

CHURCHES QUARREL ESPOUSED:

OR, A

R E P L Y

In Satyre, to certain Proposals made, in Answer to this
Question,——*What further Steps are to be taken, that
the Councils may have due Constitution and Efficacy in
Supporting, Preserving, and Well-Ordering the Interest
of the Churches in the Country ?*

By JOHN WISE, Pastor to a Church in Ipswich.

Wherefore Rebuke them sharply, that they may be
found in the faith. TIT. i. xiii.

Abjiciendus Pudor, Quoties urget Necessitas.

B O S T O N :

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Glocester, March 25, 1715.

Reverend Sir,

WE have had the favor and satisfaction of reading, and according to our measure considering the transcendent logick, as well as grammar and rhetoric, of your reply to the proposals ; by which our eyes are opened to see much more than ever before we saw, of the value and glory of our invaded priviledges, and are of opinion, that if your consent may be obtained to a new edition, it may be of wonderful service to our churches, if GOD shall please to go forth with it. However, it will be a testimony that all our watchmen were not asleep, nor the camp of CHRIST surprized and taken, before they had warning.

We are, Reverend SIR,

Full of dutiful respect and gratitude,

Your Sons and Servants,

SAMUEL MOODEY.

JOHN WHITE.



QUESTION AND PROPOSALS.

QUESTION.

WHAT further steps are to be taken, that the councils may have due constitution and efficacy in supporting, preserving and well ordering the interest of the churches in the country ?

1st part, it was proposed,

1st, That the ministers of the country form themselves into associations, that may meet at proper times to consider such things as may properly lie before them, relating to their own faithfulness towards each other, and the common interest of the churches ; and that each of those associations have a moderator for a certain time, who shall continue till another be chosen, who may call them together upon emergencies.

In these associations,

2dly, That questions and cases of importance, either provided by themselves, or by others presented unto them, should be upon due deliberation answered.

3dly, That advice be taken by the associated pastors from time to time, e'er they proceed to any action in their particular churches, which be likely to produce any imbroilments. That the associated pastors do carefully and lovingly treat each other with that watchfulness which may be of universal advantage ; and that if any minister be accused to the association whereto he belongs, of scandal or heresy, the matter shall be there examined, and if the associated ministers find just accu-

sation for it, they shall direct to the calling of the council, by whom such an offender is to be proceeded against.

4thly, That the candidates of the ministry undergo a due tryal by some one or other of the associations, concerning their qualifications for the evangelical ministry ; and that no particular pastor or congregation employ any one in occasional preaching, who has not been recommended by a testimonial under the hands of some association.

5thly, That they should together be consulted by bereaved churches, to recommend to them such persons as may be fit to be employed amongst them for present supply, from whom they may in due time proceed to chuse a pastor.

6thly, That hereunto may be referred the direction of proceeding in any of their particular churches, about the convening of councils that shall be thought necessary, for the welfare of the churches.

7thly, That the several associations in the country, maintain a due correspondence with one another, that so the state of religion may be the better known and secured in all the churches, and particularly it is thought necessary to the well-being of these churches, that all the associations of the country meet together by their respective delegates once in a year.

8thly, And finally, That ministers disposed to associate, endeavour in the most efficacious manner they can, to prevail with such ministers as unreasonably neglect such meetings with their brethren in their proper associations, that they would not expose themselves to the inconveniencies that such neglects cannot but be attended withal.

Second part, It is proposed,

1st. That these associated pastors, with a proper number of delegates from their several churches, be formed into a standing or stated council, which shall

consult, advise and determine all affairs that shall be proper matter for the consideration of an ecclesiastical council within their respective limits, except always, the cases are such as the associated pastors judge more convenient to fall under the cognizance of some other council.

2dly, That to this end these associated pastors, with their respective churches, shall confociate and combine according to what has been by the synods of these churches recommended, that they act as confociated churches in all holy watchfulness and helpfulness towards each other; and that each church choose and depute one or more to attend their pastor, as members of the council in their stated sessions, or occasionally, as emergencies shall call for.

3dly, That these messengers from the several confociated churches shall be chosen once a year at the least.

4thly, It is propounded, as that which from our beginning has been recommended, that the churches thus confociated for these purposes, have a stated time to meet in their council, and once in a year seems little enough, that they may enquire into the condition of the churches, and advise such things as may be for the advantage of our holy religion. But the more particular time is best left to the determination of each respective association.

5thly, That the associations shall direct when there is occasion for this council to convene, on any emergency, and shall direct whether the whole, or only a certain number of these confociated pastors and churches shall convene on such occasions.

6thly, It appears agreeable to the present condition of our churches, and from our beginnings acknowledged, that no act of the councils are to be reckoned as concluded and decisive, for which there has not been the concurrence of the major part of the pastors therein concerned.

7thly, The determinations of the councils thus provided, for the necessities of the churches are to be looked upon as final and decisive, except agrieved churches and pastors, have weighty reasons to the contrary, in which

eases there should be provision for a further hearing ; and it seems proper that the council convened on this occasion, should consist of such pastors as may be more for number than the former, and they should be such, as shall be directed to, and convened for this purpose by the ministers of an association, near to that whereto these of the former council belonged, unto which the agrieved should accordingly apply themselves, and in this way expect a final issue ?

