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THE
GLORY
OF A
TRUE CHURCH,
And its
Discipline display'd.

Wherein a true Gospel-Church
is described.

Together with the Power of the
Keys, and who are to be let
in, and who to be shut out.

By BENJAMIN KEACH.

Mat. 18. 18. *Whatsoever ye shall bind
on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven;
and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth,
shall be loosed in Heaven.*

LONDON;
Printed in the Year 1697.



To the Baptized Churches,
particularly to that under
my Care.

My Brethren,

EVery House or Building con-
sisteth both of Matter and
Form: And so doth the
Church of Christ, or House
of the Living God.

The Matter or Materials with
which it is built are Lively Stones,
i. e. Converted Persons: Also the
Matter and Form must be according
to the Rule and Pattern shewed in
the Mount, I mean Christ's Insti-
tution, and the Apostolical Churches
Constitution, and not after Mens In-
ventions.

Now some Men, because the Ty-
pical Church of the Jews was Na-
tional, and took in their Carnal Seed
(as such) therefore the same Mat-
ter and Form they would have un-
der the Gospel.

But tho a Church be rightly built
in both these respects, i. e. of fit Mat-
ter and right Form, yet without a re-
gular and orderly Discipline, it will

soon lose its Beauty, and be polluted.
 Many Reverend Divines of the Congregational way, have written most excellently (it is true) upon this Subject, I mean on Church-Discipline; but the Books are so voluminous that the Poorer Sort can't purchase them, and many others have not Time or Learning enough to improve them to their Profit; and our Brethren the Baptists have not written (as I can gather) on this Subject by it self: Therefore I have been earnestly desired by our Members, and also by one of our Pastors, to write a small and plain Tract concerning the Rules of the Discipline of a Gospel-Church; that all Men may not only know our Faith, but see our Order in this case also. True, this (tho plain) is but short, but may be it may provoke some other Person to do it more fully. Certainly, ignorance of the rules of Discipline causes no small trouble and disorders in our Churches; and if this may be a Prevention, or prove profitable to any, let God have the Glory, and I have my End: Who am, Yours

Aug. 18.
 1697.

Benj. Keach.

The Glory of a Gospel-
Church, and the true
Orderly Discipline
thereof explain'd.

*Concerning a True and Orderly
Gospel-Churck.*

BEfore there can be any Orderly Discipline among a Christian Assembly, they must be orderly and regularly constituted into a Church-state, according to the Institution of Christ in the Gospel.

I. A Church of Christ, according to the Gospel-Institution, is a Congregation of Godly Christians, who as a Stated-Assembly (being first baptized upon the Profession of Faith) do by mutual agreement and consent give themselves up to the

*Act. 2. 41,
42, 43, 44.
Act. 8. 14.
Act. 19. 4,
5, 6.
Eph. 1. 1,
2. and 2.
12, 13, 19.*

Col. 1.2,4, the Lord, and one to another, according to the Will of God; and
 12. do ordinarily meet together in one
 1 Pet. 2. 5. Place, for the Publick Service and
 Aſſ. 5. 13. Worship of God; among whom
 14. the Word of God and Sacraments
 Rom. 6. 17. are duly adminiſtred, according
 Heb. 6. 1, 2. to Chriſt's Inſtitution.

2. The Beauty and Glory of
 Rom. 6. 3. which Congregation doth conſiſt
 4, 5. in their being all Converted Per-
 1 Pet. 2. 4, ſons, or *lively Stones*; being by the
 5, 6. Holy Spirit, and Faith of the O-
 Eph. 2. 20; peration of God, united to Jeſus
 21. Chriſt the Precious Corner-Stone,
 Col. 2. 19. and only foundation of every Chri-
 ſtian, as well as of every particu-
 lar Congregation, and of the whole
Catholick Church.

3. That every Perſon before
 they are admitted Members, in ſuch
 a Church ſo conſtituted, muſt de-
 clare to the Church (or to ſuch
 with the Paſtor, that they ſhall
 Pſ. 65. 16. appoint) what God hath done for
 Eccl. 11. 4. their Souls, or their Experiences of
 a Saving work of Grace upon their
 23. 24. Hearts; and alſo the Church ſhould
 1 Pet. 3. 15. enquire after, and take full ſatisfac-
 2 Cor. 8. 5. tion concerning their Holy Lives,
 Jer. 50. 5. or Good Converſations. And

And when admitted Members, before the Church they must solemnly enter into a Covenant, to walk in the Fellowship of that particular Congregation, and submit themselves to the Care and Discipline thereof, and to walk faithfully with God in all his Holy Ordinances, and there to be fed and have Communion, and worship God there, when the Church meets (if possible) and give themselves up to the watch and charge of the Pastor and Ministry thereof: the Pastor then also signifying in the name of the Church their acceptance of each Person, and endeavour to take the care of them, and to watch over them in the Lord, (the Members being satisfied to receive them, and to have Communion with them.) And so the Pastor to give them the right Hand of Fellowship of a Church, or *Church Organical*.

A Church thus constituted ought forthwith to choose them a Pastor, Elder or Elders, and Deacons, (we reading of no other Officers, or Offices abiding in the Church.)

1 *Tim.* 3. 2, and what kind of Men they ought
 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. to be, and how qualified, is laid
Tit. 1. 5, 6, down by *Paul* to *Timothy*, and to
 7, 8, 9, 10. *Titus*. Moreover, they are to take
 special care, that both Bishops,
 Overseers, or Elders; as well as the
 Deacons, have in some competent
 manner all those Qualifications;
 and after in a Day of solemn Pray-
 er and Fasting, that they have elec-
 ted them, (whether Pastor, &c. or
 Deacons) and they accepting the
 Office, must be ordained with
 Prayer, and laying on of Hands of
 the Eldership; being first prov'd,
 and found meet and fit Persons for
 so Sacred an Office: Therefore
 such are very disorderly Churches
 who have no Pastor or Pastors or-
 dained, they acting not according
 to the Rule of the Gospel, having
 something wanting.

Tit. 1. 7.*Act.* 6. 6.1 *Tim.* 5. 22.

*Of the work of a Pastor, Bishop
 or Overseer.*

I. **T**HE work of a Pastor is to
 preach the Word of Christ,
 or to feed the Flock, and to admini-
 ster all the Ordinances of the Gospel
 which

1 *Cor.* 9.
16, 17.

which belong to his Sacred Office, *Act. 20. 31*,
 and to be faithful and laborious *35.*
 therein, studying to shew himself
 approved unto God, a *Work-man* *2 Tim. 2. 15.*
that needeth not be ashamed, rightly
dividing the Word of Truth. He *2 Cor. 4.*
 is a *Steward of the Mysteries of* *1, 2.*
God, therefore ought to be a Man *1 Tim. 3.*
 of good Understanding and Expe-
 rience, being sound in the Faith,
 and one that is acquainted with
 the Mysteries of the Gospel: Be-
 cause he is to feed the People with *Jer. 3. 15.*
Knowledge and Understanding. He
 must be faithful and skilful to de-
 clare the Mind of God, and dili- *2 Tim. 4. 2.*
 gent therein, also to preach in sea-
 son and out of season; God having
 committed unto him the Ministry
 of Reconciliation, a most choice *2 Cor. 5. 15.*
 and sacred Trust. What Interest
 hath God greater in the World
 which he hath committed unto
 Men than this? Moreover, he must
 make known the whole Counsel of *Act. 20. 20,*
 God to the People. *27.*

2. A Pastor is to visit his Flock, *Prov.*
 to know their state, and to watch *1 Theff. 5.*
 over them, to support the weak, and *15.*
 to strengthen the feeble-minded, and.

The Glory of a True Church,

succour the tempted; and to reprove them that are unruly.

3. To pray for them at all times, and with them also when sent for, and desired, and as Opportunity serves; and to sympathize with them in every State and Condition, with all Love and Compassion.

4. And to shew them in all respects, as near as he can, a good Example in Conversation, Charity, Faith and Purity; that his Ministry may be the more acceptable to all, and the Name of God be glorified, and Religion delivered from Reproach.

