join with him in sealing ordinances: and this embraces all the dispute between the Doctor and myself. I can conceive of a conscientious Episcopalian founding his faith on the genius of the Israelitish theocracy, where the king and the prophet was found in one man, as David, the priest and the prophet as in Samuel, though never the king and the priest in one person. I can conceive of his faith being confirmed in this by the primitive bishops, ordained by the apostles. They held their office in their particular parish, until their flocks became too numerous for personal communion, in that case, the bishop with his elders elected and ordained one of their members, his colleague, called a presbyter and so increased them until they become like the seven Asiatic churches and the senior minister still holding the precedencey as we hold our moderator. (1) I can conceive of his believing it to belong to his office, from the above theocracy and the apostle's prohibition of brethren going to law, and requiring their wise men to judge in lesser matters, who were to judge angels and men, to conceive it his duty to act the part of a chief magistrate in the church over which he presides. Now while I can believe a good man to be no farther enlightened in the simplicity of the gospel system, I can love him as a child of God, but I cannot justify him in his error,

(1) Mosh. cen. 1, page 2. Dialogue, page 177.

I cannot join with him in sealing ordinances, where my act is a declaration before heaven and earth, that there is but one faith between us, as the apostolic terms of communion are, "that we may, with one mind and one mouth, glorify God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1)

"Nothing can be more agreeable to every sensible and ingenious person, than our author's candid, tender, and respectful treatment of those from whom he differs in judgment more or less widely, while at the same time his aim and endeavor is, by a coercive propriety of arguments, to persuade his readers to relinquish all such tenets as he thinks erroneous or unscriptural."

"It is certainly both our duty and our happiness, to cultivate, with the most vigilant application, and unwearied assiduity, the temper of meekness, love, and candour; and indeed they are the very badge of Christianity: but I can no where find it made necessary to a Christian spirit, or to a fervant love to our brethren, and a desire of their welfare, that a man should become indifferent to any doctrine, or ordinance, which he hath received on conviction. We may certainly love our neighbours as men, even when we cannot judge them to be saints; and we may love them as Christians, even when we think they are in many things to be blamed, and

(1) Romans chap. xv, verse 6.

(2) Hall's gospel.

even testified against; nay, I hope, we may heartily forgive them as enemies, notwithstanding all their bitterness and rancour against us, as narrow-minded, uncharitable, &c.

“A Christian’s putting on charity, and wishing well to all that love the Lord Jesus Christ, is surely no way inconsistent with his holding fast at the same time his own professions without wavering, and even contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. ‘Charity and zeal (says Dr. Wortherspoon) are so far from opposing or hindering, or even limiting each other in their exercise, that they strengthen each other in principle, and direct each other in their application. The more fervent love I have for my fellow-creatures and my fellow-Christians, it will but excite my zeal to promote their benefit, by endeavouring to convince them of any dangerous mistake, and deliver them from the dominion of every vicious practice. At the same time, this love will naturally produce forbearance where it is lawful and proper: because, if I love any person sincerely, I will judge of him candidly, and not impute any bad sentiment or practice to him, without necessity. It will prevent us from interfering with others where we ought not, and will urge us to activity and diligence where the case seems really to call for it.”

So I can judge of an independent being so harassed by the Episcopalian that he might get at a secure distance from his camp, he has rushed into the

opposite extreme and lost sight of the presbyterian which I believe to be the only divine institution, as infallibly supported by Hall's gospel church. Now, I can believe the Independent a genuine church of Jesus Christ. But I cannot join her in sealing ordinances though I could join her in prayer or preaching. I love the presbyterian so long as she multiplies till presbytery is convinced, the government may be equally preserved in rights and purity by dividing and subdividing into several presbyteries and can meet in the synodical form which is only coming together upon her original plan as her edification may require. This is the highest court I ever wish to see. Whenever they become so massy as to form a general court of delegated members, it is too far removed from private individuals, having a fair representation. I think they are dangerous and unwarranted by the word of God, or the practice of the primitive christian churches, and have their authorities by bishops and kings; the fruit has proved the tree was bad. Either branch of the presbyterian churches in North America is too far spread to make one independent church. If they would divide into several independent Synods, as their highest court, all the individuals might enjoy full representation, and every branch of Christ's government be executed with equal edification, with more simplicity and promptitude, and all the members have latitude sufficient to extend their communion in the bounds of their respective independent dominions.

ions, and never to go beyond it where they have no representation, for I would not hold sacramental communion with any church however pure, till I should become a member with them in all branches of communion, and can recognize myself that church's property exclusively, and all that is theirs mine. There is no more need that all believers should belong to one visible communion, than that all the world should have but one earthly king, or the churches one supreme pope. A 5th inconsistency, is Hall's address, if it meant any thing, it meant that the reformed churches were not in the habit of reciprocal communion. What were denominations but distinct communions? A communion is a collection of professors, who speak the same things in the ears of men, and are of one mind in the sight of God: now the apostle, according to Hall's gospel church, makes these two points essential to christian communion. Now, is it possible for a man of common reflection to conceive that the reformed churches spoke the same and were of one mind. When Hall says, they wear the disgraceful names of those he mentioned, and those he did not, such as supralapsarians and sublapsarians, such as sacramentarians and consubstantarians, episcopal and non-episcopal, Presbyterians, Socinians, and Universalists, were all those speaking the same things as they believed, and were they of one mind? The Doctor has boldly asserted, over and over, and it has been all his labor to prove, they did without

any scruple. If they did, they must have been a most preposterous set, and their names ought long ago to have been blotted from the page of church history. If they were not, the Doctor has found a false witness, and as such is a scandalous person, and ought not to continue in the ministry. Let him read Rankins second process, page 22.

Sixth remark, upon Haws testimony concerning Bates. He was for a free communion of all such as pleased, of whatever persuasion, who differed only in extra essential matters, and in this design, he rigorously presisted as long as there was hope, desisting only when it appeared hopeless. I think the will and pleasure of a poor sinner, is but a poor standard for a mixed multitude, and would gain but little credit where we have the revealed will of God, ought to be known, and the imperious command of God, the alone authority, and the act, an act of obedience to God only; besides if his faith was a divine faith, he ought not to have deserted, to this compromising principle was pursued by Durus for 40 years, and he declined it, when his hope failed him. See Mosheim. But at most, this is only hearsay testimony, from an episcopalian, concerning an excellent presbyterian. These thoughts I never found in Bates; but every thought, moved to a compromise with an establishment made upon the penalty of death, was a sword to a non-conformist. Result. But all this goes to prove they did not in-

tercommune, and that Bates died in despair, that he would never see it.

Seventh inconsistency, comparing page 216 and 274. "Had not the price of their peace in the establishment, been rated so high as the perjury of their souls before God, they had never been separated from the church of England. As it was, they did not retire, they were driven from her bosom, and they have thus left upon record their testimony of martyrdom, to the sacredness of that communion, which belongs to the church of God, and to the criminality of dividing it upon slight pretences. Were the terms of communion with the episcopal church so expressive, that no man could hold communion in it without perjuring his own soul before God? And did they continue in it at this expence, till they were driven from her bosom? And yet the Doctor calls said church the church of God, for the sake of communion with whom these worthies suffered the martyrdom of perjuring their souls and afterwards of expulsion, because they accounted the rupture of communion, a worse evil than the scandals against which they remonstrated. If the scandals remonstrated against were sinful, as they undoubtedly were, I marvel at their decision, 274. After all this, the Doctor exhibits a long list of his worthies, advocating communion with the episcopal church; from page 275 till page 300, all in opposition to the consciencious, who could not commune

at the above expense. My limits will not afford but a few as a specimen.

Samuel Clark, unable to subscribe the act of uniformity, "laid aside his ministry and attended the church of England, both as a hearer and a communicant. For as he himself says, he durst not separate from it; nor was he satisfied about gathering a private church out of a true church, which he judged the church of England to be."

Richard Wavel. It was his principle and constant practice, to receive all whom Christ had received, without any debate about things of a doubtful nature.

John Jones. He told some of his friends who were for separating from their brethren, because they were not altogether of their own principles, that, "for his part, he would be one with every body that was with Christ." Admirable sentence!! Worthy to be written as a motto, in letters of gold over the doors of every place of christian worship. Upon the whole it is manifest the Doctor is much in favour of establishment. Query, was this the reason he visited England the second time, that he might restore to the British head of the church, what he lost and could not recover by two battles? No doubt if he should succeed by his British edition, for catholic communion, missionary and bible societies, the king would recompense him with the key his father Harry stole from St. Peter. (1)

(1) See the speech delivered by the Doctor, in England, at the 10th

Eighth inconsistency is, the Doctor says, we are to hold communion with all who hold the head. He has never yet said the episcopal church does not hold the head, yet he says, when they arrived at the extreme limit of forbearance, communion with the episcopal church was not worth the sacrifice of truth and honesty. When the terms of conformity become sinful, there was no room for hesitation. Now, I wonder if communion does not imply conformity, and if ever conformity could have been without sin, when the best blood of the nation was shed in abundance, rather than commune with her in her papal ceremonies. Could any church under heaven ever be innocent in compelling men to profess faith, in articles they never could pretend were of God, and commune with her upon pain of confiscation, imprisonment and death? Why did they not condemn men to death, because they did not regenerate, justify, and sanctify themselves? It will surprise many and well it may as a rare, and perhaps unequalled exhibition of sound scriptural doctrine in the Doctor, who has laboured hard for five or six years, and wrote four hundred pages in vindication of his favourite plea, to hear him acknowledge "that communion with the episcopal church was not worth the sacrifice of truth and honesty."

anniversary meeting of the British and foreign Bible Society. *Christian Herald*, vol. iii. Sept. 6th, 1817, no. 24.

Now, has the Doctor ever denied, much less proved the episcopal church did not belong to the catholic church, or cease to be the church of Christ? If not, then hear what the Doctor says, plea 123. "In the name of the Lord Jesus! it would be inconceivable how the idea of one catholic church can be dissevered from that of one catholic communion; it is a desperate assault upon the sense of consistency, such a laviathar of a paradox, that the faculties of poor human nature sink beneath it;" yet he here asserts the very same supposed absurdity. Further, without evidence, he asserted the Novatians, &c. who set up a restrictive communion, acted upon the avowed principle that the catholic church, from which they withdrew, had ceased to be the church of Christ, and on the other hand, they, who condemned the Separatists, held that by the very fact of their separate communion, they threw themselves out of the church of God and ceased to be a part of her, and that it is idle to pretend that the public unity of the Church, can be made to consist with such division, but here the Doctor's rare honest confession is, that the episcopal church is, and ever was from the commencement of the reformation, acknowledged, the church of Christ. Now unless the Doctor will prove Christ had no people in that church, he is forced to acknowledge his inconsistent idea of one catholic church, being dissevered from that of one catholic communion, and that communion which was not worth the sacrifice

of truth and honesty. I thank the Doctor for his candor.

