

profess the Scripture to be the word of God, and avow an assent unto the revelations made therein, yet, by the conceptions of their minds, and misunderstanding of the sense of the Holy Spirit therein, they may embrace and adhere unto such errors as may cut them off from all communion with the catholic church in faith: such are the denial of the holy Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, his divine person or office, the redemption of the church by his blood, the necessity of regeneration by his Spirit, and the like. And they may also add that of their own unto their professed belief as shall exclude them from communion with the catholic church: such are the assertions of traditions as equal with the written word, of another head of the church besides the Lord Christ, of another sacrifice besides what he once offered for all, and the like. But where any are preserved from such heresies on the one hand and the other, there is no more required unto communion with the whole church, as unto faith in general, but only the belief before described.

2. This communion in faith respects the church itself as its *material object*; for it is required hereunto that we believe that the Lord Christ hath had in all ages, and especially hath in that wherein we live, a church on the earth, confined unto no places nor parties of men, no empires nor dominions, nor capable of any confinement; as also, that this church is redeemed, called, sanctified by him; that it is his kingdom, his interest, his concernment in the world; that thereunto, and [unto] all the members of it, all the promises of God do belong and are confined; that this church he will save, preserve, and deliver, from all opposition, so as that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," and after death will raise it up and glorify it at the last day. This is the faith of the catholic church concerning itself; which is an ancient, fundamental article of our religion. And if any one deny that there is such a church called out of the world, separated from it, unto which alone, and all the members of it, all the promises of God do appertain, in contradistinction unto all others, or confine it unto a party unto whom these things are not appropriate, he cuts himself off from the communion of the church of Christ.

In the faith hereof all the true churches of Christ throughout the world have a comforting, refreshing communion; which is the spring of many duties in them continually.

3. This communion of churches in faith consists much in the principal fruit of it, namely, *prayer*. So is it stated, Eph. ii. 18, "For through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." And that therein the communion of the catholic church doth consist the apostle declares in the following verses, 19-22, "Now therefore," etc.; for prayers in all churches having one object, which is God even the Father, God as the Father; proceeding in all from one and

the same Spirit, given unto them as a Spirit of grace and supplications to make intercession for them; and all of them continually offered unto God by the same High Priest, who adds unto it the incense of his own intercession, and by whom they have all an access unto the same throne of grace,—they have all a blessed communion herein continually. And this communion is the more express in that the prayers of all are for all, so as that there is no particular church of Christ in the world,—not any one member of any of them, but they have the prayers of all the churches in the world and of all the members of them every day. And however this communion be invisible unto the eyes of flesh, yet is it glorious and conspicuous unto the eye of faith, and is a part of the glory of Christ the mediator in heaven. This prayer, proceeding from or wrought by one and the same Spirit in them all, equally bestowed on them all by virtue of the promise of Christ, having the same object, even God as a Father, and offered unto him by the same High Priest, together with his own intercession, gives unto all churches a communion far more glorious than what consists in some outward rites and orders of men's devising.

But now if there be any other persons or churches which have any other object of their prayers but God even the Father, and as our Father in Christ, or have any other mediators or intercessors by whom to convey or present their prayers unto God but Christ alone, the only high priest of the church, or do renounce the aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of grace and supplications, they cut themselves off from all communion with the catholic church herein.

4. The unity of faith in all churches effecteth communion among them in *the administration of the same sacraments of baptism and the supper of the Lord*. These are the same in, unto, and amongst them all; neither do some variations in the outward manner of their administration interrupt that communion. But wherever the continuation of these ordinances is denied, or their nature or use is perverted, or idolatrous worship is annexed unto their administration, there communion with the catholic church is renounced.

5. They have also by faith communion herein, in that *all churches do profess a subjection unto the authority of Christ in all things*, and an obligation upon them to do and observe all whatsoever he hath commanded.

Other instances of the like nature might be given, but these are sufficient to manifest how unscriptural the notion is, that there is no proper communion with or among churches but what consists in a compliance with certain powers, orders, and rites, the pressing whereof under the name of "uniformity" hath cast all thoughts of real, evangelical church-communion into oblivion.

SECONDLY. Churches ordained and constituted in the way and manner, and for the ends, declared in our former discourse on this