5. He must see he carries it to all with all Impartiality, not preferring the Rich above the Poor, nor lord it over God's Heritage, nor assume any greater Power than God hath given him; but to shew a humble and meek Spirit, nay to be clothed with Humility.

The Office and Work of Deacons.

The Deacons Work.

Akt. 6. 1, 2,

3, 5, 7, 8, 9,

10.

THE Work of Deacons is to serve Tables, viz. to see to provide for the Lord's Table, the Mini-

Minister's Table, and the Poor's Table. (1.) They should provide Bread and Wine for the Lord's Table. (2.) See that every Member contributes to the Maintenance of the Ministry, that according to their Ability, and their own voluntary Subscription or Obligation. (3.) That each Member do give weekly to the Poor, as God has blessed him. (4.) Also visit the Poor; and know their Condition as much as in them lies; that none, especially the aged Widows, be neglected.

Acts 5. 7, 8, 9, 10.

1 Cor. 16. 2.

Acts 6. 1.

Of the Duty of Church-Members to their Pastor.

IT'S the Duty of every Member to pray for their Pastor and Teachers. *Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may run and be glorified. Again, saith Paul, Praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the Mystery of Christ. Prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him. They that neglect this Duty seem*

1 Thess. 5. 25.

Heb. 13. 18.

seem not to care either for their Minister, or their own Souls, or whether Sinners be converted, and the Church edified or not. They pray for their daily Bread, and will they not pray to have the Bread of Life plentifully broken to them?

Motives to this.

1. Ministers Work is great:
2 Cor. 2. 16. *Who is sufficient for these things?*
 2. The Opposition is not small which is made against them.
1 Cor. 16. 9.
 3. God's loud Call is (as well
4, 5. as Ministers themselves) for the Saints continual Prayers and Supplication for them.
1 Tim. 4. 3.
 4. Their Weakness and Temptations are many.
 5. The Increase and Edification of the Church depends upon the Success of their Ministry.
 6. If they fall or miscarry, God is greatly dishonoured, and his Ways and People reproached.
- 2dly. They ought to shew a reverential Estimation of them, being Christ's Ambassadors, also called Rulers, Angels, &c. they that honour them, and receive them, honour

honour and receive Jesus Christ.

Esteem them very highly in Love 1 Thess. 3. 13.
for their Work sake. Again, he
 saith, *Let the Elders that rule well,*
be accounted worthy of double Ho- 1 Tim. 5. 17.
nour, especially they who labour in
Word and Doctrine: that is, as I
 conceive, such that are most labo-
 rious.

3dly. 'Tis their Duty to submit themselves unto them, that is, in all their Exhortations, good Counsels and Reproofs; and when they call to any extraordinary Duty, as Prayer, Fasting, or days of Thanksgiving, if they see no just cause why such days should not be kept, they ought to obey their Pastor or Elder, as in other cases also. *Obey them that have the Rule* Heb. 13. 5,
over you, and submit your selves. 17.

4thly. It is their Duty to take care to vindicate them from the unjust Charges of evil Men, or Tongue of Infamy, and not to take Jer. 20. 10.
 up a Reproach against them by Zeph. 2. 8.
 report, nor to grieve their Spirits, 2 Cor. 11.
 or weaken their Hands. 21, 23.

5thly. 'Tis the Duty of Members to go to them when under Trouble or Temptations. 6thly.

7thly, It is their Duty to provide a comfortable Maintenance for them and their Families, suitable to their State and Condition. Let Gal. 6. 8. him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things. Who goeth a Warfare at his own Charge? who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? &c. Even so hath 1Cor. 9. 7, 8. the Lord ordained, that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? They should minister to them cheerfully with all readiness of Mind. Ministers are not to ask for their Bread, but to receive it honourably. The Ministers Maintenance, tho it is not by Tythes, &c. as under the Law, yet they have now as just a right to a comfortable Maintenance as they had then; the equity of the Duty is the same; Our Saviour, saith Dr. Owen, and the Apostles plead it from grounds of Equity and Justice; and all kind of Laws and Rules of Righteousness among Men of all sorts calls for it.

7thly.

See Dr. Owen's Exposition, p. 21, 22.

7thly. It is their Duty to adhere to them, and abide by them in all their Trials and Persecutions for ^a ~~the~~ ^{the} Word: *Ye were not ashamed of me in my Bonds, &c.* ^{2 Tim 4. 16, 17, 18.}

8thly. Dr. Owen adds another *Esbo*, pag. 27. Duty of the Members to their Pastor, viz. to agree to come together upon his Appointment: *When they were come, and had gathered the Church together, &c.* ^{Act. 14. 27.}

Query, *Are there no ruling Elders besides the Pastor?*

Ans^r. There might be such in the Primitive Apostolical Church, but we see no ground to believe it it an abiding Office to continue in the Church, but was only temporary.

1. Because we have none of the Qualifications of such Elders mention'd, or how to be chosen.

2. Because we read not particularly what their Work and Business is, or how distinct from preaching Elders; tho we see not but the Church may (if she sees meet) choose some able and discreet Brethren to be *Helps in Government*: ^{Rom. 12. 8.}
We have the Qualifications of Bishops

1 Tim. 3. shops and Deacons directly laid down, and how to be chosen, and
Tit. 1. 5, 6, 7. their Work - declared, but of no other Office or Officers in the Church, but these only.

Quest. May an Elder of one Church if called, warrantably administer all Ordinances to another?

Act. 20. 17, 27, 28. *Ans.* No surely; for we find no warrant for any such Practice, he being only ordained Pastor or Elder of that particular Church that chose him, &c. and hath no Right or Authority to administer as an Elder in any other where he is not so much as a Member.

Tit. 1. 5.

1 Cor. 14. 40.

1 Tim. 3.

Quest. May a Church call out a Teacher that is no ordained Elder to administer all Ordinances to them?

Ans. You may as well ask, May a Church act disorderly? Why were Ministers to be ordained, if others unordained might warrantably do all their Work? if therefore they have no Person fitly qualified for that Office, they must look out from abroad for one that is. Yet (as we say) Necessity has no Law; provided therefore they can't do either, it is better their Teacher be

be called to do it, than that the Church should be without their Food, and Church-Ordinances neglected; yet let all Churches take care to organize themselves, and not through Covetousness, or neglect of Duty, rest incomplete Churches, and so under Sin. God is the God of Order, and not of Confusion, in all the Churches of the Saints. And how severely did God deal of old with such that meddled with the Priests Work and Office, who were not of the Priesthood, nor called by him to administer in holy things!

1 Cor. 14.
33, 38.

Of the reception of Members.

Quest. **W**hat is the Order of receiving Members into the Church, that were no Members any where before?

Ans. **I.** The Person must give an account of his Faith, and of the Work of Grace upon his Soul before the Church; and also a strict Enquiry must be made about his Life and Conversation: but if through Bashfulness the Party cannot speak before the Congregation,

Of the reception of Members into the Church.

Psal. 66. 16.

Acts 9. 26,

27.

3 Job. 9, 10.

Rom. 14.

17, 19.

1 Pet. 3. 15.

on,

1 Cor. 14, 40. on, the Elder and two or three more Persons may receive an account of his or her Faith, and report it to the Church, But if full Satisfaction by the Testimony of good and credible Persons is not given of the Party's Life and Conversation, he must be put by *Acts 11, 2,* until Satisfaction is obtained in *3, 4, 5, 6.* that respect. Moreover, when the Majority are satisfied, and yet one or two Persons are not, the Church and Elder will do well to wait a little time, and endeavour to satisfy such Persons, especially if the Reasons of their dissent seem weighty.

Quest. What is to be done when a Person offers himself for Communion from a Church that is corrupt, or erroneous in Principles?

Ans. 1. The Church ought to take an account of his Faith in all Fundamental Points, and of the Work of Grace upon his Heart.

2. And if satisfied, then to send also to that corrupt People, to know whether they have any thing or not against his Life and Conversation: if satisfied in both these respects, the Church may receive him.

Quest.