Again, the Doctor highly applauds as an unequalled exhibition of sound scriptural doctrine, the very assembly who prepared the Westminster confession. But notwithstanding all their convictions and complaints of the abuses and corruption in the discipline, worship, and government of the established church, they nevertheless remained steadily in her fellowship; nor did they leave it until they were cast out by that cruel act for non-conformity which would not allow them to mourn and submit, but required them also to approve. Let us for a moment examine for the virtue of this unequalled scripture doctrine. 2nd. Examine the difference between mourning, submitting and approving.

1st. See the 20th article, "that the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith." On this a dissenter said, "if the church hath really this authority and power, then objections of the Dissenters about sponsors, the cross in baptism, kneeling at the Lord's table, and every other thing, are impertinent and vain. The church having the power, ought reverently to be obeyed, then she might add as many ceremonies and articles as she pleased, and oblige her members to believe and practice, if not the power usurped is reprehensible, and submission, a transgression of "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free."

But let us enquire for the constitution of this church, with whom there is such unexampled virtue in holding regular communion. The bishops and clergy had no hand in forming this establishment or in ordering its rites and articles of faith. It was done, not only without, but in opposition to them. In the first of Queen Elizabeth, the Parliament alone established the Queen's supremacy, and the common prayer book, in spite of all opposition from the bishops, in the house of lords: and the convocation then sitting, were so far from having any hand in those church acts for reformation, that they presented to the Parliament several propositions in behalf of the tenets of popery, directly contrary to the proceedings of the Parliament: then the church of England is and was a parliamentary church; a mere creature of the state. Now, how the worthies acquired so much honor in the Doctor's eye, by remaining steadily in her fellowship, I know not; whatever they gained among the great men of this world, I know it was an abomination with God and all the worthy martyrs, who would not accept of deliverance from death upon the condition of acknowledging their worship to be of God, who had for their support Matthew xxiii chapter, 8, 9, 20 and 25th verses.

2d. What was the difference between mourning, submitting and approving?

They maintained regular communion with them when they knew their abominations, which made

them mean. But they could not approve of their articles! Now, I think their communion with them was the most solemn act of approbation, and was surely understood so by the church, who received them, in the eyes of human spectators, and surely in the eyes of the Doctor, for he acknowledges that communion presupposes union. But perhaps the church found out that they relied upon mental reservation, and required oral confession.

D. D. Twelve years after the assembly, viz. 1660, the well meaning presbyterians, that is the presbyterians of the most moderate and catholic spirit, offered the episcopalians a compromise system in which they would suffer them to wear the distinctive titles of archbishop, bishop, presbyter. The surplice, the cross in baptism, and kneeling at the communion, should be left indifferent; they were content to set aside the Assembly's confession and let the articles of the church of England take place. These waited upon king Charles, who received them very affably, made such a declaration as excited them about London to return him an address of thanksgiving.

William. Indeed, sir, I cannot read this story without being grieved with pity and shame, that these catholic presbyterians so committed their cause and themselves to the reproach of their enemies. The king and the bishops decoyed them on to

concede to their terms as far as they could lead them; while they were in grand expectations of being exalted upon par with the bishops, whose power was to be somewhat abridged. Still they shewed what little regard they had for the religion of the Lord Jesus, without receiving a single point; but in promise of what they had not the least intention of ever fulfilling, while the King was attending the brothels one part of the day, and receiving the sacrament the other, and his bishops as like him as they could make themselves, in the mean time making all the scoff imaginable of the presbyterians, giving up the principles for which thousands suffered all manner of bereavement Satan could invent. Now, I am ashamed my opponent would bring in these miserable presbyterians, making the most miserable ship-wreck of their faith, by acts of accommodation to obtain union with such men, as an example worthy of imitation. Had he searched the records of history, he could not have found more to alarm. These were to presbyterians as Esau was to Jacob in the day he looked on his brother's afflictions see Obdiah; as Aamalek was to Israel coming from Egyptian bondage, and God was to both according to his oath, (see Exodus, chap. xvii. 16.)

D. D. I refuse to be ashamed of either my argument, or yet the worthy examples, whose footsteps I wish to follow. "They were such men that there was hardly an individual among them of whom

nature and nature christianised, might not stand up and say to all the world this was a man." "They bowed implicitly to the authority of God, but would allow no other Lord of their conscience!" "With all their meekness and submission to the powers, they were perfectly intractable on the capital point of faith and duty;" "yet with this adamant firmness in essentials, they were gentle and pliant in secondary things." "They contended for communion with christian churches, even with the church whose rulers were then oppressing them. Christians look at this fact: remember it was these men, and such as these framed the Westminster confession.

William. They were such men as were willing to exchange the Westminster confession, framed by the followers of Calvin and Knox, for episcopacy. Witness the Doctor.

D. D. It is certainly true, these pages shew it, "that much aversion from communion, especially with the establishment, was to be found after the Bartholomew act, in some ministers and congregations. But was it general? Was it not chiefly among gathered churches? Was it considered as conformable to christian principles? As obedience to Christ? As a solid and permanent part of a reformation testimony? Or as the very reverse?" (1)

William. The Doctor shall answer his own ques-

(1) Plea, page 238.

tions, and out of his own mouth be condemned. Long before the Episcopalians had reached this distance of horrid wickedness, the Doctor asserts communion with them was not worth the sacrifice of truth and honesty. (1) But sure I am, if they plead for communion with such christians, that those who went to the stake rather than commune with them, did not; and then the Doctor has proved catholic communion did not prevail among them, and so he has gained nothing by his own argument. Again, Steward's collection sanctioned by Durham, (2) says, "indeed where there is no union in church government, he cannot, nor dare not, offer any directions for making up an union:" and indeed as there are no directions extant, it is manifest it never was in practice in any age or any instance without a transgression.

D. D. If this be staggering, what shall we say to a public deed of the church of Scotland, nearly 40 years later? It is an act of that General Assembly, entitled an act, concerning the receiving of strangers into church communion, and baptizing their children, and runs as follows:

William. The Assemblys act is a demonstration that they had not been in the habit of catholic communion at any rate, but beside, it forbids commu-

(1) Plea, page 274.

(2) Title 4, sec. 10.

nion with any but such as belong to the reformation, and not only so, but it requires their design of continuing "who have come or may come to reside in this country, and may incline to join in with this church. 2nd. That they come well recommended; "if" such, if such strangers be free from scandal. 3d. They must make confession with their mouth, what they believe in their heart; "professing their faith in Christ and obedience to him and engaging to educate their children in the fear of God, and knowledge of the principles of the reformed protestant religion," i.e. the Calvinistic. Now, I demand of the Doctor, if the strictest sect of our societies have laws more rigorous, against whom the Doctor raises so many exclamations, mingling his boasts as if he had gained 1000 victories, and abusing his own church which he acknowledges has been uniform in her principles this 80 years past, as if they were the offscouring and refuse of all nations, because of their zeal for truth, and love of order. I shall pass by a dozen of his pages in silence, believing it the best reply for impertinence, only state his last. If a faithful minister who happens not to be within their own circle, should be admitted in ministerial communion to one of their pulpits, however honoured he may have been of God. I tremble to write it, blasphemy itself could hardly excite a greater ferment; but the Doctor forgot to tell the rest of the aggravations, he entered into stated reciprocation of sacramental communion with D. R. with their res-

pective flocks, abolishing the Lord's song he had sworn to support, which looks a good deal like blasphemy. When he was brought to an account for his conduct, he plead his want of a church throw him and D. R. to worship in the same place, and that he intended to continue the practice as long as so situated, but no longer, but in this he only feigned, for before then he plead for the principle, but perhaps he had not met with the mistress of his conversion.

D. D. I can and have effectually proved, see plea 302; "that to refuse communion with a church or with her members," is virtually unchurcing and excommunicating all the churches and people of God upon earth, with whom we refuse communion, and is so dreadful that every christian heart sinks from it with fear and horror.

William. The Doctor must speak of church communion or visible membership, for he would not dare to say we excommunicate the saints from heaven. Now, membership here presupposes a combination of professed christians who have listed under a system of regulations which they covenant to support and practice. Now, it is impossible for one or all of them to excommunicate a man from their society who was never in, and moreover never applied to become a member of it, and as impossible to unchurch him from the church he belongs to or the people to whom he belongs: what have we to do with another man's servant? To his master he

stands or fall. The Doctor has not proved his assertion nor never will.

D. D. If it is not actually excommunication I am sure it is virtually doing the same thing.

William. It is virtually, I am sure it is not viciously nor maliciously; for the public or private character, that I refuse may be as holy as wise, and more so than the man admitted, but the very first thought that strikes the mind of a reflecting man, is that intercommunion is absurdity and havoc of church government. Does not nature teach us that the same species of the animal creation maintain a kind chastity in their social cohabitation, the fowls of heaven, beasts of the field, and fish of the sea, and even to insects, the little ant, and honey bee are strict to the laws of family connection, and how quickly an intrusion is resisted? God has given us room sufficient to extend our liberality within our respective churches without *breaking the bounds* prior to celebrating the nuptials. I know of no idea more abhorrent to my feelings except the community of women, and although the naming of that is a shock to chastity it is not so damnable, Matthew xxi. 31. Should a man ask to commune with me of a different denomination, and different persuasion, I should deem him a hypocrite or that he cared nothing about his own principles.

But as I have the testimony of a man of God, known to all the churches, though quoted by the Doctor on the other side, for his sake that I may deli-

ver him from the defamation, as I have done John Calvin: I hope for indulgence notwithstanding the length. The character is no less that Dr. Owen.

An answer unto two questions, by the judicious J. Owen, D. D.

QUESTION, I.—"Whether Persons, who have engaged unto Reformation, and another way of Divine Worship, according to the word of God, as they believe; may lawfully go unto, and attend on, the Use of the Common Prayer-Book in Divine Worship?"

ANSWER, I.—"We suppose herein, all that hath been pleaded against that kind of Service, as to its Matter, Form, Imposition, Use, End and Consequence; which are all of them duly to be considered, before the Practice enquired after can be allowed. But,

II. "The present question, is not about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of forms of prayer in general; nor about the lawfulness of that form, or those forms which are prescribed in the common prayer book, as unto their matter and manner of composure, absolutely considered; nor yet about the expediency of the whole system of worth limited thereunto: but it respects all these things, and the like, with reference unto the persons described in the enquiry. And as unto the persons intended in the enquiry, we judge this practice unlawful unto them, as contrary unto sundry rules of the scripture, and wherein it is condemned.

I. "It is contrary unto that general rule, in these cases given us by the apostle, Gal. ii. 18. "If I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." To destroy or dissolve any thing in the worship of God, is, to lay it aside, and remove it out of that worship, as that which we have no divine obligation unto. So the apostle destroyed the legal ceremonies whereof he there speaks, and no otherwise. To build again, is to admit into the worship of God as useful unto the edification of the church. And these are contrary, so as that, if the one be a duty, the other in the same case, or with respect unto the same things, is a sin. If it were a duty to destroy, it is a sin to build; and if it be a duty to build, it was a sin to destroy. He that doth both, makes himself unavoidably a transgressor.