8thly, If a particular church will not be reclaimed by council from such gross disorders as plainly hurt the common interest of christianity, and are not meer tolerable differences in opinion, but are plain sins against the command and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the council is to declare that church no longer fit for communion with the churches of the faithful ; and the churches represented in the council, are to approve, confirm and ratify the sentence, and withdraw from the communion of the church that would not be healed : Nevertheless, if any members of the disorderly church, do not justify their disorders, but suitably testify against them, these are still to be received to the wonted communion by the churches ; and if after due waiting, the church be not recovered, they may (upon advice) be actually taken in as members of some other church in the vicinity.

These proposals were assented to by the delegates of the association, met according to former agreement, at *B.*—*September 13th. 1705.* To be commended to the several associated ministers in the several parts of the country, to be duly considered, that so, what may be judged for the service of our great Lord, and his holy churches, may be further proceeded in.

At an association-meeting, the foregoing proposals were read and assented to, &c, Present,

Nov. 5. 1705.

T H E
E P I S T L E D E D I C A T O R Y.

To the Fraternity of the Churches in the *New-England*
Colonies.

Truly honorable, and beloved in Christ,

IT is not from any disrespect, or for want of honor to the reverend eldership and pastors of your several communities, that I apply my self more immediately and thus abruptly to your selves in this dedication. But for that it seems most agreeable with my present province. The privileges of the fraternity being so peculiarly the theme and subject of my pains, I esteem it very proper to introduce my following essays, with a few words of advice more directly to your selves if you may be thence moved and encouraged to assist for support of Christ's and your own interests. I desire to be without offence to any, and pray that all such worthy persons, wise and faithful pastors in these churches (who are as much obliged by their office to stand by and defend the established interest and rights of them as I am, and far more capable) will interpret my whole action in the most favorable sense. And tho' I have not with the noble *Cortius* leapt into a chasm made in the forum ; yet I have ventured to step into the gap, to keep the breach, till better hands come up, for the service of my country, and in defence of their sacred liberties ; so that I hope many of you will come in with a new supply and recruit of courage and argument, when and where mine fails ; and for the present I presume none of you will be offended, tho' I do thus immediately address the churches, over which you pre-

side, with the following principles of their interest and duty wrapped up each in other.

Then,

Honorable Brethren!

1st. In general, my advice is to you, that in good order, and with all gracefulness which becomes wise men, you will with zeal, courage and faithfulness, stand in the defence of, and maintain your church liberties; God certainly obliges you to do it, with all the discretion and bravery of spirit, which becomes free men, in withstanding vassalage or a servile state, *Gal. 5. 1, 13.* Stand fast therefore in the liberties, wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage: The plea is as forcible against a christian, as a Jewish Thralldom. For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty. I must acknowledge I have not particular prejudice against any of the governments of christian protestant churches in the world, so as to defraud or dispossess any of them of heaven; or monopolize so great a royalty to our own; but yet I am of this opinion, considering the just title of the crown, the churches, the people, the capacity of soil and climate together, that the constitution and way of *New-England* churches cannot be mended by exchange.

Briefly, To instance in the civil part, or interest of the crown, I think it very easy to evince, by the precepts both of religion and policy, that the parliament (that wise and august council of the nation) could not have invented an establishment in church order, more for the service of the imperial crown of the British empire than our present constitution, especially in such a country and climate as this is.

I shall not now any ways enter upon the question, but only give just a short hint as to the revenue. Our present constitution does indeed, somewhat more than sip; it takes an honest healthful draught at natures fountains, but leaves the flowing streams for empire to sit at, till filled with satiety.

The ecclesiasticks in some kingdoms in *Europe* are ready not only to chide with crowned heads, but to take them by the throat, and wring out of their hands, if

not almost a moiety, yet a vast share of the golden fleeces that should supply the public treasuries, and cloath the nakedness of the kingdoms, and the people have no more wit but to justify and defend them in their claims and oppressions, and that till they themselves (in great numbers) are as thin and ragged as penury itself; for by their rules of adjustment, when the church hath gotten an unconscionable share, then the crown or subject must be almost starved; for there is not left a sufficient and plentiful supply for both.

But now our *New-England* constitution is very fair-mannered; for when its sits down to the stalled ox (made ready) it carves temerately and (without much defacing) leaves the whole to the empire to make its armies and navies, with the rest of its needful and unwearied servants welcome. That in loyalty to your prince, and for the support of the royal revenue, you may justly preserve your freedoms.

Let us also consider the best good of a whole people.

It is most certain, true grace is the one thing needful, and the main concern for the improvement of the powers both of prince, noble and peasant, and tho' grace be of that nature that it will grow (after a fashion and in some sort of soil) almost under any government; yet it is most agreeable with laws of piety and wisdom (for the good of all in general) to chuse and secure that constitution and form of government that is most agreeable, and which most naturally breeds it, and in greatest plenty.

By the suffrage of our nation, that government which sensibly clogs tyranny, and preserves the subject free from slavery, under the ambition of men of great fortune and trust, is the only government in the state to advance mens temporal happiness; and we in this country honor the resolve in civil affairs, and also affirm (upon great experience) that such a constitution in church government is (also) the only way to advance grace and mans eternal happiness; and we are the more ratified in our opinion, for that the experiment has on the other hand been tryed, with a witness, in almost all kingdoms of the christian world, and that

first, by disseising the fraternity of all interest in church government, only they have had the liberty to be governed with a hook in their nose (like wild cattle in a string) by the mercy and pleasure of their drivers ; but as for any share in the exercise of government, they have had no more, than the horses in the royal stables, for that their spiritual owners having seized all the keys of church power, they profess no dividend shall be made, and also they themselves being uncontrollable by any, and unaccountable to any, unless it be to Christ himself, as they pretend : Though I believe, thousands of them never expect to meet with him, nor think that he ever will audit any accompts of theirs.