Quest. *To whom is it Members To whom
join themselves? is it to the Elder, Members
or to the Church? join them-*

Ans^r. They are joined to the whole Community of the Church, being incorporated as Members thereof, and thereto abide, tho the Pastor be removed by Death. *Acts. 2. 47.
& 5. 11, 15.*

*The Power of the Keys, with
Church-- Discipline, and
Members Duties one to a-
nother.*

1. **WE** judg it necessary that a *A monthly*
Day monthly be appoint- *day to be*
ed particularly for Discipline, and *appointed*
not to manage such affairs on the *for Disci-*
Lord's-day, which should be spent *pline.*
in the publick Worship of God, of
a different nature: besides, such
things may (on the account of
Discipline) come before the Church
which may not be expedient to be
heard on the Lord's-day, lest it
disturb the Spirits of any Mem-
bers, and hinder their Meditation
on the Word which they have
newly

newly heard: tho' in small Congregations perhaps a day in two or three Months may be sufficient.

The Power of the Keys committed to the Church.

*Acts 16.5.
2 Thess. 1.
3, 6.*

2. The Power of the Keys, or to receive in and shut out of the Congregation, is committed unto the Church: The Political Power of Christ, saith Dr. *Chauncy*, is in the Church, whereby it is exercised in the Name of Christ, having all lawful Rule and Government within it self, which he thus proves, *viz.*

‘ 1. The Church essential is the ‘ first Subject of the Keys.

‘ 2. They must of necessity to ‘ their Preservation, purge them- ‘ selves from all pernicious Mem- ‘ bers.

‘ 3. They have Power to orga- ‘ nize themselves with Officers.

‘ 4. If need be that they call ‘ an Officer from without, or one ‘ of another Church, they must ‘ first admit him a Member, that ‘ they may ordain their Officer ‘ from among themselves.

‘ 5. They have Power to reject ‘ a scandalous Pastor from Office ‘ and Membership.

‘ This Power of Christ is ex- ‘ erted

erted as committed to them by the Hands of the Elder appointed by Christ, the due management whereof is in and with the Church to be his Care and Trust, as a Steward, whereof he is accountable to Christ and the Church, not lording it over God's Heritage. And that the Power of the Keys is in the Church, appears to me from *Mat. 18.* *If he will not hear the Church;* it is not said, if he will not hear the Elder, or Elders. As also that of the Apostle, in directing the Church to cast out the Incestuous Person, he doth not give this Counsel to the Elder or Elders of the Church, but to the Church; so he commands the Church to withdraw from every Brother that walks disorderly. *Purge out the old Leaven, that you may be a new Lump.*

Dr. Ch. *sum*
cy on the
Power of
the Keys,
P. 335.

1 *Cor.* 5.4,
3.

2 *Theff.* 3.
6, 14.

3 *Cor.* 5.7.

Of Church-Censures.

NOW as to Church-Censures *Of Church-Censures.* I understand but two besides Suspension, *viz.* (1.) Withdrawing from a Member that walks disorderly.

disorderly. (2.) Casting out, or Excommunicating such that are either guilty of notorious or scandalous Crimes, of Heresy, &c. or of contemning the Authority of the Church.

Briefly to each of these.

1. Suspension is to be when a Member falls under Sin, and the Church wants time fully to hear the matter, and so can't withdraw from him, or cast him out.

2. If any Member walks disorderly, tho' not guilty of gross scandalous Sins, he or she, as soon as it is taken notice of, ought to be admonished, and endeavours to be used to bring him to Repentance:

Thess. 3. For we hear that there are some
11, 12. which walk disorderly, not working at all, but are busy-bodies. Such as meddle with Matters that concern them not, it may be (instead of following their Trade and Business.) they go about from one Member's House to another, telling or carrying of Tales and Stories of this Brother, or of that Brother or Sister, which perhaps may be true, or perhaps false, and may

may be too to the Reproach or Scandal of some Member or Members, which, if so, it is back-biting; and that is so notorious a Crime, that without Repentance they shall not ascend God's holy Hill. Back-biting is a diminishing our Neighbour's, or Brother's good Name, either by denying him his due Praise, or by laying any thing to his Charge falsely or irregularly, or without sufficient cause or evidence, *Thus our Annotators.* But this of disorderly walking does not amount to such a Crime, but Evils not so notorious; *Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own Bread.* They must be admonished.

2 *Thess.* 3.
42.

1. An Admonition is a faithful Endeavour to convict a Person of a Fault, both as to Matter of Fact and Circumstance; and this Admonition must be given first, if it be private, by that Brother that knows or has knowledg of the Fault or Evil of the Person offending, whether the Elder, or Member; for any

any private Brother ought to admonish such with all care and faithfulness before he proceeds farther. But if it be publick, the Church ought to send for the Offender, and the Pastor must admonish him before all.

2. But if after all due Endeavours used he is not reclaimed, but continues a disorderly Person, the Church must withdraw from him.

2 Theff. 2. 6. Now we command you Brethren, in Disorder-ly Mem- bers only to be with- drawn from. *the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Traditions he received from us.* This is not a delivering up to Satan, Excommunicating or dismembering the Person; for this fort are still to be owned as Members, tho disorderly ones: the Church must note him so as not to have Communion or Company with him in that sense; yet count him not as an Enemy, but exhort him as a Brother: if any Man obey not our Word, note that Man.

2 Theff. 2. 14, 15. It appears that such who refuse to adhere to what the Pastor commands and exhorts to, in the Name of

of Christ, are to be deemed disorderly Persons, as such are who meet *Heb. 12. 25.* not with the Church when assembled together to worship God, or that neglect private or family Prayer, or neglect their attendance on the Lord's-Supper, or to contribute to the necessary Charges of the Church, or suffer any Evils unreproved in their Children; all such may be lookt upon disorderly Walkers, and ought to be proceeded against according to this Rule, or divulge the private Resolves of the Church, as well as in many like cases.

Of private Offences of one Brother against another.

I. **A**S touching private Offences, *Of private* the Rule *Mat. 18.* is to be *Offences be-* observed, only this by the way *tween Bro-* must be premised, *viz.* if but one *ther and* Brother or two have the knowledg *Brother.* of some Members Crime, yet if it be publickly known to the World, and the Name of God be reproach-
B ed,

ed, it being an immoral Act, a private Brother is not to proceed with such an Offender, according to *Mat. 18.* but forthwith to bring it to the Church, that the publick Scandal may be taken off.

2. But if it be a private Offence or Injury done to a Brother or Sister in particular, and not being a notorious scandalous Sin, that Brother must not mention it to one Soul, either within, or without the Church, until he hath proceeded according to the Rule.

(1.) He must tell his Brother his Fault. *Moreover, if thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault betwixt thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother.*

Thou must labour in Love and all Affections to convince him of his Fault; but if he will not hear thee,

(2.) Thou must take one or two more, but besure see they are discreet Persons, and such that are most likely to gain upon him; and they with thee are to labour with all Wisdom to bring him to the sense

sense of his Fault: 'tis not just to speak to him, as if that were enough; no, no, but to take all due Pains, and to strive to convince him, that so the matter may be issued, and the Church not troubled with it: *But if he will not hear thee, take one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three Witnesses every word may be established.* Mat. 18. 16.

3. But if he will not hear them after all due Means and Admonitions used, then it must be brought to the Church; and if he will not hear the Church, he must be cast out: The Elder is to put the Question, whether the offending Brother be in their Judgments incorrigible, and refuseth to hear the Church; which passing in the Affirmative by the Vote of ~~the~~ Congregation, or the Majority of the Brethren by the lifting up of their Hands, or by their Silence; the Pastor after calling upon God, and opening the nature of the Offence, and the Justness of their Proceedings, in the Name and by the Authority of Christ,

*Dr. Ch. un-
C, P. 345.*

*The Sisters
are not to
vote in the
Church.*

pronounces the Sentence of Excommunication to this effect.

The Act
of Excom-
munica-
tion or
Church-
Censure.