"But, we have in this sense, as unto ourselves, destroyed this form of worship; that is, we have omitted it, and left it out in the service of the church, as that, which we had no divine obligation unto, and as that, which was not unto edification; if we now build it again, as it is done in the practice enquired after, we make ourselves transgressors, either by destroying or building.

"And there is strength added unto this consideration, in case that we have suffered any thing on the account of the forbearance of it; as the same apostle speaks in the same case, 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain? If it be yet in vain.' (Gal.

3. 4.) It is a great folly to lose our own sufferings: Are ye so foolish? (Ver. 3.)

II. "It is contrary unto that great rule, whatsoever is not of faith is sin, (Rom. 14, 23.) for that any thing which a man doth in the worship of God, may be of faith, it is necessary that he be convinced or persuaded that it is his duty so to do. (Mat. 28. 20. Isai. i. 12. Deut. 4. 2.)

"It is no rule in the worship of God, that we should do what we can, or that we have a liberty to do this or that, which we yet suppose, all circumstances considered, that we are not divinely obliged to do. In all things in general, and in particular duties or instances, we must have an obligation on our consciences, from the authority of God, that so we ought to do, and that our not doing of it, is a neglect of duty, or it is not of faith. The performance of any thing in the worship of God, hath in it, the formal nature of a duty, given it, by its respect unto divine authority. For a duty to God, that is not an act of obedience with respect unto his authority, is a contradiction.

"Wherefore, no man can (that is, lawfully and without sin) go to, and attend on this kind of religious worship, but he, who judgeth his so doing to be a duty, that God requireth of him, and which it would be his sin to omit, every time he goes unto it. God will not accept of any service from us on other terms. Whether this be the judgement of

those who make the enquiry as unto what they do, they may do well to consider.

III. "It is contrary to the rule delivered, (Mal. i. 13, 14.) 'Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame and the sick; thus ye brought an offering. Should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, that hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great king saith the Lord of hosts.' We are obliged by all divine laws, natural, moral and positive, to serve God always with our best. The obligations hereunto are inseparable, from all just conceptions of the divine nature, and our relation thereunto. No man can think aright of God, and that it is his duty to serve him, but must think it to be so with the best that he hath. To offer Him any thing when we have that which is better, or which we judge to be better, is an act of profaneness and not obedience. In all sacrifices, the blood and the fat were to be offered unto God. Wherefore he that attends unto this service, doth avow to God that it is the best that he hath, and if it be not so, he is a deceiver.

"If it be objected hereon, that by virtue of this rule so understood, as that we are always obliged to the use of that which we judge best in the worship of God, we are bound to leave this or that ministry or church, if we judge that the administrations are better amongst others; it is answered that the rule respects not degrees, where the whole admini-

stration is according to the mind of God, but different kinds of worship, as worshiping by a limited prescribed form, and worshiping by the assistance of the spirit of God, are.

IV. "It is contrary unto that rule, 'let all things be done to edifying.' (i. Cor. xiv. 26.) Whosoever doth not promote edification, is excluded out of the worship of the church by virtue of this rule. Nor can it be a duty in us to give countenance thereunto, or to make use of it. It is said, that prayer is the worship of God; these forms of it are only a determination of the manner of it, or an outward means of that worship. Let it be supposed; although it be certain that as prescribed they are parts of the service. They are therefore means that are an help and furtherance unto edification in prayer, or they are an hinderance of it; or they are of no use or signification one way or the other. If it be said, that they are an help unto edification, and are found so by experience, in the exclusion of any other way or worship; then I ask, why they are not constantly used? Why do we at any time, in any place refuse the aid and help of them, unto this great end, of all things that are done in the church? But this can be pleaded only by those, who contend for the constant use of them in the worship of God, with whom at present we are not concerned.

"If it be acknowledged, that indeed they are an hinderance unto edification, which is more promoted without them, yet are they not in themselves

unlawful; I say as before, that it is not the present Question. We enquire only, whether the use of them by those who judge them hinderances unto edification, be not contrary to the rule mentioned, 'let all things be done unto edifying.' For the things of the third sort that are of no use, or signification at all, they can have no place, nor be of any consideration in the worship of God.

"V. It is inconsistent with that sincerity in profession that is required of us. Our public conjunction with others, in acts and duties of religious worship, is a part of that profession which we make; and our whole profession, is nothing but the declaration of the subjection of our souls unto the authority of Christ, according unto the gospel. Wherefore, in this conjunction in worship, we do profess, that it is divinely required of us, and that it is part of that obedience which we owe to Jesus Christ. And if we do not so judge it, we are hypocritical in what we do, or the profession that we make; and to deny, that our practice is our profession in the sight of God and men, is to introduce all manner of licentiousness in religion.

"VI. Such a practice is in very many instances, contrary unto the great rule of not giving offence. For it is unavoidable, but that many will be given and taken, and some of them of pernicious consequence unto the souls of Men. In particular,

"First, woe will be unto the world because of these offences. For hence our adversaries will

take occasion to justify themselves, in their most false and injurious charges against dissenters, unto the hardening of them in their ways. As 1. they accuse them as factious and seditious, in that they will not do what they can do, and what by the present practice they own to be the mind of God, that they should do, or else expressly play the hypocrits, for the sake of peace, order and obedience unto magistrates. 2 That they pretend conscience, wherein indeed it is not concerned in their own judgment, seeing on outward considerations, which conscience can have no regard unto, they can do what is required. On these apprehensions, they will justify themselves in their sins, it may be to their perdition. Woe be unto them by whom such offences come!

“Secondly, By this practice, we cast in our suffrage on the part of persecutors against the present sufferers in the nation. For we justify what is done against them, and condemn them in their sufferings, as having no just cause or warranty for what they do; as we declare by our practice of what they refused. There is no man who complies in this matter, but it is a part of his profession, that those who refuse so to do, and are exposed to sufferings thereon, do not suffer according to the will of God, nor do their sufferings redound unto his glory. And no offence or scandal can be of an higher nature!

“Thirdly, Differences and divisions will on this

practice, unavoidably arise between churches themselves, and members of the same church, which will be attended with innumerable evil consequences unto the dishonor of the gospel, and it may be to the loss of all church communion.

“Fourthly, Many will be induced, on the example of others, especially if they be persons of any reputation in the church, who shall so practice, to follow them against their own light, having the great weight of the preservation of their liberties, and goods lying on the same side. And, experience will quickly shew, what will be the event hereof, either in total apostacy, or that terror of conscience which they will find no easy relief under, as it hath fallen out with some already. And,

“Fifthly, It is a justification of our adversaries in the cause wherein we are engaged; 1. in their church state, 2. In a reading ministry, 3. In their casting us out of communion on the present terms, 4. In their judgement concerning us in the point schism, as might easily be manifested.

“Lastly, There is in this practice, a visible compliance with the design of the prescription of this form of service, unto the sole use of the church in the duties of divine worship. And this, in the nature of the thing itself, is an exclusion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in that worship, which is given and continued by Christ, to this very end, that the church may be edified in divine worship, and the due performance of it. And whether this answers our loy-

alty unto Christ in his kingly office, ought to be well enquired into.

“And we shall hereby, on a mere act of outward force, join with them in church communion, who have cast us out of their communion, by the imposition of principles and practices in divine worship, no way warranted by the scripture, or authority of Christ: who allow us no church state among ourselves: nor will join in any one act of church communion with us! who persecute us even unto death, and will not be satisfied with any compliance, without a total renunciation of our principles, and practice in the worship of God, and giving away our whole cause about the state of the church, and other divine institutions! Besides, at present we shall seem to be influenced by a respect unto their excommunications, which as they are managed, and administered at present, are not only an high profanation of a sacred ordinance, but suited to expose christian religion unto scorn and contempt.

“**QUESTION II.**—A second enquiry is, whether the persons before mentioned and described, may lawfully and in a consistency with, or without a renunciation of their former principles and practice, go to, and receive the sacrament of the Lord’s supper in the parish churches, under their present constitution and administration?

“**ANSWER.** It appears that they may not, or cannot so do. For,

“**I.** Their so doing, would be an ecclesiastical

incorporation in the church, wherein they do partake: for, a voluntary conjunction, in the highest act of communion, with any church, according to its order and institutions, warranted by its own authority, is an express incorporation with it; whereby a man is constituted a formal member of it, unto all ends and purposes of privilege, right and duty. The church state is owned hereby, its authority submitted unto in its right and exercise; nor is it otherwise interpreted of them unto whom they so join themselves. But this is a virtual, yea, an express renunciation of their own present church state in any other society, and necessitates a relinquishment of their former practice.

“It will be said, that a member of one particular church, may partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper in another, without incorporating or becoming a stated member of that church wherein he doth so partake.

“It is answered, that he may do so by virtue of that communion, which is between the church whereof he is a member, and that church wherein he doth so partake. For he is admitted unto that participation, by virtue of that communion, and not on his own personal account. If it be otherwise, where any one is received unto the participation of this ordinance, there he is admitted unto entire membership, and is engaged unto all the duties thereunto belonging.

“And thus is it in this case, for those unto whom

they join themselves herein, if but occasionally, do
 1st. own no church state, in this nation, but their
 own, 2ly. admit of none unto this sacrament, by
 virtue of their communion with any other church, or
 any churches not of their own constitution; nor,
 3ly. will administer it unto any, but those whom
 they claim to be their own, as living in their parish-
 es, in opposition unto any other church state what-
 ever.

“Wherefore it is impossible, that any man should
 be a member of one church, and communicate in this
 ordinance in another, which condemns that where-
 of he is, as schismatical, and receiveth him as one
 belonging unto itself only, but he doth professedly
 renounce the communion of that church, wherein he
 was; and is by them that receive him, esteemed so
 to do! and no reserves of a contrary judgment, or
 resolution in his own mind, will relieve any man in
 conscience or reputation, against the testimony of
 his practical profession!

“II. They do hereby profess a spiritual incor-
 poration with those, or that church wherein they do
 so communicate; namely, that they are one body
 and one bread with them; that they all drink into
 one spirit, (Cor. 10. 17. chap. xii. xiii. How they
 can do this in those places where they judge the
 generality of them to be profane and ignorant, with-
 out sinning against their own light, is not to be un-
 derstood.

“It is said, that no persons in this or any other

ordinance of divine worship, are polluted, or made guilty by the sins of others, with whom they do communicate. It is answered, that this is not at present enquired into. That which such persons are charged with, is their own sins only, in making a profession of spiritual incorporation, or becoming of one body, one bread with them, and of drinking into the same spirit with them, when they do not esteem them so to be, in the exercise of love without dissimulation. The neglect also of other express duties, which we owe unto those, who stand in that union with us, will necessarily follow hereon. Neither do such persons, as so communicate, intend to take on themselves an obligation unto all those duties which are required of them, towards those with whom they profess themselves to be one spiritual body, which is an open prevarication against scripture rule.