But however, for the comfort and glory of the present life, the whole government of the spiritual kingdom in all its branches, and with its immense profits, has been established theirs. But this sort of discipline, hath sunk great part of the christian world, as many times over, as ages have past, since it hath been installed universal rector, and where it hath kept absolute possession of the throne.

And must the waves and present currents fit and waft these churches, towards those rocks and shipwrecks, whilst we have such good hands and pilots on board ? God forbid !

Therefore let these churches and the noble fraternity of them, stand their ground, keep fast hold of what you have got, *Rev. 3. 11.* Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Hold your hold brethren ! *Et validis incumbite Remis*, pull up well upon your oars, you have a rich cargo, and I hope we shall escape shipwreck ; for according to the latest observation, if we are not within sight, yet we are not far from harbour ; and though the noise of great breakers which we hear, imports hazard, yet I hope day-light, and good piloting will secure all.

More particularly I ask your patience with liberty (still for your service) to make the few following distinct petitions.

L P E T I T I O N.

Honorable brethren !

THAT you would know what you are, and who you are, in the more ample and heroic sense of your state !

It is certain very agreeable with grace, for the upright, sometimes to shift ideas, and change such as are mournful, for those which bear a bright aspect in their condition ; otherways they may rob God of the glory of the best part of his grace and bounty, and disfigure their own strength, for some of the most important services they are called to in the world ; therefore *Nehemiah* plucks up his courage, and says, “ Should such a man as I flee ? As tho’ he should say, he knew himself owner of too many great endowments and instruments, to be so little as to run for it, or be dreaded with such an alarm, *Neh. 6. 11, 12.*

So brethren, imagine your selves to be something more than ordinary ; for really you be so ; and that as you are a gospel combination, and collectively considered.

What ! the best men of our country who form our courts, and command our armies, that make the figure and cast the true lustre (by their great wisdom and real accomplishments) in all great shews and appearances : Must all these be made null, or buried in a miosis (as is frequently enacted by ambition) for the sake of some inferiour members in a fraternity ? which is as much as to say, in state affairs, because cobblers stalls or orange sellers baskets, afford no statesmen, ergo, none to be found ; or because that in many great counties there may chance to be an hundred knaves, and twice the number of fools, ergo, there be no legales homines, lawful, men, fit for juries ; no men fit for burgessees or knights of the shire, to be found to make parliament men ? and so the kingdom must needs loose all its antient rights by default. And whether or no such observations as these, that are so very conclusive, as you see, may stand for better law and logick in the churches then in the empire ?

But if of equal force in each constitution, then,

whether this is not the way to inter and bury the glory of the empire and churches in their own rubbish, whilst we incapacitate the heroes of both by an argument a minoriad majus, viz. by infering the insufficiency of the great and wise, because of the mean and base mingled in the same communities.

II. P E T I T I O N.

THAT you will put such an estimation and value on your church liberties as the English do on their civil. And this is but a very reasonable request, if you consider the differing treasuries under custody, viz. Immortal souls on the one hand, and outward fortunes on the other.

Many of you know the stories (possibly better than I can recite them) which tell us, what ship loads of blood and treasure those civil things have cost the English world; and how near they still lie to Englishmens hearts. And many of you being immediate successors, cannot but be very sensible what these *New-England* liberties have cost your progenitors, some of them having buried their estates, and all of them their bones in these foundations, and left you now in possession, that if you should put contempt upon their adventures, their courage, wisdom, zeal and self denial, by under-prizing these inestimable infranchizments, and flights them as though they were now to be indorft by your own hands with *Hezekiah's Nebustan*, God may then put you to learn the worth of them at that school where they learnt it; and I am sure you will pay dear for your tutoring if it comes to that.

III. P E T I T I O N.

Honor and oblige your pastors and public minstry :

IT is certain they are very great articles in the reasons of your well being, *Mat. 5. 13, 14.* They make all things more savory; and to go down with a better relish; yea, they alter tragédies and comedies into a more grateful entertainment. What is all the glory in the world without the gospel purely dispens'd, and its most refined influence? These are the lights of the world, and carry the lanthorn aloft in the dark night

of your travels, thro' the tempestuous ocean of a miserable life, to direct all to a safe landing at last.

Indeed, I must acknowledge, your ministers, when sound and faithful, are to be accounted and esteemed amongst the best of your friends, tho' when corrupt and prejudiced, the worst of your enemies.

I think the devil himself, and the world of his accomplices, can't do you the damage, they may upon a revolt. That I beg you will be curious and careful of your interest embarked and deposited there.

And without making any scruple (in the main) they are your hearty and faithful servants. Indebour to increase their love, and let them see and feel you have a double honor for them for their works sake. And if after all your repeated grace and goodness, they will desert and betray you, they shall then incur a double guilt both by transgressing the laws of gratitude to you and of loyalty to their great Lord.

And I assure you, Sirs, I should upon such terms be very loath to share in their triumphs, tho' their gains should be seemingly great, and their signals and shouts equal with the *Cæsars* of the world in their going off.

IV. P E T I T I O N.

Furnish your churches with ruling elders!

