

Wherefore,—1. As excommunication by a *cursed noise and clamour*, with bell, book, and candle (such as we have instances of in some papal councils), is a horrible antichristian abomination: so,—

2. It is an undue representation of Christ and his authority, for persons openly guilty of profaneness in sinning to excommunicate them who are blameless in all Christian obedience.

3. All excommunication is evangelically null where there is wanting an evangelical frame of spirit in those by whom it is administered, and there is present an anti-evangelical order in its administration.

4. It is sufficiently evident that, after all the contests and disputes about this excommunication that have been in the world, the noise that it hath made, the horrible abuses that it hath been put unto, the wresting of all church order and rule to give countenance unto a corrupt administration of it, with the needless oppositions that have been made against its institution, there is nothing in it, nothing belongs unto it, nothing is required unto its administration, wherein men's outward interests are at all concerned, and which the smallest number of sincere Christians in any church-society may not perform and discharge unto the glory of Christ and their own edification.

It is the mystery of iniquity that hath traversed these things into such a state and posture as is unintelligible unto spiritual wisdom, unpracticable in the obedience of faith, and ruinous unto all evangelical order and discipline.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the communion of churches.

CHURCHES so appointed and established in order as hath been declared ought to hold communion among themselves, or with each other, as unto all the ends of their institution and order, for these are the same in all; yea, the *general end* of them is in order of nature considered antecedently unto their institution in *particular*. This end is, the edification of the body of Christ in general, or the *church catholic*. The promotion hereof is committed jointly and severally unto all *particular churches*. Wherefore, with respect hereunto, they are obliged unto mutual communion among themselves; which is their consent, endeavour, and conjunction, in and for the promotion of the edification of the catholic church, and therein their own, as they are parts and members of it.

This communion is incumbent on every church with respect unto all other churches of Christ in the world equally. And the duties and acts of it in all of them are of the same kind and nature; for there is no such disparity between them or subordination among