“III. They would hereby, not only justify the whole service of the liturgy, but the ceremonies also enjoined to be used in the administration of this sacrament. For the rule of the church wherewith they join, is that whereby they are to be judged. Any abatement that may be made of them in practice, is on both sides an unwarrantable self-deceiving, inconsistent with christian ingenuity and sincerity. But hereby they do not only condemn all other present dissenters, but all those also of former days and ages, ministers and others, who suffered

under deprivation, imprisonment and banishment, in their testimony against them.

“If they shall say, they do not approve what is practised by others, though they join in the same worship and duties of it with them; I say, this is contrary to the language of their profession, unto scripture rule, (Rom. xiv. 22.) And is indefensible in the sight of God and good men, and unworthy of that plain, open, bold sincerity, which the gospel requireth in the professors of it.

“IV. The posture of kneeling, in the receiving of this sacrament, is a peculiar act of religious adoration, which hath no divine institution or warrant; and is therefore at best, an act of will worship not to be complied withal.

“It is said, that kneeling is required not as an act of worship or religious adoration, but only as a posture decent and comely, because the sacrament is delivered with a prayer unto every one. But,

“I. That delivery of it with a prayer unto every one, is uninstituted, without primitive example, contrary to the practice at the first institution of the ordinance, unsuited unto the nature of the communion required, and a disturbance of it.

“II. He that prays stands, and he that doth not pray kneels: which must be on another consideration. For,

“III. Praying is not the proper exercise of faith, in the instant of receiving of this sacrament, as is evident from the nature and use of it.

“IV. The known original of this rite, doth render it, not only justly to be suspected, but to be avoided.

“On these considerations, which might be enlarged, and many others that might be added, it is evident that the practice enquired into, with respect unto the persons at first intended, is unlawful; and includes in it, a renunciation of all the principles of that church communion, wherein they are engaged. And whereas, some few have judged it not to be so, they ought to rectify their mistake in their future walking!”

“Twelve arguments against any conformity of members of separate churches, to the national church.

“POSITION.—It is not lawful for us to go to, and join in public worship, by the common prayer, because that worship itself, according to the rule of the gospel, is not lawful.

“Some things must be premised to the confirmation of this position.

“As first, the whole system of liturgical worship, with all its inseparable dependances, are intended. For as such it is established by law, and not in any part of it only: as such, it is required that we receive it, and attend unto it. It is not in our power, it is not left to our judgement or liberty, to close with, or make use of any part of it, as we shall think fit.

“There is in the mass book many prayers and

praises directed to God only, by Jesus Christ, yet it is not lawful for us thereon to go to mass, under a pretence of joining only in such lawful prayers as, we must not affect (1) their drink offerings of blood, so, we must not take up their names into our lips, have no communion with them.

“2. It is to be considered as armed with laws: first, such as declare and enjoin it, as the only true worship of the church: secondly, such as prohibit, condemn, and punish all other ways of the worship of God in church assemblies; by our communion and conjunction in it, we justify those laws.

“3. This conjunction by communion in the worship of the liturgy, is a symbol, pledge, and token of an ecclesiastical incorporation with the church of England in its present constitution, it is so in the law of the land. (2) It is so in the common understanding of all men; and by these rules, must our profession and practice be judged, and not by any reserves of our own, which neither God nor good men will allow of.

“4. Wherefore, he that joineth in the worship of the common prayer, doth by his practice make profession that it is the true worship of God, accepted by him, and approved of him, and wholly agreeable to his mind, and to do it with other reserves, is hypocrisy, and worse than the thing itself without

(1) Psal: 16. 4.

(1) In the canon of the church.

them. (1) Happy is he who condemneth not himself, in the things which he alloweth.

“5. There may be a false worship of the true God as well as a worship of a false God; (2) such was the worship of Jehovah the Lord, by the calf in the wilderness: such was the feast unto the Lord, ordained by Jeroboam in (3) the eighth month, fifteenth day of the month, the which he devised of his own heart.

“On these suppositions the proposition laid down, is proved by these following arguments.

“*First Argument.*—Religious worship not divinely instituted and appointed, is false worship, not accepted with God; but the liturgical worship intended, is a religious worship not divinely instituted, nor appointed, ergo, not accepted of God.

“The proposition is confirmed by all the divine testimonies, wherein all such worship is expressly condemned; (4) that especially, where the Lord Christ restrained all worship to his alone command.

“It is answered to the minor proposition, that the liturgical worship is of Christ’s appointment, as to the substantials of it, though not as to its accidentals, namely, prayers and praises, not unto its outward rites and forms, which do not vitiate the whole.

(1) Rom. 14. 23. (2) Exodus 32. 56. (3) 1. Kings, 12. 32.
33. [4] Deut. 4. 2. chap; 12. 32.

“But it is replied, 1. There is nothing accidental in the worship of God: every thing that belongs to it, is part of it, (1) some things are of more use, weight, and importance, than others; but all things that duly belong unto it, are part of it, or of its substance: outward circumstances are natural and occasional, not accidental parts of worship.

“2. Prayers and praises absolutely considered, are not an institution of Christ, they are a part of natural worship, common to all mankind. His institution respecteth only the internal form of them, and the manner of their performance: but this is that which the liturgy taketh on itself, namely to supply and determine the matter, to prescribe the manner and to limit all the concerns of them to modes and forms of its own, which is to take the work of Christ out of his hands!

“3. Outward rites and modes of worship, divinely instituted, and determined, do become thereby necessary parts of divine worship, (2) therefore such as are humanly instituted, appointed and determined, are thereby made parts of worship, namely, of that which is false, for want of a divine institution.

“4. Prayer and praise are not things prescribed and enjoined in and by the liturgy, it is so far from it, that thereby all prayers and praises in church assemblies, merely as such, are prohibited; but it is

(1) Math. 23, 23.

(2) Lev. 1. 16.

its own forms, ways, modes, with their determination and limitation alone, that are instituted, prescribed, and enjoined by it; but these things have no divine institution, and therefore are so far false worship.

“Second argument, That which was in its first contrivance, and hath been in its continuance, an invention, or engine to defeat, or render useless the promise of Christ unto his church, of sending the Holy Spirit in all ages, to enable it unto a due discharge, and performance of all divine worship, in its assemblies; is unlawful to be employed withal, nor can be admitted in religious worship, but such is the liturgical worship. *Ergo, &c.*

“That the Lord Jesus Christ did make such a promise, that he doth make it good, that the very being and continuance of the church (without which it is but a dead machine) doth depend thereon, I suppose will not be denied, it hath been sufficiently proved. Hereon the church lived and acted for sundry ages, performing all divine worship in their assemblies, by virtue of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, and no otherwise.

“When these things were neglected, when the way of attaining them, appeared too difficult to men of carnal minds, this way of worship, by a prescribed liturgy, was insensibly brought in, to render the promise of Christ, and the whole work of the Holy Spirit in the administration of gifts, useless, and thereupon two things did follow:

“1st. A total neglect of all gifts of the Holy Spirit in the administration of church worship and ordinances.

“2dly. When a plea for the work of the Holy Spirit began to be revived, it produced all that enmity, hatred, and contempt of and against the Spirit of God himself, and his whole work in the church which the world is now filled withal. All the reproaches that are daily cast upon the spirit of prayer; all that contempt and scorn, which all duty of religious worship, performed by his aid and assistance, are entertained withal, arise from hence alone, namely, from a justification of this devised way of worship, as the only true way and means thereof.

“Take away this, and the wrath and anger of men against the Spirit of God, and his work, in the worship of the church, will be abated; yea the necessity of them will be evident. This we cannot comply with, least we approve of the original design of it, and partake in the sins which proceed from it.

“*Third argument,* That in religious worship, which derogates from the kingly office of Jesus Christ, so far as it doth so, is false worship.

“Unto this office of Christ, it inseparably belongs, that he be the sole lawgiver of the church, in all the worship of God. The rule of his government herein, is, ‘Teach men to observe and do whatsoever I command.’

“But the worship treated about, consisteth wholly in the institutions, commands, prescriptions, orders, and rules of men, and on the authority of men alone, do all their impositions on the practice of the church depend; what is this, but to renounce the kingly office of Christ in the church?

“*Fourth argument,* That which giveth testimony against the faithfulness of Christ in his house, as a Son and Lord of it, above that of any servant, is not to be complied withal, let all his disciples judge.

“Unto this faithfulness of Christ, it doth belong, to appoint and command all things whatever in the church, that belong to the worship of God; as is evident from his comparison with Moses herein, and his preference above him; but the institution and prescription of all things in religious worship, of things never instituted or prescribed by Christ in the forms and modes of them, ariseth from a supposition of a defect in the wisdom, care and faithfulness of Christ, whence alone a necessity can arise of prescribing that in religious worship, which he hath not prescribed.

“*Fifth argument,* That which is a means humanly invented, for the attaining of an end in divine worship, which Christ hath ordained a means for, unto the exclusion of the means so appointed by Christ, is false worship and not to be complied withal.

“The end intended, is the edification of the church,

in the administration of all its holy ordinances. This, the service book is ordained and appointed by men for, or it hath no end or use at all; but the Lord Christ hath appointed other means for the attaining the end, as is expressly declared. (1) 'He hath given gifts to men for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body:' that is, in all gospel administrations; but the means ordained by Christ, namely, the exercise of spiritual gifts in gospel administrations, unto the edification of the church, is excluded, yea, expressly prohibited in the prescription of this liturgical worship; the pretence of men's liberty to use their gifts in prayer before their sermons, and in preaching is ridiculed, they are excluded in all the solemn worship of the church.

"Sixth argument, That which hath been, and is obstructive of the edification of the church, if it be in religious worship, it is false worship; for the end of all true worship is edification; but such hath been, and is this liturgical worship.

"For 1st. it putteth an utter stop to the progress of the reformation in this nation, fixing bounds to it, that it could never pass.

"2dly, It hath kept multitudes in ignorance.

"3dly, It hath countenanced and encouraged many in reviling and reproaching the Holy Spirit and his work.

(1) Ephes. 4. 7. 8. 11.

“4thly, It hath set up and warranted an ungifted ministry.

“5thly, It hath made great desolations in the church:

“1st, In the silencing of faithful and painful ministers.

“2dly, In the ruin of families innumerable.

“3dly, In the destruction of souls!

“It is not lawful to be participant in these things, yea the glory of our profession lies in our testimony against them!

“*Seventh argument*, That practice, whereby we condemn the suffering saints of the present age, rendering them false witnesses of God and the only blameable cause of their own sufferings, is not to be approved; but such is this practice, and where this is done on a pretence of liberty, without any plea of necessary duty on our part it is utterly unlawful.

“*Eighth argument*, That practice, which is accompanied with unavoidable scandal, engaged in only on pretence of liberty, is contrary to the gospel, but such is our joining in the present public worship. It were endless to reckon up all the scandals which will ensue hereon.