THE nature of the office is not only agreeable with your frame, and exacted by your principles, but indeed carries safety and protection in it to your liberties; such trustees are not liable to corruption as other officers, in that you do (as it were transmit and intrust them with your very principles of self-preservation, which are of that nature as never to alter their sentiments, unless it be in the dissolution of the subject, when all falls together. The office seems a creation, where your just and regular sympathies, and antipathies center by the laws of nature; that what you love, they love; what you hate, they hate; and being *ex officio*, of the standing watch and guard, they will peculiarly personate your selves upon every notable crisis, and naturally caring for your affairs, will, like wakeful sentinels, curiously and with courage guard your liberties.

Let churches which are numerous and fuller of eminent gifts, lead the way, and then excite and provoke their sister churches to such love and good works for the advance of the common cause. There are without doubt, in these churches, many private members, worthy persons, suitably qualified for this office, who (like some edge-tools heedlessly left to rust out in oblivion) lie hid, yet, when found, and put to use, will prove themselves truly eminent.

Let Christ's churches seek amongst their neglected hoards; for they are, without doubt, church by church, far richer than they make for; there are, indeed, complaints of great poverty, and of a dearth and scarcity of suitable men. But I presume it is done with great injustice; and complaints of this nature in these churches, are but the complaints of servants that are full fed; and relieve no case by complaining, but rather reflect dishonor upon their good master, who hath bought all and bestow'd enough and also incur blame to themselves for not improving those talents for the advance of his exchequer, which they themselves have wrapt up in a napkin, and that in this case, by too much symbolizing with the carnal and politick men of the world, who to humour some by-ends (under the masquerade of indigent persons) make themselves very poor, tho' God has given them great riches, *Prov. 13.7.* This is a true (tho' a serious affirmation) that in our constitution and principles, there is as plain a precept, if not as great a reason for this officer, as for any other in our churches; and yet, as to matter of fact, we find it to be *rara avis in terra*, like a black swan in the meadow; and tho' the whole species is not quite root-ed out, yet it is grown very rare to find one individual.

Now the fault must be some-where, and I am satisfied, our poverty is least to blame.

That some body or another must needs be culpable, on the account of this great omission, may I without offence issue out, search and inquest, to know who is to blame, upon this failure whether brethren, or public officers, or whole churches?

I. *Private Brethren.*

MAY not the blame be laid in some cases and in some churches, upon some very capable christian gentlemen, who tho' not incumbred (for the public) with any other incoherent service, yet are possibly too shy of this trust, when offered to them? It must needs be acknowledged, the office is almost perfectly a piece of mortification and self-denial; there is no provision in it to feed ambition, or feast any other lust; all is full of watching and painfulness, and the reward and wages quite out of sight. But however in such examples, whether persons so qualified, and so called, ought not to comply, or themselves bear the blame.

The terms of Christ's kingdom are very strict and rigorous, for the honor of his own crown, when our just titles are competitors, and he lays the conditions of our obedience, upon a great forfeiture, if we don't submit, when called to duty, *Matth.* 10. 37, 39.

2. *Public Officers.*

MAY not the ordained officers in some cases and in some churches, be taxed or blamed, for this great omission? Such as out of timidity and distrust, jealous ruling elders, lest they should instead of colleagues prove corrivals in the exercise of their own trust and authority, for being men not of such deep learning, yet may prove so fortified with friends, and so popular, as that they may be capable to over-top men of greater learning, and wiser principles of conduct in all administrations.

Now if any of Christ's churches, are vacated of this officer, by such jealousies as these, or of the like nature, can the officers be without blame? and if so, then whether the first born son may not justly imprecate future barrenness on his own mothers womb, for fear lest he should be supplanted of the inheritance, by the next son or brother born of the same ventre?

2dly, Such officers as may plead their own particular conscience and perswasion, against the office, as being of a doubtful original, or of an uncertain institution, and therefore make bold to over rule our plain precept for it, and the church submits: whether is there not a great blame here?

It seems apparent by all rules of order and government, that this is too too sovereign in the one, and too servile and careless in the other.

For that no officers particular conscience must be a rule to govern any particular church, contrary to the churches own law, or rule of establishment; For if it be, then the churches must have as many distinct charters, and differing books of canons, as their pastors have differing consciences; which is a plain in-let to all sorts of confusion.

3dly, Such officers who plead the custom of the churches, and so make the illegal omissions of some, a sanctuary for the same fault in others; but whether this plea from custom will hold officers exempt from blame, when weighed in a just ballance? custom is justly allowed a great conqueror in the world, it subdues whole kingdoms to its empire, and all men submit and adhere to its demands and dictates, as to an oracle? But then it must be custom that is honorable, laudable, and uninterrupted, otherways a custom which continually crosses a plain precept is very culpable, and contracts a long series of guilt, and may expect to be pursued with a tedious train of sad consequences, altho' it should with much presumption wipe its mouth and say, I am innocent. Therefore custom is no plea in this case, but rather renders all who depend upon it, to be reduced to a desperate posture in their thoughts and arguments; for tho' there is a customary omission, that hath prevailed in the churches to a sad degree, as to this office, yet the omission has all along crossed a precept, and has been confronted by the custom of other churches in the land, who have attended their duty; so that those churches who have maintained the practice, have kept lawful possession of the right, and the title being matter of record, and founded in law, there remains no shelter here from custom for delinquents.

4. Whether those officers are justifiable, who honor the office, yet do honestly and uprightly think that the narrow extent of territory may (as to many churches) serve as a supersedeas to the office? For what need of so many great commissions in so small bodies? But

whether small churches have not great work belonging to them, sufficient to improve a full compleat set of officers, and possibly, all little enough to do the work well, if the nature and extent of it be rightly considered and faithfully managed; for who is sufficient for these things?