1 Cor. 5.

That A. B. being guilty of great Iniquity, and not manifesting unfeigned Repentance, but refusing to hear the Church, I do in the Name, and, by, the Authority of Christ, pronounce and declare that he is to be, and is hereby excommunicated, excluded or cast out of the Congregation, and no longer to be owned a Brother, or a Member of this Church; and this for the destruction of the Flesh, that his Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And this we believe is the substance of that which the Apostle calls a delivering up to Satan, he being cast into the World, which is called the Kingdom of Satan, where he rules and reigns.

Pag. 345. The delivery unto Satan (saith Dr. Chancy) signifies only the solemn Exclusion of a Person from the Communion of the Church, the visible Kingdom of Christ, and disfranchizing him, or divesting him of all visible Right to Church Privileges, casting him

' him into the Kingdom of the
' World, where the Prince of
' Darkness rules in the Children of
' disobedience. And this being
done, he is to be esteemed to be no
better than an Heathen Man, or
Publican, or as an evil Person, and *Mat. 18.*
not to have so much as intimate ci- *17.*
vil Communion withal.

*Of Scandalous Persons guilty
of gross Acts of Immorality.*

IF any Member fall into any gross *Of Scanda-*
Acts of Sin, as *Swearing, Lying,* *lous Crim:s*
Drunkenness, Fornication, Covet- *or Evils.*
ousness, Extortion, or the like, and
it is known and publickly spread
abroad to the great scandal and re-
proach of Religion, and of the Ho-
ly Name of God, his Church, and
People; the said Offender so charg-
ed, the Church must send one or
two Brethren to him to come be-
fore the Congregation: if he will
not come, but doth slight and con-
temn the Authority of the Church,
that will bring farther Guilt upon
him, for which Offence he incurs.

The Glory of a True Church,

the Censure before-mentioned. But if he doth appear, his Charge is to be laid before him, and the Witnesses called; and after he has made his Defence, and said all he hath to say, and the Congregation finds him Guilty, then the same Censure is to pass upon him, to the end he may be brought to unfeigned Repentance, and the Name of God cleared; and some time must be taken to make it appear that he hath true Repentance, by the Reformation of his Life and holy walking afterwards, before he be received again, and the Censure of the Church in a solemn manner be taken off.

*The Church
Censure on
notorious
Offenders
is the same
with that
in Mat. 18.*

P. 343.

Dr. Channcy puts this Question,

Quest. 'How is a Church to proceed in case of open and notorious Scandals?

*'The Answer is, 'the matter of Fact, as such, being beyond all question; the Church is to proceed immediately to censure, to vindicate the Honour of Christ and his Church, and to manifest
'to*

and its Discipline explain'd.

91

to the World their just Indignation against such Notorious Offenders, and wait for a well-grounded and tryed Evidence of his true Repentance under that Ordinance of Christ which is appointed to that end.

1. Tim. 5.
24.
Act. 5. 11.
Jud. 23.
1. Cor. 5.
2 Cor. 7.
11.

Observe, It is the opinion of the Doctor, that tho the Person be penitent, yet because his Sin is open and scandalous, he ought to be cast out to vindicate the Honour of Christ and the Church, as part of his just Punishment (that being one reason of the Ordinance of Excommunication) as well as to bring the Person to thorow Repentance; and we are of his Mind. *Paul* takes no notice in the case of the *Incestuous Person* of his immediate Repentance; or if he repent not, then, &c.

But says he, *deliver such a one to Satan, &c.* Saith the Lord, *if her Father had but spit in her Face, should she not be ashamed seven Days? Let her be shut out from the Camp seven Days: (speaking of Miriam) and after that let her be received in again.*

Numb. 12.
14.

Of

Of dealing with Hereticks and
Blasphemers.Of dealing
with Here-
ticks.

AS touching Hereticks or He-
resy, the same Censure, when
they are convicted, ought to pass
against them; Heresy is commonly
restrained to signify any perverse
Opinion or Error in a fundamental
Point of Religion, as to deny the
Being of God, or the Deity of
Christ, or his Satisfaction, and Jus-
tification alone by his Righteous-
ness, or to deny the Resurrection of
the Body, or eternal Judgment, or
the like. Yet our Annotators say,
the Word signifies the same thing
with Schism and Divisions; which
if so, such that are guilty of Schism
or Divisions in the Church, ought
to be excommunicated also. *Here-
sies* are called *Damnable* by the A-
postle *Peter*; without Repentance
such cannot be saved, *as bring in
Damnable Heresies, denying the
Lord that bought them.*

See Pool's
Annot. on
1 Cor. 11.
19

2 Pet. 2.1.

Two things render a Man an
Heretick according to the common
fig-

signification of the Word. 1. An *Who is an Error in matters of Faith, Funda- Heretick.* mental or Essential to Salvation.

2. Stubbornness and Contumacy in holding and maintaining it. *A Man that is an Heretick, after the first and second Admonition reject.* Tit. 3. 10.

Now that this Rejection is all one with Excommunication, appears by what Paul speaks, 1 Tim. 1. 20.

Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to Blasphe- 1 Tim. 1. 19, 20. me. Their Heresy, or Blasphemy was in saying the Resurrection was past.

Some would have none be counted an Heretick but he who is convicted and condemned so to be in his own Conscience, mistaking Paul's Words, *Knowing that he that is such, is subverted, being condemned of himself.* He may be condemned of himself, tho not for his Heresy, yet for his spending his Time about Questions, and strife of Words, to the disquieting the Peace of the Church; or tho not condemned of himself directly, yet indirectly; according

ing to the Purport of his own Notion, or what he grants about the Point in Debate, &c. Else the Apostle refers to some notable and notorious self-condemned Heretick. It is a great question, whether *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* were condemned in their own Consciences, about that Heresy charged upon them, and yet were delivered up to Satan. However the Rule is plain, respecting any that are subverted, and resolutely maintain any Heretical Notion, *i. e.* after he hath been twice (or oftner) admonished, that is, after all due means used, and pains taken with him, to convince him of his abominable Error; and yet if he remains obstinate, he must be *delivered up to Satan*; that is, the righteous censure of the Church must pass upon him, as in the case of other notorious Crimes. Heresy is a Work of the Flesh: and hence some conceive such ought to be punished by the Civil Magistrate.

Quest.

Quest. What is an Admonition?

Ans^w It is a faithful endeavour *What an admonition is.*
to convict a Person of a Fault both
as to matter of Fact, and his Duty
thereupon, charging it on his Con-
science in the Name of the Lord Je-
sus with all Wisdom and Authority.

*Quest. What is a Church Admo-
nition?*

Ans^w. When an offending Bro-
ther rejecting private Admonition
by one, or by two or three Per-
sons, the complaint being brought
to the Church by the Elder, the
offending Member is rebuked and
exhorted in the Name of the Lord
Jesus to due Repentance; and if
convicted, and he repents, the
Church forgives him, otherwise
casts him out, as I before shewed.

*Quest. May a Church admit a
Member of another Congregation to
take Communion with them, with-
out an orderly receiving him as a
Member?*

Ans^w. If the Person is well
known by some of the Church, and
that

The Glory of a True Church,
 that he is an orderly Member of a Church of the same Faith, he being occasionally cast among them, they may admit him to transient Communion for that time; but if he abides in that Town or City remote to the Church to whom he belongs, he ought to have his regular dismissal, and so be delivered up to the care and watch of the Church where he desires to communicate.

Quest. If an Excommunicated Person hath obtained of God true Repentance, and desires to be restored to the Church, what is the manner of his Reception?

The manner of the Reception of a communicate Person.

Mat. 13.

18.

2 Cor. 2. 6,

7.

1 Tim. 5.

Ans. Upon his serious, solemn and publick Acknowledgment thereof before the Church, and due Satisfaction according to the nature of his Offence being given, the Elder solemnly proceeds and declares in the Name of the Lord Jesus, that the sentence which A. B. was laid under (upon his unfeigned Repentance) is taken off, and that he is received again as a Member, &c. To the Praise and Glory of God.

Quest.

Q. How ought a *Pastor* to be dealt withal; if he to the knowledge of the Church, or any Member thereof, walketh disorderly, and unworthily of his Sacred Office, and Membership?