“That which respecteth our enemies must not be omitted; Will they not think? Will they not say? That we have only falsely and hypocritically pretended conscience for what we do, where we can on outward considerations comply with that which is required of us? ‘Woe to the world, because of

such offences, but, woe to them also, by whom they are given.'

“Ninth argument, That worship, which is unsuited to the spiritual relish of the new creature, which is inconsistent with the conduct of the Spirit of God in prayer, is unlawful: for the nature, use, and benefit of prayer is overthrown hereby, in a great measure.

“Now let any one consider, what are the promised aids of the Holy Spirit, with respect unto the prayers of the church, whether as to the matter of them, or as to the ability for the performance, or as to the manner of it, and he shall find, that they are all rejected and excluded by this form of worship; comprising (as is pretended) the whole matter, limiting the whole manner, and giving all the abilities for prayer, that are needful or required, and this hath been proved at large!

“Tenth argument, That which overthrows, and dissolves our church covenant, as unto the principal ends of it, is as unto us unlawful.

“This end is the professed joint subjection of our souls and consciences unto the authority of Christ in the observation of all whatever he commands, and nothing else in the worship of God; but by this practice, this end of the church covenant is destroyed, and thereby the church covenant itself is broken; for we do and observe that which Christ hath not commanded, and while some stand unto the

terms of the covenant which others relinquish, it will fill the church with confusion and disorder.

“Eleventh argument, That which contains a virtual renunciation of our church state, and of the lawfulness of our ministry, and ordinances therein, is not to be admitted, or allowed.

“But this also is done by the practice enquired into, for, it is a professed conjunction with them in church communion and worship, by whom our church state and ordinances are condemned, as null. And this judgment they make of what we do, affirming, that we are gross dissemblers, if after such a conjunction with them, we return any more into our own assemblies. In this condemnation we do outwardly and visibly join!

“Twelfth argument, That which depriveth us of the principal plea for the justification of our separation from the church of England, in its present state, ought not justly to be received or admitted; but this is certainly done by a supposition of the lawfulness of this worship, and a practice suitable thereunto, as is known to all who are exercised in this case. Many other heads of arguments, might be added to the same purpose, if there were occasion.” Owen’s sermons, vol .2, page 379.

Thus my dearly beloved father, next in estimation to his father Calvin, in all the churches of the saints, has in his nervous manner sealed all I have, or wished to say.

DIALOGUE VII.

Same Persons.

SCENE, CONTINUED.

D. D. When we shall have settled the doctrine of communion, as taught in the Westminster confession, we shall also have settled the principle which these churches, at least the prebyterian part of them, have solemnly adopted and promised to observe, as the rule of their ecclesiastical conduct. With this general clue let us go to the "confession of faith." The 26th chapter is entitled, "*Of communion of saints*," the doctrine concerning which it lays down in the following terms:

"All saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by his spirit and by faith have fellowship with him in his graces, suffering, death, resurrection and glory; and being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

II. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification, as also, in

relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities: which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended into all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. (1) This latter section describes apparently the communion which ought to subsist between professed christians in their relation to each other as visible members of the church of God, asserting their joint title to and interest in all the privileges of his house, and their duty to participate therein with each other, as they have opportunity, upon the single ground of their being followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us view it a little more closely. "The parties are saints by profession."

William. The Doctor passes what might have made the introduction of his subject, if he had meant to be candid, and says the "parties are saints by profession:" that they are bound to participate with each other, upon the single ground of their being followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, (2) by which, in a word he asserts his generalising system at the expense of government. Let us have the subject arranged in order before our eyes, as it is to be decisive take the word saints, then communion of saints, lastly saints by profession.

[1] Plea, page 221.

[2] The Doctor grows more despotic in his government, he was for a free communion if they pleased; plea, page 227.

First, the parties spoken of are saints without their volition or profession; and no man need profess to me to be a saint, for if he did, I have no warrant to believe him. It is enough for me to believe there is a communion of saints without judging who they are: this judgement belongs to God only. A saint in its first signification is one chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and thus given by the father to the son, and by him set apart for the work he proposes to perform in him, and for the work he will qualify him to perform, and which he will perfectly execute in a time, accepted. In the 2d. sense of the word, a saint is one sanctified by the application of the benefits of Christ's attonement effected by the word, blood and spirit of God, by which they stand justified from all unrighteousness. Christ is made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, &c. nor is it essential to their saintship, that they should make any profession of it, as many have gone to heaven who never did tell the world *they had a brother*. Because a man must first become a saint before he can in truth make a profession of it, and many are called out of the world before they have a call in God to make a profession of their faith in Christ.

2d. Of communion Nevertheless as they have fellowship with Christ in his graces, suffering, death, resurrection and glory, exhibited by sitting, eating and drinking. "I will sup with him and he with me:" "at supper, leaning on Jesus breast, asked him,"

most elegantly typified in Exodus xxv. 21. 22. "And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony, that I give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you. (1) Illustrated by a double image, the saints are compared to bread made of many grains, and to guests, partakers of one body, even his flesh and blood. For these and many other reasons, it is called the communion. Such as "the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." (2) "But ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, abba, father, and the spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. If so be it, that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together." (3) All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. All that thou hast given me, are as much as ever thine and all that thou hast chosen for thy self, are equally mine. Our property in them is not divided, but is common to us both. I pray for them who are both thine and mine.

[1] 1. Corinth xi. 28.

[2] John 17.

[3] Rom. viii. 15, 16-17.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his father and he shall be my son. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, and being united to one another in love, they are obliged to the performance of the duties mentioned, invisible and visible as God offereth opportunity. "This leads to the last thing, saints by profession. Now, saints and saints by profession may be two things entirely distinct, for a saint is a saint, but a saint by profession may be a wolf in sheep's cloathing, and we are bound to try them before we give them the outward privileges of a saint: and before he can be legally entitled to the character of a saint by profession, he must make a good confession before many people, that is, his character in toto must be such as becometh the gospel before all men, and expressly before a court of Christ, legally constituted in his name and qualified of God for the execution of their office. Now, when he has first given himself to God and that church, he becomes the exclusive property of that church or denomination discriminated by their constitution, so long as the relation last, and although he is bound to be the christian in all the relations he sustains to all men, he is not bound to, but in my judgement he is interdicted the sealing ordinances with, all but his own, who have the alone legal government over him: with them he is entitled to fellowship in all the branches of worship and discipline; and he is bound to them to maintain it beside all the other duties he owes to them mentioned

in the second section. 2nd. These are bound to maintain an holy fellowship, first in observing all the ordinances of said judicatory in the Lord, as to the exterior medium of government. He is bound not to waste his master's goods, he is bound to bring all his tythes into the store house, to know them that rule over him and bow subjection to the yoke, and to give double honor to them who labour in word and doctrine, and to defend their respectability as Christ's ambassadors and love them for their works' sake; to improve his talents that he may give to those who need suitable instruction, he is bound to pray for all men, but especially for those of the household of faith, and to attend with that church who received him in social acts of worship, with constancy, reverence, and godly zeal. Thus approving the things which are excellent and commending himself to every man's conscience, and especially that he be commended by God, obtaining a good report through faith, that when the holy supper is administered, that he may sit down with the twelve, that number multiplied into the twelve patriarchs 144, that into Christ's reign of 1000 years, making 144,000, all standing with him on mount Zion, having his father's name in their forehead. Now, he is just as much a member of the 144,000, if he only has personal acquaintance with the 12 or with the 144 as with the 144,000. Thus interpreted, we are partners with each other in all that is comprehended under the worship of God, that is, his

instituted ordinances in his house. This partnership is to be avowed and expressed by open acts of mutual recognition: they are to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and not at discretion, but as God offers opportunity. As to acts of religious good-will and relieving each other, we are agreed.

D. D. Sir, I hope William is not about to confine himself within the limit of that judiciary, in all these points, and acknowledge no relation to any who are not amenable with him at the same human bar.

William. All things I do not, but some things I assuredly do. As to sealing ordinances I view myself strictly limited, although a neighbouring church for aught I know, may be a church of Christ, as long as they refuse reconciliation with our creed, I can and ought to refuse to know and acknowledge them as the judiciary who received me.

D. D. I would William to know, he has no power in that point he judges himself at liberty in or is a matter of choice which he may do or omit at pleasure, it is a duty which he is not at liberty to forego, an imperative obligation lies upon his conscience, that he is bound to maintain this communion.

William. I wish for the Doctor's authority, and it must be presented in terms not ambiguous, as it is the very point of our difference.

D. D. I shall state in terms too plain for him to

equivocate, you have my authority from that legislature, whose laws he has bound himself to observe. As to the extent of this communion in all its branches, it is to embrace christians as such: 1st. of every denomination, even all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus: 2nd. of every country and clime, even all who in every place call upon him.

William. Sir, I expected my opponent would have contented himself by quoting the laws of the high court, and not his interpretation, because I claim as good a right to interpret to him as he has to me, and then our difference is no nearer an issue. Let us hear the law. Which communion is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus? Now, I ask, is this a fair way of reasoning to interpolate the very word in the law which decides the dispute in his favor. By what authority did he corrupt the words of the assembly of divines by foisting in of *every denomination*, and so to bind me to the same extent of communion in all its branches to other denominations I owe to my own, and by this act and deed do away all distinction of denomination, which at the very same instant, he acknowledges to have a standing, separate existence? This absurdity never entered the mind of that godly assembly, or they could have made it with as much ease as his reverence. If he had interpreted as he had a right to do, and like an honest man, he would have told us what it is to extend this communion to all those who in every place

call upon the name of the Lord Jesus; that it was a specific of a believer's character which embraces every thing belonging to a son of God. Thus, the scripture often adorns the children of the kingdom with distinguishing honorable appellations. Thus I think I have seen an author, that sums up the names of her husband at about 200 titles, and I suppose his bride is as fruitful in names. In imitation of this honor, we find men in authority assume a long string of names to effectually distinguish them from all other men in the world. She is called by him names, and new names which none can read but they who receive them; all to express his love, his care for her increase of faith, hope and joy, such as his love, his dove, his fair one, his delight, &c. &c. and he who is entitled to one of those names is entitled to them all, but is generally addressed in one of these just to suit the present occasion, as he assumes names to suit her present necessity, beautifully varied in his epistles to the severe Asiatic churches, but why did our divines chuse the periphrasis of all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus? The reason is perfectly just and conspicuous. If we examine the reason, the Holy Ghost gave her this name by apostolic authority in the days of the apostles, this was the most descriptive character, when the true believers were of one mind concerning the Lord Jesus, for although there were swarms of professors, and diverse denominations, who were zealous worshipers of God,

Paul could testify this in their favour, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God," but they had their own ways, and their own means of serving God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." (1) Now, all these were enemies to the name of Jesus and could call Christ accursed, as none could call Christ Lord, but by the spirit. Now in allusion to these times, to distinguish the genuine bride from the pretenders, the Westminster assembly used this periphrases in contradistinction to those who corrupted the christian religion by their customs, rites, and ceremonies, and doctrine of devils, which had a tendency to deny the kingly authority of Christ, the pure principles of the reformation, as exhibited in their standards.