3. *The churches.*

WHETHER the churches, as incorporate bodies, are free from blame when they don't regularly endeavour to compleat themselves in all offices, and prosecute their claim to this with effect?

The ruling elders are the churches privilege, and a very great right, on which their well-being and stability does much depend, and the great omission in the country has probably brought things to that posture of fickleness as we now find them at? Then whether the churches can be exempt from blame, when they suffer such vacancies to continue, when it is in the power of their hands to remedy it?

Here indeed is a great question commencing, viz.

Question, Whether any church can possibly, and according to rules of order, proceed to elect ruling elders, when other of their officers in actual rule and trust, shall refuse to call and guide the church in the choice?

I shall indeed transgress the bounds of my own intentions, and the civility of an epistle, if I should now undertake a full and compleat answer to this question.

I shall therefore at present only just index the principal titles or heads for answer, by pointing briefly at the duties of officers, and the prerogatives of the churches in the case.

1. It is most apparent though the whole ministry of the world (unless in absolute monarchies) that it is the duty of all public officers, to minister according to the plain rules of the public state, and not by their own fancy or wills, and so in this case, the chief ruling officer or officers (then in being) in point of conduct are obliged to lead the church in their operation, according to the churches plain and settled principles, and not reluct because their own persuasions do otherwise

incline them ; It is now plainly too late for any officer to pretend conscience against established rules : This objection should have been made before they had taken office. But now it is out of season, for they were elected and ordained to govern the church, not by their own thoughts, as the rule, but by the churches canon, and that by their own consent, when they took office. And moreover, this is most evident, that if such powers which belong to the inside of mens being, viz. their hearts, fancies, notions, judgments, imaginations or consciences, call them by what names you please, or let the owners freely fix the titles (the odds is not great,) now if these are to be the rule of churches, then pastors and ruling officers have (in their degree) as absolute a dominion over the churches, as the great *Turk* has over his bashaws, and other vassals.

But I hope, none here will claim this dominion. And if not, then let pastors and teachers do their duty in point of conduct (if the churches are not remiss in theirs) and this great vacancy may be soon supplied, and there is also a relief for officers, if their just prerogatives are any ways toucht by the traverse.

2dly, To confine the discourse to this present example, and to shorten terms, for brevity's sake, it must be granted, that any particular officer sensible of his duty, that shall undertake to gratify and lead the church, in the election and choice, &c. This makes the case very easy in point of conduct ; yea, tho' other officers in the same church, if there be any, should either oppose or not act. For that any one ruling officer in a church, where there may be many of the same nature, he himself is virtually the whole college of officers in any office-act that he performs without them. As in civil affairs a particular executor so far sustains the whole executorship, as that he can make a valid act in that ministry though many others are joined with him in the same testament, and yet don't nor won't act with him, in this or that affair, tho' confirmed in their trust ; which principal is founded in the nature of a joint tenancy in general, and in a joint trust in particular, held by many equals.

3dly, The case is very difficult when the standing officers join as one man, and will not guide the church in these elections referred to, &c. And I must needs say, I fear here has been the great bar to this office.

We may from interest, as well as duty, rationally suppose the inclinations of the churches, and the desires of many of them have been made known by repeated and honorable solicitations therein, saying to *Archipus*, fulfil thy ministry, Cor. 4. 17. and we may also affirm, the principle is plain, the office is acknowledged, at home and abroad to be of divine original. But however this is certain, it is a formal establishment by these churches, and not now to be disputed. Yet the officers pretend, they see no reason to give way to the churches desire or demands, neither will they conduct in this case, though their duty does oblige, that so the church may be compleated in its officers; no! they are pleased by acts of a superintending power, to lock the church door, and turn the key against this office, and no pleas or persuasions can alter their resolutions. But hereby the officers do plainly abdicate their office, by changing the acts of a limited trust, bounded by precept into what is meerly arbitrary; so in a degree, they break up the relation between themselves and the church, and by such an essential error, so contrary to the churches charter, and their own commission they forfeit all at once, tho' lenity and mercy may favor them with a long life; yet in the eye of justice they are dead men, if not in nature, yet in law, and upon their OBSTINACY may justly be DEGRADED, therefore in such a case, when it comes to the extremity, the churches may and ought to call in council, and proceed in their work and duty for their own well being, after the manner of an inorganic *church platform*, chap. 10. And this I need not stand to describe, our platform, the laws of the province, and the practice of the churches in other cases, and vacancies will do it.

Then whether these congregational churches thro' these provinces may not justly reflect blame upon themselves, for too supine negligent a frame of spirit, towards so great an interest, and so noble an office, seeing they have such a share in government, and can fair-

ly rescue themselves and their own rights, by the power and principles of their own essence, when their other officers neglect duty ?

V. P E T I T I O N.

THAT you will please to revise the study, (and in order to it) a new impression of your platform.

It is very usual for many gentlemen in your country, landed men, and men of estates, every man to keep his law-book by him, as his bible, the bible for the solace of his mind, and the law-book for the safety of his estate, that upon any defamation of title, or other incroachments, when his lands and properties are in hazard, he may know whither to repair for his direction, and how to make his defence. And so methinks it should be with the members of the churches, as to their stated rights by their cannon law? That there should be a kind of a penalty (if the hazard in such a defect be not punishment enough) on such delinquents, as live members of Christ's visible kingdom here, and yet live without the platform, the ecclesiastical political charter of these churches.