Take the Answer of another Author here.

Ans. ' Those Members, to whom this is manifestly known, ought to go to him privately, and unknown to any others, (with the Spirit of Meekness, in great Humility) lay his Evil before him, and intreat him as a Father, and not rebuke him as their Equal, much less as their Inferiour; and if they gain upon him, then to receive him into their former Affection and Honour, for ever hiding it from all others. But if after all tender intreaties, he prove Refractory and Obstinate, then to bring him before the Church, and there to deal with him; they having Two or Three Witnesses in the face of the Church, to testify matter of Fact against him to their personal Knowledge.

How to proceed against a Scandalous Pastor.

2. But

C

The Glory of a True Church,

2. ' But before he be dealt with,
 ' they must appoint one from among
 ' themselves, qualifyd for the *work of*
 ' a Pastor, to execute the Church's
 ' Censure against him, &c. Yet
 no doubt, the Church may
 Suspend him from his Commu-
 nion, and exercising of his Office
 presently, upon his being fully
 Convicted:

Q. Suppose a Member should
 think himself Oppressed by the
 Church; or should be Unjustly
 dealt with; either Withdrawn
 from, or Excommunicated, has he
 no Relief left him?

Relief for a
 Member un-
 justly dealt
 with.

Ans. We believe he hath Re-
 lief; and also, that there is no
 Church infallible, but may Err
 in some points of Faith, as well
 as in Discipline. And the way
 proposed, and agreed to, in a ge-
 neral Assembly, held in *London,*
1692. of the *Elders, Ministers,*
and Messengers of our Churches,
 we approve of, which is this; *viz.*
The grieved or injured Person may
make his Application to a Sister-
Church for Communion; and that
Church may send some Brethren in
their

their names, to that Congregation that have dealt with him, and they to see if they can possibly restore him to his place; but if they cannot, then to report the matter charged, with the Proofs, to the Church that sent them: and if that Congregation shall, after a full Information, &c. be perswaded the Person was not orderly received, they may receive him into their Communion.

*Of such that cause Divisions;
or Unduely separate them-
selves from the Church.*

THIS I find is generally assert-
ed by all Congregational
Divines; or worthy men, *i. e.* That
no person hath power to dismem-
ber himself: *i. e.* He cannot, with-
out great Sin, translate himself from
one Church to another; but ought
to have a Dismission from that
Church where he is a Member:
provided that Church is orderly
constituted, nothing being wanting
as to any Essential of Salvation;
or of Church-Communion:
But if not, yet he ought to in-
deavour

The cause of
Disorders in
the Church.

deavour to get his orderly Dismission.

Nor is every small Difference, in some points of Religion, or Notions of little moment, any grounds for him to desire his Dismission.

That he cannot, nor ought not to Translate himself, see what a Reverend Writer saith :

Dr. Chauncy.
pag. 339.

“ He cannot, *saith he*, for many
“ Reasons :

1. ‘ It is not Decent, much less
‘ an Orderly going away ; but ve-
‘ ry unmannerly, and a kind of
‘ running away.

Phil. 1. 27.
Tit. 2. 10,

2. ‘ Such a Departure is not ap-
‘ proved of in Families, or Civil
‘ Societies.

The great
Danger of
making a
Rent in a
Church.

3. ‘ It destroys the Relation of
‘ Pastor and People : For what
‘ may be done by one individual
‘ Person, may be done by all.

4. ‘ What Liberty in this kind
‘ belongs to the *Sheep*, belongs to
‘ the *Shepherd* ; much more he may
‘ then also leave his *Flock* at his
‘ Pleasure, without giving notice or
‘ reason thereof to the Church.

Rom. 1. 31.

5. It is breaking *Covenant* with
Christ,

Christ, and with the Congregation,
and therefore a great Immorality;
he being under Obligation to abide
steadfastly with the Church;
i. e. till the Church judge he
hath a lawful Call to go to another
Church.

6. 'It's a Schism: For if there
be any such thing in the World,
it's of particular Societies.

Acts 2. 42.
1 Cor. 12.

7. 'It is a despising the Govern-
ment of the Church.

6. 14. 7. 5.
1. 20, 21,
25.

8. 'It is a particular Member's
assuming to himself the use of the
Keys; or rather stealing of them.

Heb. 10. 25.
Jude, 12.

9. 'There is as much reason
Persons should come into a Church
when they please, without asking
Consent, as depart when they
please.

10. 'It is very evil and unkind
in another Church, to receive
such an one, as not doing as they
would, or should be dealt with.

11. Such Practices can issue in
nothing than the breach and con-
fusion of all particular Churches;
and make them like Parishes.



12. 'Such Departures cannot be
pleaded for in the least, but up-

The Glory of a True Church,

on the notion of a *Catholick* visible Church, wherein all Members and Officers are run into one *Organized Church*, which will, and must introduce, a *Co-ordinate* (if not a *Subordinate*) *Pastoral Government*, by combination of *Elders*, over all the Churches; and therefore by *Synods* and *Classes*.

13. 'It is like a Leak in a Ship, which, if not speedily stopped, will Sink at last.

14. 'It tends to *Anarchy*, putting an *Arbitrary Power* in ev'ry Member.

15. 'It breaks all Bonds of Love, and raiseth the greatest *Animosities* between Bretheren and Churches.

16. 'It is a great Argument of some Guilt lying on the Party. Thus the Dr.

Again he saith, 'It is no more in the just Power of a particular Member to dissolve his Church-Relation, than in a Man to kill himself: but by his said withdrawal he doth *Schismatically* rend himself from his *Communion*, and so

and it's Discipline explain'd.

43

so Separate himself Sinfully. *

* Jude 19.
1. Cor. 1. 10.
& 3. 3. &
11. 18.
Heb. 10. 22.
23, 25.

Quest. *What is the just Act of the Church, that cloathes this irregular Separation, with the Formality as it were of an Excommunication.*

He Answers. (Calling) this a mixt Excommunication i. e. Originally proceeding from, and consists in, the act of the Brother himself, and is the Formality of his Offence; upon which proceeds the just and unviolable act of the Church.

The Judgment of the Church publicly declared by the Elder of the Congregation; as the Dr. words it; viz.

That A. B. having so and so irregularly and sinfully withdrawn himself from the Communion of the Congregation, we do now adjudge him a Non-member, and one that is not to Communicate with the Church, in the special Ordinances of Communion, till due Satisfaction is given by him.

Mixt Excommunication.

Rom. 19,
17, 18.
2 Thes. 3.
6. 14, 15.

Jude 12.

Yet we believe, as the Dr's Opinion is, that a Church may, (if they find the Case to be warranted

C 4.

by.

by the Word of God; or as it may be circumstanced) give a dismissal to a Member, when insisted on, to another regular *Church*, tho' not in every case of small Offence, or dissent in some small points of different Notions, or from Prejudice; for that may tend soon to dissolve any *Church*: For what *Church* is it, where every Member is of one mind in every particular case and thing about Notions of Religion?

Let none call the *Church* a Prison, since all do voluntarily Covenant with it, and 'tis dangerous to break *Christ's* bonds.

And such that make Divisions, and cause Schisms, or Discord among Brethren, to disturb the Peace of the *Church*, if they cannot be reclaimed, must be marked, and dealt with as great *Offenders*: It being one of those things that God hates, and is an abomination to him.

Quest. What is a full and lawful Dismission of a Member to another Church, upon his removing his Habitation, or on other warranted Cases.

Ans. VVe answer a Letter Testimonial, or Recommendation of the Person; and if he intends to abide there wholly, to give him

Of a Letter of Recommendation.

up

up to that *Communion*, and *Fellowship*, to be watched over in the Lord.

Rom 16.

Acts 18. 27.

Of Disorders, or causes of Disorders, prevented, corrected, and removed.

I. **O**NE cause of Discord is, through the Ignorance in some Members of the Rules of Discipline, and right Government; particularly that Rule in *Matth.* 18. not being followed.

Mat. 18. 15.

Disorders Corrected & Removed.