D. D. William had better give some evidence for his bold assertion, or I shall be tempted to retort.

William. I may have overrated my sentiment, but I thought it possessed internal evidence; but if it is not plain or cavited by my opponent, I shall prove as I go. There cannot exist any kind of government without officers. Now, church officers are limited beings, and cannot extend their authority beyond the limits of their suffrage. Thus, they can be only officers of one particular denomination, and

(1) Rom. x. 2,3.

that one independent of all others, and by oath they can act but only according to their commission.

2nd. It is impossible to invest a session with discretionary power to extend communion beyond the limits of their own jurisdiction, without having different terms of communion in the same church; some to submit to the yoke of government, others, viz. strangers, to enjoy the same immunities, without. If this had been the established practice, I wonder some historian would not have handed down a minute of it to our times. As I think the partiality of the custom would have occasioned some shrewd observer to make remarks which might have occasioned altercations worthy of historical notice.

D. D. If it is not possible for a body politic to commission their officers to entertain strangers with courtesy, the church of Christ is more morose than the kingdoms of this world.

William. Both have natural rights to entertain strangers, with natural rights and many other tests of charity; but neither of them at the expense of law or profanation of their oath of office.

D. D. If every denomination must be thus limited to their own precincts, how account for the practice of sending missionaries to preach the gospel beyond their limits, civil and sacred?

William. They are only sent upon the principle of an ambassador, who is admissible at the pleasure of the governor whither he goes, and then not at

the expense of any municipal law of the incorporation.

D. D. Is it possible that the Westminster assembly should treat professedly of the church of God, and contain not one syllable on that momentous topic of catholic communion; should be explicit, minute on the private communion of her members, and silent as death about her public fellowship. It is absolutely impossible. (1)

William. Could she, or did she, in fixing her terms of private communion which were essential to her church existence, in the same words fix terms to reciprocate catholic communion. I am mistaken if she or any other ever thought of such a communion: at least I have not found it by any fair construction quoted by the Doctor, in any confession or exposition. If we take the words, communion of saints, to signify an imperative obligation upon their conscience, they are bound to maintain a catholic communion with all christian professors in the world, (as the Doctor asserts,) I must think the Westminster assembly took too much upon her. They were only one party, and the consent of the rest of the christian world ought to be obtained before she made it an absolute term with her own members, but on this principle I think she would have had but few saints under her controul.

D. D. William says, he has not found my inter-

(1) Plea, page 228.

pretation in any confession or expositor of all I have quoted. If he is so dull of perception, how will he receive the doctrine of sir Peter King? That there is and ought to be, &c.

William. This puts me in mind of what no one can forget who reads the Doctor, that whatever any men recommended to be done, was then in practice. Sir Henry is in a diductic manner stating what would be a comely order in his judgement, if it was possible to bring it into operation, but never stated it had an existence or any general law to coerce it into operation; but if he erred in his judgement he guards himself with a becoming decency, first that it should be done in the usual and regular ways, as particular churches among themselves, so that they would show themselves twin sisters who could not by principle or practice be discriminated or by anything but their local distance; that there ought to be a mutual intercourse and society, &c. That they should show themselves of one and the same body, of which Christ is their head, that they are all guided by the same spirit, communicate in the same institution, and are governed by the same general rules, so that whatsoever is regularly performed and determined in one congregation is assented to by all others, but we have not a word here in his theoretic plan, recommending that those distinct congregations did not belong to one particular denomination; and if they did not, it is manifest there was nothing to divide them but distance, for they com-

municated on the same institutions, and were governed by the same general laws, and then he recommended it where it was practised, and to those who had never attained to such perfection. But if one church is offering the sick and the lame for sacrifice, or a corrupt thing, and will not serve God with his best, will I offer him the precepts of men, instead of the divine service he has required, and expose myself to the curse, Mali. 1 chap. and especially, the last verse? Will I join with him in his offering and partake with him in his plagues? What profit should I have in the things, I would be ashamed to offer to my governor? When I have his spices, his honey, his milk, his spiced wine, his instituted, ordinances, shall I deform them by lifting up a tool upon them to make an altar after the model of a heathen king, and offer upon it strange fire, that the very exterior of my religion should not have the appearance of divine beauty, nor be an act of divine obedience? Shall I bow to an image, doing more honor to men than God? What pleasure or profit to myself or any other, to be paying a kind of idol worship never required, without Christ and his spirit to guide, provoking a consuming fire, and without grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear? From such church connection may the good Lord deliver my soul, and all who love his appearance! How! am I, in the sight of my judge a corrupt thing in my hand, in my heart, in my lips, lifting up my voice in concert

with fellow idolaters, close the book and immediately join in prayer to his insulted majesty? While I am touched with no sense of need, nor endowed with a principle of sincerity, I may move with the current and sleep in the calm. But let the alarm excite me to call, and I would soon cast my idols to the moles and to the bats.

D. D. It is therefore clear that the phrase "communion of saints," was originally so far from signifying what is now called christian communion in opposition to church communion, that it signified exactly or nearly the reverse: i. e. it is not only comprehended, but strictly and properly expressed, and was put into the creed for the very purpose of expressing "church communion." (1)

William. As to the first, I must pass it till my judgement grows more mature. As to the last, I must wait till I get better evidence. This puts me in mind of the Doctor's speech, that for an Anabaptist, an Independent, an Episcopalian, and Presbyterian to refuse communion together, is a worse error than any of the errors they held: (2) but look to the next sentence and you will find him in favour of the divine right of gospel ministry. If of divine authority, there must of necessity be a violation of the authority of Christ, as all cannot be right, yet all swear they are. What is this short of perjury? But according to the Doctor's divinity, they were forced

(1) Plea, page 233.

(2) Plea; page 256.

to sin, whether they communed together or whether they did not. Then there is no way right in the sight of God: a native result of so much about subordinate points or venial sins.

D. D. Church communion, and communion of saints, and christian communion, are convertible terms.

William. If the Doctor has so quickly lost sight of the above distinction of these terms, I marvel not, that he staggered my judgement when he asserted, (page 233,) that the one signified exactly or nearly the reverse of the other; but we shall examine: communion of saints will never desist, church communion cannot last longer than life: church communion may exist where there is no communion of saints. Communion of saints is without our volition: volition is essential to church communion: communion of saints may exist where there is no church communion. Or in other words, the communion of saints will always have communion with the head of the church, church communion may be where they have none. Our communion with the head is by faith, our communion with each other is by love, but as fellow saints are not objects of faith, our love may be lost on a sinner instead of a saint, and then there is no reciprocity of that which is essential to the communion of saints. But I intend to demonstrate a proposition more strange, and less acceptable to the adulterers and adultresses. It shall do them as much honor as they can demand, and be as sharp a reproof as I can administer. I

shall grant there is an assembly of saints, and the communion of saints, and that they hold church communion, and deny them the honor of christian communion. An assembly of saints may meet for public worship, and as such, hold the communion of saints and church communion; but if the mean of worship is not the appointment of Christ, it is not christian communion, for in christian communion Christ must be honored as the lawgiver, king and judge. Now, see an assembly; suppose the saints abolish the use of the Lord's song, that is, a song concerning Christ and his vine-yard, composed by the eternal spirit of Jesus Christ, and sealed to her exclusive use, with an injunction under the Old Testament to praise him with the words of David and Asaph, with the additional injunction under the New, to praise him with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, the three names of the Lord's book of songs, so sacred that the captives did not know how to sing them among the heathen, "O! How the Lord's song shall we sing within a foreign land!" Now, I say, an assembly of saints met for public worship, singing the songs of some vile Socinian or Ariau, for none else would dare to set themselves upon par with Christ in making psalms, is not christian communion, for Christ is no more honored in it than Uriah by David, when he cohabited with his wife: and Christ and his, who obey his revealed will, are just as much exposed to their resentment, as Uriah to David's sword, and Na-

both to Ahab's stoning, who both killed and took possession.

D. D. I say sacramental communion is church communion, therefore church communion is communion of saints.

William. The premises are true, but the conclusion is fallacious, for church communion may be without saints, and the communion of papists. The communion of the papists is church communion: church communion is the communion of saints: therefore, the communion of papists is the communion of saints. (1)

(1) This brings to my remembrance the Doctor's criticism, in 1808. He asserted before this assembly, it was impossible for a student of divinity to have one idea of criticism, till he would come to the Doctor's hall. This prompted my curiosity to interrogate the Rev. R. A. one of his superintendants, how he examined the Doctor's students, as it was impossible for them to have a single idea of that science, unless they would become the Doctor's pupils? He told me he could learn me, for he had taught them, that they grub up a hebrew root, commence a process of derivation or extraction upon it, till pulverised into invisible fractions. If a man should study till distracted, he could not tell any meaning the word ever had.

It was thus he delivered the tortured text, ("withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly,") out of the hands of the litigious primitive saints and donatists, lest like its author, it should be torn to pieces by the violence of the people. But when he had it captive, he treated it worse than the chief captain did Paul, when he commanded him to be examined by scourging, for he said the text did not signify a refusal of sacramental communion: but only to debar them civil sociability, such as eating with us at a common table, making our table of natural food more sacred than the table of the Lord.* But perhaps some may say, revilest thou the Lord's high priest? I wist not that he was. But if so, I shall borrow his apology for flagellating his fathers in the church before he did it: because through their ignorance they were not able to run away as fast as he did.† It is not longer than his tithe law bill, he foisted into the communion of saints, and to make it the more emphatic he put it in latin, but to make it the more universally useful, he gave us the translation.‡

(*) Plea, page 339. (†) Plea, page 227. (‡) Plea, page 231.

PART III.



DIALOGUE VIII.

A REVIEW OF OBJECTIONS.

D. D. I demand of my opponent in express terms, to show why we may not hold communion with those who are acknowledged christian churches, with whom God holds communion.

William. The Doctor acknowledges the Episcopal church of England to be a christian church: but he asserts communion with her was not worth the sacrifice of truth and honesty. (1) To which I may boldly add, if communion with an erroneous church is a sacrifice of truth and honesty, such sacrifices are an abomination, and forbidden, for truth is of more value than communion with all the angels of heaven.

2nd. God holds his communion secret with some of his saints, with whom we may not hold public communion, or there could be no suspension of a believer for his error. So a church's carrying on a course of defection by her authorities, in opposition

(1) Plea, page 216.

to her own constitution and all remonstrants, is as sufficient a justification for every individual, (if they mean to support their principles,) to decline her communion without ceremony, as for a church to suspend her own members for holding the same errors. A church may omit a judicial testimony against an erroneous church of Christ, but if their members are received with their errors into communion, it is an approbation of their iniquity, and instead of order in all the churches of the saints, is confusion. Every church has sufficient to exercise her grace, of forbearance with her own members who are professionally sound, with whom we can safely commune.