I must needs say, and I wish I could whisper it so low, that the eccho might never rebound to *Gath* or *Askelon*, and yet be distinctly heard thro' these churches, That I fear the impression of the platform is almost extinct, if not quite worn out in the country. And that as it was said in the day of battle, under king *Saul*, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people ; so here, though your bible, which is the sword of the spirit, is in every mans hand, yet possibly, this spear or necessary weapon, in the defence of your gospel liberties, your platform, is scarce to be found in the hands of one in a thousand, thro' all the host of *Israel*. I do therefore advise my country, and these churches, to furnish yourselves, and that you would encourage the printers in this design; and they can soon recruit you.

My honorable and dearest friends,

If we are push't on to battle, and our weapons are then in the oar, we may justly suspect we shall be but too easy and cheap a conquest for assailants. There-

fore furnish yourselves in good time with this piece of artillery, that you may be well fix'd and equipt for service.

Don't you hear from the top of yonder proud and lofty mountain, the enemies trumpets, and their drums beating a preparative ? Therefore let all the good soldiers of christ be compleat in this and all other parts of their armour, and at an hour's warning, unless you reckon your treasure not worth defending.

VI. P E T I T I O N.

WHETHER it may not be very proper for these churches, after so long an interval, to admit of this address, viz. That they will please to meet or represent themselves in a provincial or general synod ?

That if there be any thing in our church government which may want emendation, that (as they say) it may be done, *Secundum usum sarum*, or regularly and according to the manner of these churches ; or if there be any new forms, needful to be inserted, or whatever else may in a way of order be thought necessary for the advance of religion, it may be fairly decided for the service of the whole. And also, if it shall then be judged prudent, our principles for the seising, and tryal of the more ungovernable, and stouter sort of delinquents and offenders, may be revised, and somewhat enlarged, that so it may be made very easy for all particular churches, to make out processes against them, and that they shall find the churches fetters will hold them. That forever after all small juncto's of men, or particular persons, member or members of the churches (let their character be what it may be) shall be deterred from being so hardy and bold as to divulge their pernicious doctrines, and seditious sentiments, with such presumption, and such hopes of impunity, as some of late have done.

Thus, *Right honorable and beloved in Christ !*

I have nothing more at present to add by way of petition to your selves, but only that you will please to take this poor piece of service in good part.

But tho' it be but as a little goats hair, or a badgers hide or two, or skins not well drest, yet it may be some

way useful for the tabernacle. And tho' it won't shelter against storms of great shot, it may serve to cover and shield from some flightier arrows.

But let it be what it may be in every other mans opinion, it is in mine (as to design and intention) my love, honor and loyalty to my God, prince and country, for whose service I was born, according to the received maxim, *Non soli nobis nati sumus*. And here I pay one part of my debt to those great creditors in such species as I have ; therefore I hope for pardon from, and acceptance with all of them.

My conclusion is with devoutest application to the supream throne, that the almighty God will bless the great ANNE, our wise and protestant princess ; *New-England's* royal nurse, and great benefactress, that she may live to see all the protestant churches thro' her vast empire, more virtuous and more united, and as they all meet and center with their differing persuasions, by their love and loyal actions in her person and government. Let her most excellent majesty, next to Christ, continue absolute in her empire over their hearts, and as she has made such a compleat conquest, of all differing parties within her dominions, by her wise and virtuous measures, and thereby won all the fame of rule and sovereignty from her royal progenitors, who could never so charm such mighty nations. Let her reign continue the exactest model for all courts in *Europe* ! and when she is full repleat and satisfied with length of days, and the most glorious effects of a prosperous reign, let God favor her lasting and flourishing name with an unperishing monument, on which justice shall become obliged to inscribe this memento, viz. " Here lies in funeral pomp, the princess of the earth, the store-house of all enobling and princely perfections," That if all the monarchs on earth, have lost their excellencies, their *arcana imperii* their state, wisdom, skill in government, and all sorts of heavenly, princely and heroick virtues ; here they may be found lodged in this one unparralled MONARCH.

Let God bless his excellency, and preserve the government of the province, and let it continue always in the hands of natives, and let our country, succe

sively breed men of such merit, as shall always enamor imperial majesty, with their loyalty and worth ; and that their true deserts may ever purchase for them such a high station, whilst they shall plainly out-weigh their rivals in the royal ballance. And let them be always patron to these churches, as an acknowledgement to the crown of heaven, as the settled condition of tenure they hold by, and possess such royal demesnes.

Let the great and good God of heaven and earth bless these churches, the beauty of the wilderness, and continue so noble a ministry as they now have, and prosper and requite their faithful and unwearied labors, and let him continue the succession, and furnish the next set with greater accomplishments and virtue.

Let *Christ Jesus*, the great sheppard, who hath the care of the flocks in the wilderness, preserve inviolable, the inestimable privileges and liberties of these churches ; and let them entail them, with all other civil and sacred rights and immunities which they now enjoy, as a sure estate of inheritance, to the last posterity of this people. And let their children, and childrens children remain from generation to generation, until the world be done with ; and the sun has left shining.

So prays, the meanest of all your servants

in CHRIST,

JOHN WISE,

May 31, 1710.

A N

A N S W E R

To the foregoing

P R O P O S A L S.

THE nobleness of parentage, by the laws of honor, entails on posterity, (with other rights) a protection from all incivilities, but not from the austerer demands of justice, when that is affronted and violated. Justice keeping the golden rule, (*Quo dat suum Cuique*) observes no other distinctions, than what it first makes in its distributions amongst the rich and poor, the noble and ignoble, it is no respecter of persons; for that it is superior to all men, and sits as a veiled empress, holding the ballance to weigh out equal to each one according to the merits of the cause, and sees no man.