But one Person takes up an Offence against another, and speaks of it to this, or that Person, before he hath told the Brother offending, of it; which is a palpable Sin, and a direct violation of Christ's holy Precept: and such must, as Offenders themselves, be in a Gospel-way dealt with.

To prevent this, the Discipline of the Church should be taught; and the Members informed of their Duties.

II Another thing that causes Trouble and Disorder in a Church;

is want of Love, and tender Affections to one another; and not having a full sight and sense of the great evil of breaking the Bonds of Peace, and Unity: O that all would lay this abominable Evil to Heart, how base a thing it is to break the Peace of a private Family, or Neighbourhood; but much more sinful to disturb the Peace of the Church of the living God, and break the bonds of the Unity thereof. Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity! But, O how ugly and hateful is the contrary!

Eph. 4. 3.

Mat. 133. 1.

Lev. 5. 3. 8.

III. Another disorderly Practice is this, When one Member or another knows of some sinful act, or evils done by one or more Members, and they conceal it; or do not act according to the Rule; pretending they would not be lookt upon as Contentious Persons: but hereby they may become guilty of other Mens Sins, and also suffer the Name of God, and the Church, to lye under Reproach, and all thro their neglect. This is a great Iniquity.

IV. When

IV. When an Elder, or Church shall know that some persons are Scandalous in their Lives, or Heretical in Judgment, and yet shall bear or connive with them.

V. When Members take liberty to hear at other Places, when the Church is assembled to worship God: this is nothing less than a breaking their Covenant with the Church, and may soon dissolve any Church: For by the same Rule, one may take that liberty, another; nay, every Member may. Moreover, it casts a Contempt upon the Ministry of the Church, and tends to cause such who are Hearers to draw off, and to be Disaffected with the Doctrine taught in the Church, they knowing these Dissenters do belong unto it. I exhort therefore, in the Name of Christ, this may be prevented: And any that know who they are, that take this Liberty, pray discover them to the Church. We lay no restraint upon our Members from hearing such, who are sound in the Faith at other times.

VI. The

VI. The Liberty that some take to hear Men that are corrupt in their Judgments; and so take in unsound Notions; and also strive to distil them into the Minds of others; as if they were of great Importance. Alas, how many are Corrupted with *Arminianism, Socinianism*, and what not! This causes great trouble and disorder.

2. Pet. 2. 12.

VII. When one Church shall receive a Member or Members of another Congregation without their Consent or Knowledge: Nay such that are Disorderly and may be loose Livers, or cast out for Immorality, or Persons filled with Prejudice without cause. This is enough to make Men Atheists, or contemn all Church Authority, and Religion: For hath not one regular Church as great Authority from Christ as another.

Acts 9. 27.

VIII. Another disorder is, when Members are received without the general Consent of the Church; or before good Satisfaction is taken of their Godly Lives, and Conversations: Or when a Church is too remiss in the reception of her Members.

IX. Ans.

IX. Another disorder is, when a Church shall receive a charge against a Member, (it being an Offence between Brother and Brother) before an orderly proceed has been made by the offended Person. Mat. 18.15.

X. When Judgment passes with Partiality; some are connived at, out of favour or affection: *Levi* was not to know his *Father* or *Mother* in Judgment.

XI. When Members constantly and early do not attend our publick Assemblies, and the worship of God on the Lord's-day especially, but are remiss in that matter: This is a great Evil.

XII. When part of a Church shall meet together as dissatisfied, to consult Church-matters, without the knowledge or consent of the Church, or Pastor: This is disorderly, and tends to division; and such should be marked.

XIII. Another thing that tends to disquiet the Peace of the Church is, when there are any undue heats of Spirit, or Passion shewed
in

2 Tim. 2. 25. in the Pastor, or others, in managing the Discipline of the Church. Have we not found by experience the sad effect of this? Therefore things must be always managed with coolness, and sweetness of Spirit, and moderation; every Brother having liberty to speak his mind, and not to be interrupted, until he has done; nor above one speak at once.

John, 19.

XIV. When one Brother or more Dissents in the sentiments of their Minds from the Church, in any matters circumstantial; either in respect of Faith, Practice, or Discipline, and will not submit to the Majority, but raise Feuds; nay, will rend themselves from the Church, rather than consent.

Query, what reason, or ground, hath any Man to refuse Communion with a Church that Christ hath not left, but hath Communion with?

XV. When any Member shall divulge, or make known to Persons, not of the Congregation, nor being concerned in those matters

ters, what is done in Church-meetings, the Church in this respect (as well as in others) is to be as a *Garden inclosed, a Spring shut up, a Fountain sealed.* This oft times occasions great Grief, and the disorderly Person should be detected. Is it not a shame to any of a private Family, to divulge the Secrets of the Family? But far greater shame do these expose themselves unto.

Cant. 4.12.

XVI. Another disorderly Practice is this; viz. When a Member shall suggest, and seem to insinuate into the minds of other Members some evil against their Pastor, yet will not declare what it is; and may only be evil Surmifings, & out of Prejudice; and yet refuses to acquaint the Pastor with what it is: This is very abominable, and a palpable violation of the Rule of the Gospel, and Duty of Members to their Minister. Such a person ought to be severely rebuk'd; and if he confess not his Evils, and manifesteth unfeigned Repentance, to be dealt with farther. Moreover, it is a great evil

Rom. 1. 29.

vil in another to hear such base Insinuations, and neither rebuke the Accuser, and so discharge his Duty, nor take two or three more to bring the Person to Repentance. If he deal thus by a private Brother, it is a great Evil, but far worse to an *Elder*, whose Name and Honour, ought with all Care and Justice, to be kept up, as being more Sacred.

XVII. Another disorderly Practice is, (which causes much trouble) When the publick Charges of a Church are not equally born; but some too much burdened, when others do but little or nothing.

And also, when every one does not Contribute to the Poor, as God has blessed them, on every Lord's day, or first day of the Week, as he hath Comanded.

XVIII. Another disorder is this, When Members refuse to communicate with the Church at the Lord's table, because some person or persons, they think are guilty of Evil, and yet they have not proceeded with them according to Rule.

Rule : These either Excommunicate the Church, or themselves, or those Persons at least, they censure unwarrantably.

I beseech you for Christ's sake, that this may never be any more among you : You ought not to deal thus with them ; or refuse your Communion, (tho faulty) until the Church has dismember'd, or withdrawn from them ; or at least Suspended them.

XIX. When one Member, shall believe, or receive a report against another, before he knows the truth of the matter.

XX. When an Accusation. is brought against an *Elder*, contrary to the Rule, which ought not be without two or three Witnesses, as to the matter of Fact. 1 Tim. 5: 19.

XXI. When the word of God is not carefully attended upon, on Week, or Lecture-days, by the Members generally ; tho the said Meeting being appointed by the whole Church.

XXII. When Days of Prayer and Fasting, and of publick Thanksgiving,

giving, or when days of Disciplining are not generally attended upon.

Lastly, VVhen Gifted Brethren are not duely encouraged: First privately to exercise their Gifts; and being in time approved, called forth to Preach or Exercise in the Church: And encouragement is not given to bestow Learning also upon them, for their better Accomplishment. What will become of the Churches in time to come, if this be not prevented with speed?

What tends to the Glory and Beauty of a true Gospel-Church.

What tends to the Glory of a Church of Christ.

I. **T**HAT which Primarily tends to the Glory of a Church of Christ, is the Foundation on which it is Built.

I. In respect of God the Father, who laid this Foundation in his eternal Purpose, Counsel, and Decree; *Behold I lay in Sion;* Isa. 28. 16. and this is as the result of his infinite Wisdom, Love, and Mercy to his Elect.

II. In

II. In respect had unto Christ himself, who is this Foundation.

1. He is a Suitable Foundation.

1. In respect to the Glory of God in all his Attributes.

2ly. In respect to our Good ; he answering all our wants, who are united to him, or built upon him.

3. In respect of the preciousness of Christ, as a Foundation ; a Stone ; a *precibus Stone*, a *tryed Stone* ; and *but one Stone*.