D. D. If communion with a church is to be interpreted as an approbation of *her* sins, then by the same rule, communion with an individual is to be interpreted as an approbation of his *sins*, and so communion of saints is cut up by the root. (1)

William. Here my opponent sails in wind and tide, as if he had just broke loose and gained his victory, beyond resistance. I feel him not. With all his long harang as if his opponents were children of a day, and that wisdom must die with him, he has never touched the subject on hand, which is, that distinct denominations are so contradictory in their public and judicial testimony concerning articles of faith and means of worship, that they

(1) Plea, page 325.

cannot by any treaty or investigation come into a judicial incorporation, and are so alien to each other, compelled to a judicial distance till further light or darkness have incircled them in one bow, and while at this distance, each church believes they are right and the other wrong. Now, how will their respective individuals without any rule reciprocate? And which side of the question can they be said to seal? I say they are like the two kings, telling lies at one table.

D. D. The principle assumed is false; the true and only safe rule of interpreting social communion is that it always goes so far as the act which expresses it, but is not of necessity to be considered as extending further. This is a rule of inspired authority.

William. I grant it, but it operates on the other side. "If any of them, that believe not," says Paul, "bid you to a feast and ye be disposed to go, whatever is set before you eat, asking no questions for conscience' sake; but if any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not." (1) The Doctor's profound education has surely, without an informer, taught him to know that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is a sealing ordinance, and that every communicant seals the public articles of his faith, calling on heaven and earth to witness the purity of his faith, and the fidelity of his practice. If

(1) 1. Cor. x. 27.

the articles are Arian he seals them; if they are Armenian he seals them. If he does not believe, then he is lying to God and man, and eating and drinking his own damnation.

D. D. If I sit down at the table of the Lord, my act cannot be fairly construed as more than an act of communion in the body and blood of the Lord.

William. Why is it called a seal of the New Testament? And why did the Doctor's next page call it "*my testimony to Christ, my passover crucified for me?*"

Objection 6. As communion is founded upon union, it is a contradiction to hold communion with churches, with which we are not united, and therefore all such communion is inconsistent with distinct ecclesiastical organization. (1)

D. D. If unity of sect be a sufficient reason for all sectarian communion, unity in Christ is a sufficient reason for all christian communion.

William. If we all had the gift of discerning spirits, and no man was capable of deception, we could dispense with profession and church government. We maintain that the sectaries of one church of Christ cannot hold lawful communion with each other, unless they be also united in one external denomination.

D. D. Were it so indeed, that formal union of sects in one and the same organical body is essen-

(1) Plea, page 358.

tial to their christian fellowship; the hand which guides this pen, would account itself superlatively honored in putting the match to a train which would explode under their ramparts and citadels, and so break and shatter and disperse them, that every trace of their existence should disappear from under heaven. (1)

William. Speculative zeal is never more confident than when most in the wrong. If I am to decide by the Doctor's eloquence on this subject, I have no doubt, but if he had it in his power, as he had it in his heart, that our constitution would meet with as powerful a repulse as Stephen did from the council. But it would not be the first time that his catholic church burnt the books of sectarians.

But I farther contend that communion by giving public countenance to churches, erroneous or corrupt, destroys the force, or at least shackles the freedom of the faithful testimony for Christ and his truth. (2)

D. D. If that public countenance which is given to a church by communion with her, were of course a public countenance to her errors or corruptions, the objection would be unanswerable.

William. Unanswerable it is, and he who denies it, must go learn first principles before he can be convinced by argument, then let him go to his bible

(1) Plea, page 360.

(2) Plea, page 343.

and enquire, why Jehoshaphat's ships were broken at Ezion geber. (1)

General communion among visible professors will not only diminish the value but impeach the propriety of all that service, which in every age the churches of God have rendered to pure and undefiled religion, by their judicial confession of faith.

D. D. Confessions are supposed, and in some instances are declared, to contain the terms of communion, that is, the terms upon which alone an individual can be admitted into church fellowship. There are good reasons for doubting whether such opinions are correct and such declaration discreet. (2) To observe once for all, no man is more thoroughly convinced than myself of the propriety, utility, and necessity, of public confessions of faith. In her confessions of faith, then, are strictly and indispensably her terms of official union. But are these terms to regulate private communion? The answer is, no. "Will a discreet man suppose that every plain christian, who knows enough for his salvation and has learned to glorify God in his body and his spirit, can also be acquainted with the whole doctrine of those standards?" A work, which occupied for years the care and study of a body of divines, second to none in the world, which has condensed the literature and labour of their lives, is it a reason-

(1) ii. Chron. xx. 37.

(2) Plea, page 351.

able expectation, that every plain christian should be able to grasp a work like this? Do they pretend to measure his knowledge by their public standards? They do not—not a man of them. If they did, they might resign their houses of worship to the beasts: there would be no place for one christian in ten thousand; and were their example universal, not a church of God would be left standing from the rising to the setting sun.

William. Therefore we have the rant of the day, it is no matter what a man's principles are, if his practice is good. There is a large sect who deny parental representation; they do not feel any obligation on themselves to teach their children the first rudiments of religion, and their ministers only examine their applicants upon experimental religion. The Redeemer is too great for a mediator: the bible is too mysterious for the laity! The psalms of David too hard to be understood, to be sung in the church. According to the depth of divine wisdom in the Westminster assembly, is our system of theology obscured. This is all as valid, as ignorance, the mother of devotion. But, he tells us, said confession was not the standard "for the reciprocation of ministerial fellowship." But when Rankin, one of their ministers, was tried last year, he could not enjoy it as a law; moreover was judged, and condemned, though innocent, without notice of the point, upon which he was suspended. (1) This is anti sectarianism. (2)

(1) See his 2nd Process. (2) A sect of which no account is to be found in any ecclesiastical historian. See editor Christian Observer, v. i, part ii. page 712.

PART IV.

DIALOGUE IX.

D. D. It remains to trace the consequences of sectarian as opposed to catholic communion. These may be viewed, in relation to ourselves, to the church of God at large, and to the surrounding world.

I. *To ourselves.*—The first and most obvious consequence, is an utter self-excision or excommunication from all the rest of Christ's church upon earth. That such is the fact, it would be illuminating the sun to prove.

William. I agree with the Doctor, that to prove his proposition would be as impossible for him, as to illuminate the sun. It is impossible for me to excommunicate myself from a church, with whom I never had any visible connection, or to excommunicate myself from the catholic church without the help of a methodist. This is impossible; (with reverence and joy unspeakable I announce it,) with God, myself, with all men or devils; and the Doctor will sooner eclipse the sun by the purity of his doctrine, than curse whom God hath blessed. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel; he shall not

lie down, until he eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain.

D. D. I stand corrected. I recal the terms self-excision and excommunication, and adopt the word non-communion with the church of the living God: insolated by our own act.

William. The Doctor must amend his term again: insolated is synonymous with self excision or excommunication. He will have to have recourse to the mint for a new vocabulary for his new religion. Neither Boanerges nor Barnabas could understand his law nor his gospel.

D. D. I stand corrected. I shall exchange again and adopt the word *practical*. under a practical, and in some instances a doctrinal, protest against fellowship with her ordinances, which we enjoy only as a part of the great whole.

William. I cannot understand the Doctor's new vocabulary. Let him go on.

D. D. I am done. This next operation is kicking and cuffing, calcis et pugnis.

William. And so persecuted they the prophets.

D. D. II: Upon the church at large, the system of sectarian fellowship operates with a most baneful power.

William. Form is not substance: but it demonstrates what is substance; and if we discard form, how are we to distinguish substance? The worshippers of form may forget substance, but the despisers of form are in danger of believing in visio-

nary substitutes, such as never did and never will exist: but we can commune only with those to whom we have professional evidence that they are his disciples; and if we err in that evidence it makes the condition of his disciples no worse.

D. D. III. We have yet to survey this *seciartan* fellowship from another point in view—its effect *on the surrounding world.*

William. I am tired of the Doctor's censure: let him turn eulogist, and blaze from the bottom of his heart the advantages of the anti-sectarian scheme upon the surrounding world. But as I durst not trust his integrity, I shall speak for him. Let as many articles be agreed upon, as the systematic deists (1) had for the common faith, that no one can scruple; and let it be the common confession for all, if no longer than the apostles' creed, (2) and let as many as can seal it, commune together under the broadest seal of christian fellowship, and all sectarianism will be blotted out of the page of church history: there will be no more need of bible societies or jesuitic missionaries: there will be a united suffrage in the power of the christian world to legislate in favor of one establishment, as despotic as ever was; "we will make us captains and return to Egypt," and we will have as many sacerdotal loungers about courts and palaces, as graced the pa-

(1) The first of whom was Herbert, baron of Cherbury, in the seventeenth century: he had five fundamental articles. (2) *Plea*, page 42, 43, 128.

pal see. If the designing men could lead the undesigning, they would soon show that the anti-sectarian's unbounded benevolence concentrred in his own heart, where God set the world. But one thing is to me a gratification, as I am far from soliciting the displeasure of any man, that the sentiment I oppose is held by men, whose patronage I am as much entitled to, as any other man. As an anti-sectarian is a kind of religious stoic, who holds himself alike indifferent to moral good and evil, I am sure to be embraced in their universal benevolence, and as a return of the compliment, I can assure them, that my designs are as benevolent for their best interest, as theirs can be towards me. But if they mutter under my rod, they will invalidate the virtue of their new religion.

My salutation to all those, whose religion is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated!"

APPENDIX.

While the Doctor and William were closely engaged, Arius, who is an enemy to every testimony he cannot scan by his wisdom, especially to every idea of unity of essence and plurality in persons, whether in God or those made after his image, and conceiving that William made more free than decent with his superior, and having a great partiality for the Doctor from a long and intimate acquaintance, and especially loving him for the liberality of his sentiments, waited with great impatience to humble the arrogance of his opponent, and finding there was no more answer in the Doctor, he says; William, can you tell me how three can be one; and one can be three?

William. Can you tell me how God could love without an object? And how that love could be infinite in a plurality of essence? Or how, if there were but one person in God, he could say, let us make man after our own likeness, and that he created them in the image of God, that the twain made he one, in flesh, bone, and spirit, that they never could have a separate interest, that their love in each other might be the more perfect and the like-

ness of that love in the Godhead? Arius, do you believe there is creative power in God, and that he who possesses it, is God? Can you form an idea of creative power, with more ease than of a trinity of persons in unity of essence, or how your own soul and body are connected in one person? If you are forced to believe what your puny philosophy cannot scan, may you not as well believe the record God gave concerning his son? Does the word *son* offend you, because with us a son and a father are not equal, although I hope and pray your son may be a greater and better man than his father? But suppose it a truth in the divine essence, what word would your wisdom have selected as a better image? As he made us after his image he can only speak by images, and no image is equal to the substance. But when he informs us that by this image he means equality, why find fault? "I and my father are one."