There being now under cognizance, such as are of honorable families, and yet arrested and brought by due course of law to answer for high crimes, it must not be supposed rudeness in manners, though they be somewhat freely and rusty handled, whilst the prosecution is held agreeable with the impeachment and rule of justice. And as for myself, who am under commission from authority, to appear in defence of my country's sacred liberties: I can in my own justification, affirm, that I have no dishonorable inclinations, but carry a just mind, so as to condemn no man or thing, but upon plain evidence, nor to aggravate any plea beyond its just bounds.

Therefore, tho' in the following pages there may be discerned, a great liberty in argument, with a mixture

of satyrs, as tho' none but my inferiors were involved in the charge; yet ascribe it unto my love and veneration for so great an interest as I appear for, and not to any base intent of sinking the honor, or darkening the lustre of men. I neither desire, nor design to hurt any man, no, not so much as an hair on his head, but I solely aim at ERROR, that is the butt I level for.

Thus having by this brief, but sincere apology, secured the honor of my intentions, if I am worthy of belief; I shall no longer interrupt the process, but shall nextly, draw up the indictment, upon which these proposals are to pass, and abide a tryal.

And this I shall do in a form borrowed from sir *Edward Cooke*, the king's attorney, in the arraignment of sir *Walter Rawleigh*, in these words.

HERE is mischief, mischief in *Summo Gradu*; yea, exorbitant mischief. This is the charge I offer to make good against the proposals, at the bar of common reason; in order thereto, I shall proceed, and expect to produce sufficient evidence under two heads.

1st. By a few preliminary queries.

2dly, By a more critical examination of the proposals themselves.

1. As introductory, and for the bringing in further evidence against the criminal proposals, now upon their tryal, I offer these following queries.

1st Query.

Whether the churches in *New-England* are not fairly in possession of a form of government, by which they are distinguished from most of the reformed churches in the world, more than by their grace? and if so, (which no man that knows them will deny,) then it must be some superior power, or their own voluntary act, regularly obtained, that must out or dispossess them. Did an equal claimer appear, yet long and quiet possession holds against a writ of ejectment, a very strong plea in the sessions, both of reason and law; according to that acknowledged maxim, *Æquali*

Jure, melior est Conditio Possidentis, when two plead an equal right, he is in the best condition who is in possession ; then it can be no less than a very indisputable right, and duly prosecuted with effect, that can dispossess these churches of their government.

2d Query.

Whether length of time has discovered any essential error in the government of these churches ?

And 1st, it has, or 2dly, it has not.

1. If time has made any such discovery, yet the proposals have not been so fair as to detect it, or describe wherein, or in what respect. The great service these churches, with their government, have done, in subduing and beautifying a wilderness, bespeaks some considerable respect from all men, who value wisdom or piety ; that it must needs seem a harsh piece of justice, without any formal trial, for them to be driven from plenty, and sent to the doors of their own tenants, to beg for a booty, out of that estate which was once their own at least, by a seizure in fact, if not in law ; for that the proposals kill, and take possession with far less ceremony or legal formalities, than *Ahab* did, in gaining the right of *Naboth's* vineyard ; when as if there is any essential error in their frame or constitution, and that they have either ignorantly or treacherously assumed any peculiar prerogative which belongs to Christ's throne, as king, that was never their due to possess (and so being considered as usurpers, are dead in law) yet notwithstanding it would not have offended against the laws of gratitude in sending them to their graves, to have put some more marks of honor upon them, by certain solemn and usual forms of trial in the prologue of their dissolution ; for they have been certainly great and good servants to the public, that if they deserve to die, they ought to die under all the marks of honor which justice can allow of, at the least a grand sessions, a jury, and liberty to make plea in their own defence, and under the influence of royal council, should have been granted ; unless they may be treated as conquerors, serve unfortunate pirates, who when taken, are without form of law hung up at the yards-arm.

2dly. But if no such discovery can be made, whether it is a wise and just thing for men to alter their government? The churches of Christ in this country, have been in possession of this form of government; and it hath been established by certain legal and orderly familiarities, and universal consent; and has continued upwards of threescore years. And as the poet says, *Pervarios Casus Per Tot Discrimina Rarum Tendimus in Cælum*, They have passed various changes, and great temptations, and yet to this day by this besome of discipline have been kept as clean swept, as any churches of God in the world; and any such embroilments as have lately happened in the churches, have been more the folly of administrators, in not keeping to the rules of government, than from any defect in the constitution. Then what reason have we to meditate a change? No, certainly; it will be more divine, and agreeable with the law of our religious gratitude, to join with the rev. Mr. *Nicholas Noyse*, in his doxology, or use of triumph and praise for the great mercies he recites in his election sermon, p. 79. says he, Thanks be to God and the king! our houses and our lands are our own, without every mans being at the cost of a charter; and yet we have the liberty of our religion, and the free exercise of it, without subscribing new articles of faith, worship or discipline; which is a great favor of God, if we have wisdom and grace to improve it rightly.

Query, Whether the right improvement will be to alter the scheme of our government or discipline, seeing no body else will do it for us? No surely! But it will be more agreeable, with both our policy and duty, to follow the good advice Mr. *Cotton Mather* leaves us in his golden-street, page 40. in these words, "Where we have a platform left us that is according to the word of our gracious Lord, and the pattern in the mount; we shall be great enemies to ourselves, if we do not keep to it."