4. In respect to the Durableness of it *i. e.* sure Foundation.

Brethren, a Foundation of a House must of necessity be laid ; no House can be built without a good Foundation, that will stand firm, and unmovable ; it is the strongest part of the Building, and it beareth all the weight of the whole Superstructure : So doth Jesus Christ.

III. The Beauty and Glory of a true *Church*, consists in the true and regular, or right *Constitution* of it ; nothing being wanting

ing that is Essential to it, upon this account.

IV. It consisteth in the Excellency, Glory, and Suitableness of the materials 'tis Built with, answering to the Foundation, all *precious Stones, lively Stones; all re-*

1. Pet. 2, 5,
6.

generated Persons.

V. In that all the Stones be well Hewed and Squared; all made fit for the Building, before laid in. Were it thus, there would not be so great a Noise of the Hammer and Ax, in Church Discipline, as indeed there is. It was not thus in the Type, I mean in *Solomon's Temple.*

1 Kings 6, 7.

VI. It's Beauty and Glory consisteth in that all the *Stones* being not only united by the Spirit, and *Faith of the operation of God, to Christ the Foundation,* but also to one another in sincere Love and Affection. *In whom all the Building, fitly Framed together, groweth up unto an holy Temple in the Lord.*

Eph. 2. 19,
20. 21.

VII. It consisteth in the Holiness and Purity of the Lives and Conversations of all the *Members: Be ye Holy, for I am Holy*

ly. Holiness becomes thy House, Psalm 93. 2.
O God, for Ever.

VIII. It consisteth in that sweet Union and Concord that ought to be in the Church; all like the Horses in Pharoah's Chariot, drawing together: Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. By this shall all Men know ye are my Disciples, if you Love one another. Cant. 1. 9. Eph. 4. 3.

IX. In their having the divine Presence with them: Or when the Glory of God fills his Temple. Exod. 20. 24.

X. In keeping out all un sanctified, or unclean Persons, or if they get in, to purge them out by a strict and holy Discipline, or else it will soon loose it's Beauty. 1 Cor. 5. 5.

XI. In that Zeal and Equality that should be shewed in all to keep up the Honour, Peace, and Comfort of the Church, and the Ministry thereof. 2 Cor. 8. 14. Tit. 3. 2.

XII. In the Administration of right Discipline; to see no neglect nor delaying of Justice, thro carelessness, or Partiality: No ways partaking of other Mens Sins; which may be done by
Con-

The Glory of a True Church,

Conniving at it; (1.) By Lessening or Extenuating of it (2.) By Countenancing, or any ways Encouraging any in Sin. (3.) By not Restoring a Brother, that confesses his Sin when overtaken. (4.) Not bringing in a just Charge against an Offender, nor rebuking him; and yet have Communion with him.

2ly. Not to wrest Judgment, out of it's true and right Channel: Nor to inflict a greater censure than the Law of Christ requires on any.

3ly. Timely to acquit, and discharge a penitent Person.

4ly. Not to do any thing out of Prejudice, but in Love, and Bowels, of affection; and to do all in Christ's Name, or by his authority.

XIII. To *Sympathize* with the *Afflicted*, *Succour* the *Tempted*, and *Relieving* the *Poor* and *Distressed*: *Rejoicing* with them that *Rejoice*, and *Mourning* with them that *Mourn*.

XIV. To *speak evil of no Man*; not only speaking no evil of their
Bre-

Brethren, but of no *Man*, to his hurt or injury, detracting from his Worth and Honour: See *Sirach*, *Whether it be to Friend or Foe, talk not of other Men's Lives*; and if thou canst, without Offence, reveal them not. We

Ecc. 19. 8.
Apocal.

must not discourse his Faults, unless in a Gospel-way; and that too, to amend the Person, and not out of Passion, or Prejudice to expose him, but out of Love to his Soul. Yet we may speak of the evils of others, (1.) When called to do it, in a Legal or Gospel-way; and it is a Sin then to conceal his Crime. (2.) Or when it is to prevent another, who is in danger to be Infected by his *Company*, or ill Example. (3.) Or in our own just *Defence* and *Vindication*. Moreover, consider the evil of *Reproaching* of others.

First as to the causes why some do it.

I. One Cause is from want of Love: Nay from Malice, and Hatred.

I. Front

The Glory of a True Church,

1. From the Baseness, ill Nature, and Cruelty of the accusers *Disposition*.

2. 'Tis occasioned from that itch, of talking and meddling in the *Affairs* of other Men.

3. Or perhaps to raise their own Esteem and Honour, some *Degrade* their Brother; which is *Abominable*.

Consider it is *Theft*, or *Robbery*; nay, and 'tis worse than to Rob a Man of his Goods, because thou takest away that which perhaps thou canst not restore again.

Moreover consider, That such who reproach others, lay themselves open thereby to Reproach.

3. Moreover know, he that *Receives*, or *Hearkens* to the Scandal, is as Guilty as the *Accuser*; he is like a Person that receives Stolen Goods, and so is as bad as the Thief.

This being one of the Grand and Notorious Evils of these *Days* I speak the more to it.

If you abominate this evil, and avoid it, you will shine in *Grace* and

and *Virtue* the more clearly.

Alas, in our days some Professors stick not to vilifie Christ's Ministers, even the best of Men; and are so full of Malice, they care not what wrong they do to their Brethren, nor to the truth it self, or interest of God, and so expose themselves to a lasting shame, and their Spirit, and Practice, to an abhorrance; they are like cursed *Cham* who discovered his Fathers nakedness; these persons violate all Laws, both Humane and Divine.

3ly. When they bear one anothers Burdens, and so fulfil the *Law of Christ*: And that you may do this, consider where is that Church in which there are no Burdens to be Born. Gal. 6. 2.

[*Motives thus to do.*]

1. Consider what a Burden *Jesus Christ* hath born for thee.

2. What a Burden thou hast to bear of thine own. Gal. 6. 5.

4. May'st

D

The Glory of a True Church,

3. Mayst not thou in some things be a Burden to thy Brethren ?

4. Wouldst thou not have others bear thy Burden.

5. May not God cause thee to bear a more heavy Burden ; because thou canst not bear thy Brother's ?

Rom. 3. 10. 6. 'Tis a fulfilling the Law of Love, may the Law of Christ.

XV. The Glory and Beauty of a Congregation, is the more manifest, when the Authority of the Church, and the Dignity of the Pastoral Office is maintained. How great was the Evil of the saying of Corah ? The Apostles speaks of some that are Selfwilled, Presumptious, who are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities.

Iude, 11.

Numb. 22.
7, 21.

God has put a Glory and high Dignity upon the Church and in it's Authority and Power ; *Whom ye bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven.*

1 Pet 2. 10. in

More

The Solemn Covenant of the Church at its Consti- tution.

WE who desire to walk to-
 gether in the Fear of
 the Lord, do, through
 the Assistance of his
 Holy Spirit, profess our deep and
 serious Humiliation for all our
 Transgressions. And we do also so-
 lemnly, in the Presence of God, and
 of each other, in the Sense of our Ezek. 16.
 own Unworthiness, give up our 6, 8.
 selves to the Lord, that he may be 2 Cor. 8. 5.
 our God, and we may be his People, Hos. 2. 23.
 through the Everlasting Covenant of 2 Cor. 6.
 his Free Grace, in which alone we 16.
 hope to be accepted by him, through
 his blessed Son Jesus Christ, whom
 we take to be our High Priest, to
 justify and sanctify us, and our Pro-
 phet to teach us; and to subject to
 him as our Law-giver, and the King
 of Saints; and to conform to all his
 Holy Laws and Ordinances, for
 our Growth, Establishment, and
 E Con-

Church-Consolation; that we may be as a
 Communi- Holy Sponse unto him, and serve
 on proved, him in our Generation, and wait
 far his second Appearance, as our
 Exod. 26. glorious Bridegroom.