There is by me no robbery of my father's glory that I claim perfect equality with him, in point of the fullness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in me. Worship is only due to God: my father commanded all the angels of God to worship me and honour me as the father, though I assume union with an inferior nature, to exalt it above an angelic. Arius, if you cannot believe these things, your scientific power will come infinitely short of a reformation, much more of salvation, to either the Jew or the

Greek: and that with all your power of language and science, you cannot receive our words, is no mystery. But if ever you do, it will be your gain. Ez. 13.

FINIS.

DEO GRATIAS AGO

ERRATA.

Page 26, 4th line from the top, for *or* read *of*. Page 68, 10th line from bottom read *have before thundered*. Page 95, 9th line from bottom for *nor* read *or*. Page 125, line 13, for *vomit* read *varieties*. Page 180, 3 line from the top, for *bloomed* read *blamed*. Page 183, 12 line from bottom, for *storie* read *store*. Page 189, 10th line from top, for *wanting* read *writing*. Page 217, 7th line from the bottom, for *things* read *thanks*. Page 233, 2d line from the bottom, for *or* read *no*. Page 259, 4th line from bottom, for *now* read *did not*. Page 270, 4th line from the top, for *has* read *is*.

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BARREN COUNTY.

John Sutton.

BOURBON COUNTY.

John Reed,
Capt. William Scott,
George Holloway,
Alexander Magill,
Hon. Jesse Bledsoe,
Alexander M'Clintic,
William Shaw,
John Shaw,
Thomas Shaw,
John M'Kee,
Hubbard Williams,
Hugh M'Clintic,
William Bows,

Miss Aun M'Cracken,
John Cartright,
Capt. Henry Talbot,
Daniel Anderson,
Maj. Samuel Cartright,
Capt. Daniel Cartright,
Henry Cartright,
Maj. Levi Crose,
Neal Cartright,
Capt. William Mitchell,
Col. Butler,
Dennis Leavy,

BATH COUNTY.

Joseph Walker,
John English,
John Kinkaid,
William Howe,
Samuel Sanders,
Daniel Walker,
Clenthus Whitecraft,

Adam R. Faris,
William English,
3 Samuel Feamster,
Rev. J. Barrow,
David Alexander,
Thomas Fletcher, esq.
Henry Sanders,

SHELBY COUNTY.

Maj. William Patterson,
Revd. Arcabald Cameron,
William Littell,
Singleton Wilson,
James Finley,
Alexander Shannon,
James Shannon,
Alexander Reed,
John Shannon,
Robert Brookie,
John Harbison,

John J. Roberts,
David Robison,
Moses Hall, sen.
James Galey,
John Veech,
James Logan
William Shannon,
David Shipman,
David M'Williams,
Pasey Ann Allen,
John Brookie.

CHRISTIAN COUNTY.

Adam Mills,
Matthew Wilson,
Isaac Bean.
Hugh Brown,
James Galbreath,
Forkle Galbreath,
Daniel Galbreath,
Alexander Calvin,
Malcomb Galbreath,
Angus Galbreath,

John Galbreath,
John Blue,
Daniel M'Swain,
Samuel Whiteside,
Ezekial Harrison, esq.
Benj. W. Patton, esq.
Matthew Patton, senr.
John Harrison,
John H. Stevenson,
William Patton,

KENTUCKY.

LIVINGSTON.

William Brown,	Robert Wooside,
Rev'd. Samuel Brown,	3

MADISON.

Robert Cochrane,	John Mason,
Samuel Wallace,	James Anderson,
David More,	William Chap,
John Cochran, elder,	Alexander Mackey,
John Wallace,	George Alcorn, elder,

GARRARD COUNTY.

John Arnold,	Edward Leavel,
Joshua Jacobs,	Benjamin Leaval,
James Sellers,	James Wallace,
William George Lear,	William Wallace,
Edmund Smith,	William Miller,
Thomas Scott,	Maj. William Lackey,
Mary Stevenson,	Nathaniel Lewis,
John Orr,	William Wooley,
George Stevenson,	Salim Wallace,
Robert Lytle,	Allen Wallace,
Joshua Jacobs,	Josiah Wallace,
Mary Stevenson,	Rankin Wallace.
Elijah Williams,	

FLEMING COUNTY.

George Glass,	2 Mrs. Margaret Butler,
Thomas Henry,	Mrs. Fitzgerald,
John Lee,	Samuel Wood,
James Young,	Joseph Dunkin,
James Smith,	Austin Parks,
Archibald Grimes,	Martin Dunkin,
David Henderson,	Samuel Wills,
John Brain,	Capt. James Nealis,
John Light,	Henry McClune,
John Smith,	Samuel Straken,
James Brain,	Andrew Wills,
James Mekemson,	Alexander Ramsey,
George Crow,	Thomas D. Andrews,
Madcaeff Lees,	Rev'd. John Edgar,
Peter Lantermon,	Henry McClune,
Samuel Lantermon,	James Parks. elder,

GALLATIN COUNTY.

John Gibson,	Agus Haddan,
Capt. David Gibson,	Samuel Meek,
Joseph Henderson,	James McCracken,

KENTUCKY:

PENDLETON COUNTY.

William Henderson,

BENSON BOUNTY:

Col. Wesley Hardin,

SALT RIVER.

Isaac Bogart,
Joseph Adams,
John M'Coun,
Lewis Davis,
Ezekiel Lyons,
Matthew Frasythe,

David Couingor,
Stephen Lyons,
Molly Magee,
James Tilford,
Capt. Samuel M'Coun,
Sally Tilford,

GREENFIELD COUNTY.

Alexander Morrow,
Noble Crawford.

Isaac Smith,
Thomas Dunlap.

BOON COUNTY.

Nathaniel M'Clure,
John Anderson,

Joseph Anderson,
Thomas Anderson,

HENRY COUNTY.

John Butler
James Dodd

Samuel Wester

NICHOLAS COUNTY.

John Campbell
James Hudleson
James Baker
James Robison
Henry Thompson, jun.

Jane Johnson
2 William Clintock
Daniel Thompson
Valentine Starmant,

FRANKLIN COUNTY.

John Pope, esq.

Richard Blair, esq.

MASON COUNTY.

David Duncan.

12

HARDIN COUNTY.

Samuel Finley.

MOUNT STERLING.

John Peeble

Samuel Femster,

ALLEN COUNTY.

George Richee,

MUCKSKIN.

James Watt,
Daniel Matthews,

William Smith,

OHIO.

PAINT CREEK.

John Alexander

John Adams.

NEW ALEXANDER.

Benjamin M'Clure

ROSS COUNTY.

James Collins

Samuel M'Williams.

James Colliers.

CAMPBELL COUNTY.

John Parlisle,

Elijah Griffith,

John Griffith,

Joseph Anderson.

William. Griffith,

JEFFERSON COUNTY.

James M'Hatton,

John Burge' Portland,

HARRISON COUNTY.

John Hudelson,

Robert Harrison,

Samuel Patton,

John Trimble,

Robert Sewart,

William Garmonty,

Robert Craig,

Samuel Ferguson.

MERCER COUNTY.

Rev. Henry B. Bascom,

TENNESSEE.

MAURY COUNTY.

John Mathews,

Moses A. Miley,

Isaac Faris,

John Faris,

John Faris,

James Lusk,

James Robeson,

Samuel Scott,

Thomas Craig Faris,

Michael Baldridge,

Alexander Faris,

William Henderson,

Mary Alexander,

James Hannah,

Robert Miligan,

Robert Mathews,

Hugh Douglass,

Robert Ramsey,

Caleb Faris,

Abner Mathews,

Alexander Faris Miley,

John A. Lapsley,

Joseph Hart,

Mrs. Mary Wallace.

DIXON COUNTY.

Col. John Nesbett,

Joseph Nesbett,

Eleazer Smith,

Maj. Christopher Strong,

William B. Hadden,

Besse Rowen,

TENNESSEE.

GILES COUNTY.

Thomas Bingham.

WISAM COUNTY.

Shadrach Cayce.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY.

William Jordan,

Thomas Carroway.

OHIO.

ADAMS COUNTY.

John Wickerham,	James Finley,
Rev. William Baldrige, 12	James Campbell,
William Baldrige,	Thomas Patton,
John Leach,	George Greman,
Joseph M'Neels,	William M'Very,
A. H. Baldrige,	James C. Coskey,
Samuel Finley,	Adam Kirkpatrick
Nathaniel Patton,	Duncan M'Kenzie,
Robert Anderson,	James Binken,

MONTGOMERY COUNTY.

George G. Bradford,	Robert Scott,
Mathews Qenkin,	John Biggen.

CLARK COUNTY.

James Barnes,	John Fuston,
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GREEN COUNTY.

Hugh Andrews,	James Andrews,
John M'Culbey,	James January,

MUSKINCUM.

Rev. Abram Craig.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY.

Elizabeth Wilson,	Emanuel Carpenter,
Robert Wilson,	Asa Mounts,
Natnaniel Wilson,	William Wilson,
Birus Stinett,	Timothy Sturgeon,

LANCASTER.

J. Willson,	George King.
Samuel Offinger,	

OHIO.

ROBISON COUNTY.

Sarah Crockett.

DAYTON.

David Lindsly,

Col. James Thompson,

GREEN COUNTY.

Rev. John Steel,

James Gill,

Samuel H. Millon,

Samuel Gowdy,

James M'Coy,

William Torrence,

James Shaw,

John Pinkerton,

James Goudy,

Samuel Gamble,

Robert Gowdy,

Robert Kendel,

George Gordon,

Hugh Hammel.

James Clarey,

HIGHLAND COUNTY.

William Wright.

MASON COUNTY.

Maj. William Beaty.

INDIANA.

GIBSON COUNTY.

Judge John M'Creery,

Alexander Johnson,

Josesh Fleming,

4

JEFFERSON COUNTY.

Rev. Andrew Fulton,

David Anderson,

James Anderson,

James Mathews,

George Shannon,

James Mackey,

Alexander Thomson,

James Patterson,

William Watson,

John Anderson,

OUTING COUNTY.

A. Kearly,

WASHINGTON COUNTY.

James M'Kinney,

John M'Pheeters,

John M'Pheeters,

Joseph Scott,

John Scott, esq.

2 Alexander M'Pheeters.

James M'Pheeters,

ORANGE COUNTY.

Devid M'Kinney,

William Rigney,

Andrew Walker,

Morton Rigney.

Hugh Holmes,

ILLINOIS.

WHITE COUNTY.

Andrew Story,	Robert Wilson,
John Story,	Thomas Logan,
Robert Story,	Alexander Logan,
George Story,	

GALLINTON COUNTY.

George Robison,	Capt. George K. Logan,
Alexander Robison,	John Robison.

PENNSYLVANIA.

WESTMORELAND.

Robert Rainey,	John Rainey.
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GREAT CAVE.

John Rankin

3

CANNONSBURG.

Rev. John Riddle,

VIRGINIA.

ROCKINGHAM DOUNTY.

Jesse Harrison.

AUGUSTA COUNTY.

Robert M^cPheeters.