

their own consent, or that it is not sufficient for the preservation of the union and furtherance of the edification of the church catholic, whereunto it is designed.

Wherefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, in his infinite wisdom, hath constituted his churches in such a state and order as wherein none of them are able of themselves, always and in all instances, to attain all the ends for which they are appointed, with respect unto the edification of the church catholic; and he did it for this end, that whereas the whole catholic church is animated by one spirit, which is the bond of union between all particular churches (as we shall see), every one of them may act the gifts and graces of it unto the preservation and edification of the whole.

Herein then, we acknowledge, lieth the great difference which we have with others about the state of the church of Christ in this world. We do believe that *the mutual communion of particular churches* amongst themselves, in an equality of power and order, though not of gifts and usefulness, is the only way appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ, after the death of the apostles, for the attaining the general end of all particular churches, which is the edification of the church catholic, in faith, love, and peace. Other ways and means have been found out in the world for this end, which we must speak unto immediately. Wherefore it behoveth us to use some diligence in the consideration of the causes, nature, and use, of this communion of churches.

But it must be moreover premised, that whereas this communion of churches is *radically* and *essentially* the same among all churches in the world, yet, as unto the ordinary actual exercise of the duties of it, it is confined and limited by divine providence unto such churches as the natural means of the discharge of such duties may extend unto; that is, unto those which are planted within such *lines of communication*, such precincts or boundaries of places and countries, as may not render the mutual performance of such duties insuperably difficult. Yet is not the world itself so wide but that, all places being made pervious by navigation, this communion of churches may be visibly professed, and in some instances practised, among all churches, "from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same," where the name of Christ is known among the Gentiles; wherein the true nature of the catholic church and its union doth consist, which is utterly overthrown by the most vehement pretences that are made unto it, as those in the church of Rome.

Wherefore such a communion of churches is to be inquired after as from which no true church of Christ is or can be excluded; in whose actual exercise they may and ought all to live, and whereby the general end of all churches, in the edification of the catholic church, may be attained. This is the true and only *catholicism* of