3, 4, 6. Being fully satisfied in the way of
 Isa. 62. 5. Church-Communion, and the Truth
 Pl. 122. 3. of Grace in some good measure up-
 Eph. 2. 23. on one anothers Spirits, we do so-
 Eph. 4. 16. lemnly join our selves together in a
 1 Pet. 2. 5. Holy Union and Fellowship, humbly
 Psal. 93. 5. submitting to the Discipline of the
 Isa. 35. 8. Gospel, and all Holy Duties required
 Luke 1. of a People in such a spiritual Re-
 lation.

74, 75. 1. We do promise and ingage to
 2 Cor. 7. 1. walk in all Holiness, Godliness, Hum-
 1 Tim. 6. 11. ility, and Brotherly Love, as much
 2 Pet. 1. 8, 7. as in us lieth to render our Commu-
 nion delightful to God, comfortable
 Act. 20. 19. to our selves, and lovely to the rest
 Phil. 2. 3. of the Lord's People.

Joh. 13. 34. 2. We do promise to watch over
 & 15. 12. each others Conversations, and not
 1 Pet. 1. 22. to suffer Sin upon one another, so
 Lev. 19. 17. far as God shall discover it to us
 Heb. 10. 24, 25. or any of us; and to stir up one an-
 1 Thess. 5. 14, 15. other to Love and good Works; to
 Rom. 15. warn, rebuke, admonish one another
 with Meekness, according to the

Moreover, the Pastoral Office, is an Office of Dignity; they are called *Rulers, Angels, Fathers*: For any therefore to cast contempt on the Church, or Pastor, is a great evil, and a reproach to Christ, and tends to Disorder and Confusion.

Rev. 2. 1.

1 Tim. 3. 5.
Act. 23, 5.

Lastly, When Holiness, Righteousness, Charity, Humility, and all true Piety is prest upon the Consciences of every Member, and appears in the Minister: also that all strive to excell therein, with their uttermost Care and Diligences.

psal. 110. 3.

1 Pet. 1. 25.

D 2 The

The Conclusion.

Psal. 87. 2. **K** Now my Brethren, That God loves the Gates of Sion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob: Therefore the publick Worship of God ought to be preferred before private.

1. This supposeth there must be a visible Church.

2. And that they frequently meet together to worship God.

3. That they have an orderly Ministry and one ordained *Elder*, at least, to administer all Publick Ordinances.

4. Moreover, all Persons have free liberty to assemble with the Church, and to partake of all Ordinances, save those which peculiarly belong to the Church; as the Lord's Supper, holy Discipline, and

and days of Prayer and Fasting. Neh. 9. 2
Then the Church of Old separated themselves from all Strangers.

Yet others may attend on all other publick Ordinances with the Church; as publick Prayer, Reading, and Preaching the Word, and in Singing *God's* Praises, as hath formerly been proved: may Others join in Prayer with us, and not praise *God* with us.

But, O my Brethren! let me beseech you to shew your high Value, and Estimation for the publick Worship of *God*.

[*Motives hereunto.*]

1. Since *God* prefers it thus.

2. Because he is said to dwell in *Sion*; *It is his Habitation for ever.* The place, where his Honour dwells. Psal. 132. 13.

3. Here *God* is most Glorified. In his *Temple* every one speaks

*The Glory of a True Church,
of his Glory ; My Praise shall
Psal. 29. 9. be in the great Congregation.*

4. Here is most of God's gracious presence (as one observes it.)

1. His effectual Presence, in
Exod. 20. 24. *all Places ; Where I record my
Name, thither will I come ; and
there will I bless thee.*

2. Here is More of his intimate
Mat. 18. 20. *presence : Where two or three are
gathered together in my Name,
there am I in the midst of them.*
Rev. 1. 13. *He walks in the midst of the seven
Golden Candlesticks.*

3. Here are the clearest mani-
festations of God's Beauty, which
made holy David desire to dwell
Psal. 27. 4. *there for ever.*

6. Here is most Spiritual Ad-
vantage to be got : Here the
Dews of Hermon fall, they de-
scend upon the Mountain of Sion.
Psal. 132. 3. *Here God commands the Blessing,
even Life for evermore. I will
Psal. 130. 15. abundantly bless her Provision, and
satis-*

and its Discipline explain'd. 67

Satisfie her Poor with Bread. Here David's Doubt was resolv'd. Pfal. 73. 16. 17.

7. Here you received your first spiritual Breath, or Life, many Souls are daily Born to Christ. That good which is most Diffusive, is to be Preferred; but that good which most partake of, is most Diffusive; *O magnifie the Lord with me! let us exalt his Name together.* Live Coals separated, soon die. Pfal. 34. 3.

8. Brethren (as a worthy *Divine* observes) the Church in her publick Worship is the nearest Resemblance of Heaven, especially in Singing God's Praises. What Esteems also had God's Worthies of old, for God's publick Worship? *My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord. How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!* Pfal. 84. 1.

See how the Promises of God run to Sion, or to his Church: *He will bless thee out of Sion.* **O** let nothing discourage you in your

The Glory of a True Church,

your waiting at the Posts of Christ's Door. *David* desired Rather to be a Door-Keeper, in the House of God, than to Dwell in the Tents of Wickedness. Yet
 Psal. 87. 4. nevertheless do not neglect, for the Lord's sake, private Devotion; viz. Secret, and Family-Prayer: O pray to be fitted for publick Worship! Come out of your Closets to the Church? What signifies all you do in Publick, if you are not such that keep up the Worship of God in your own Families?

O neglect not Prayer, Reading, and Meditation! And take care also to Educate and Catechise your Children; and live as Men and Women that are dead to this World: and walk for the Lord's sake as becomes the Gospel.

See that Zeal and Knowledge go together; a good Conversation. and a good Doctrine go together. These Two together, are better than One.

That

Brethren, he that makes the Word of God his Rule, in whatsoever he doth, and the Glory of God his end in what he doth, shall have the Spirit of God to be his strength. This is like Solomon's Three-fold Cord, that will be One, or it will be Three; it can't be Two; nor can it be broken.

Ecc. 4. 9.
10. 11. 12.
13.

FINIS.

Rules left to us of Christ in that Be-
half.

3. We do promise in an especial Eph. 6. 18.
manner to pray for one another, and Jam. 5. 16.
for the Glory and Increase of this Col. 4. 12.
Church, and for the Presence of
God in it, and the pouring forth of
his Spirit on it, and his Protection
over it to his Glory.

4. We do promise to bear one ano- Gal. 6. 2.
thers Burdens, to cleave to one ano- Heb. 12. 12.
ther, and to have a Fellow-feeling Heb. 13. 2.
with one another, in all Conditions, Rom. 12.
both outward and inward, as God 15.
in his Providence shall cast any of us 2 Cor. 11
into. 29.

5. We do promise to bear with 1 John 5.
one anothers Weakness, Failings, 17, 18.
and Infirmities, with much Tender- Gal. 6. 7.
ness, not discovering to any without 1 Thim. 5
the Church, nor any within, unless 14.
according to Christ's Rule, and the Rom. 15.
Order of the Gospel provided in that 12.
case. Eph. 4. 31
32.

6. We do promise to strive toge- Jude 23.
ther for the Truths of the Gospel, Gal. 5. 1
and Purity of God's Ways and Or- Tit. 3. 9. 10
dinances, to avoid Causes and 2 John 7.
Causers of Division, endeavouring 10.
to keep the Unity of the Spirit in
the

the Bond of Peace; Ephes. 4. 3.

7. We do promise to meet together
 on Lord's Days, and at other times,
 as the Lord shall give us Opportuni-
 ties, to serve and glorify God in the
 way of his Worship, to edify one ano-
 ther, and to contrive the Good of
 his Church.

Heb. 3. 10.
 & 10. 25.
 Mal. 3. 16.
 Rom. 14.
 18.
 & 15. 16.
 Eph. 4. 16.

These and all other Gospel-Du-
 ties we humbly submit unto, promi-
 sing and purposing to perform, not
 in our own Strength, being conscious
 of our own Weakness, but in the
 Power and Strength of the Blessed
 God, whose we are, and whom we
 desire to serve: To whom be Glory
 now and for ever-more. Amen.



FINIS.