3d. *Query*.

Whether it be not great boldness for any particular gentlemen to invade, null, alter or weaken so great a right and propriety, as is the government of these churches, without their consent?

Government is the greatest blessing in the world, of a worldly nature ; it is felony, cheaper by far to the loofers, to plunder men of their estate and wealth, nay, and of their lives too, then to dispoil them of government ; for by the latter, you harrafs and worry them in the world, with plagues and miseries, worfe then death it felf, that the bafeft is far better than no government ; a churlifh tyranny, is better than an insolent anarchy, where men are without law, and all hail fellows, not well, but baelly met. And for men to alter or fwap government, without all interefted parties are agreed, is a very bold intrufion.

That, yea, that government which is in any good meafure formed, and does agree with the natural freedom of human beings, and is adjusted by the laws of wisdom and honor, and plainly, and fairly eftablifhed ; is too much of God in the world, and too great a royalty belonging to men, for any to play the knave or fool with.

And when a government hath done all things in the main well, and has reapt in a great ftock of blessings, now to fhuffle it out of place, is ficklenefs, and not policy ; for a fenfible ferief of blessings will always atone for fome feeming defects in a constitution. Therefore when all *Ifreal* met at *Ramah*, in a general afsembly, to alter their confular government, which had been crowned with fignal blessings, they got ill will in the court of heaven for it, 1 *Sam.* 8. 7.

The great fuccefs which attended, fignified it to be a theocracy, and that it had more of God, than of man in it, which is an argument, (*Cæteris Paribus*) for all other governments, and fo for this of *New-England* churches, which has been honored with great fuccefs, and many blessings from its beginnings to this day ; therefore well does Mr. *Cotton Mather* describe the fubject and advife his country, in his late fermen on the ftreet of gold, fays he, (in a remarkable paffage out of a letter) page 40. “ Here is a temple built, more glorious than *Solomon’s*, not of dead ftones, but living faints ; which may tempt the greateft queen of *Sheba* to come and fee, and allure even kings from far to come and worship in. Therefore, as to their govern-

ment, (says he) first, do not spil it, oh, destroy it not! there is a blessing in it."

4th. Query.

Whether by comparing the proposals and our platform, we don't find them repugnant, and so contradictory, that if one stands, the other must fall?

And that we can as soon reconcile a republic with an absolute monarchy, or the best sort of free states with a politick tyranny, or at least with an oligarchy, where the chief end of government is the enriching and greatness of its ministers; and this we may do, when we have compounded these *proposals* and our *platform*, so that as that faithful and noble friend to these churches, the famous and learned *Increase Mather*, D. D. in an appendix to his dissertation concerning the sacrament, laments several plots conspiring the dissolution of these famous churches, in these words, viz. The bold attempts which have of late been made to unhinge and overset the congregational churches in *New-England*, by decrying their holy covenant, &c. We may here justly highten the complaint, and cry, *Pro Dolor ! hinc Lachrimæ !* Alas, alas ! here's the grief ! hence flows our tears ! for here is a bold attempt indeed, not only to despoil the house of some particular piece of furniture, but to throw it quite out at windows ; not only to take away some of its ornaments, but to blow up its foundations. For these bold attempts which that **WORTHY** complains of, seem now to be grown very rampant ; for here is in view a combination of workmen disaffected with the fashion of the old fabrick, who (in pretence) design to repair, but in reality to ruin the whole frame. They appear (indeed) something in the manner of *Nehemiah's* men on the wall, *Neh. 4. 17.* as it were with a trowel in one hand, with which they now and then put on a little untempered mortar, to plaister over a chink or two, where the old work by length of time, is somewhat weather-beaten, to pacify the jealousies of the inhabitants, that they may think these builders (surely) are mending, and not marring their old comfortable habitation. But in reality, they have in the other hand a formidable maul, not as *Nehemiah's* weapon to defend, but to break down the building ; for they are

all hands at work banging the platform in pieces, upon which the old fabrick is built. That may not the churches, and all their lovers sigh and complain, as once *Cicero* did, *O Tempora ! O Mores !* who would have expected such times and such things from such men ?

5th Query.

We must needs then enquire, From whence the proposals derive their force ? Who gives them letters of attorney, or commission to sue these churches (by a *Quo Warranto*) out of possession of their government ? To me (I must needs confess) the attempt is very daring ; and I see no way of reconciliation, unless the scheme drawn in the proposals can be fairly sheltered under some more authentic and specious umbrage, than the bold dictates, tho' of the wisest of men, when they are pleased to set themselves up oracles for their country.

So I come,

2. To the more critical examination of the proposals themselves, which I shall attend,

1. More generally.

2. More particularly, by taking a survey of them in their distinct sections.

1. More generally, by enquiring into their original, and nature.

1. By making a more exact inquest and search after their original ; and in this debate, they forfeit their essence, unless they can derive their pedigree, either,

1. From Gods immediate inspiration. Or,

2. From ancient revelation. Or,

3. From right reason, which is a ray of divine wisdom, instampt upon human nature. Or,

4. From the platform of the churches, which is a system of government, collected by our ancestors out of several fountains, and principally from the scriptures. Now in pursuing this distribution, I shall diligently enquire, whether we can hear of their original under any of these heads.

1. As to immediate inspiration, I must needs presume, these gentlemen will not dare to assert, that they are sent immediately from God with this message to the churches ; they are too good and wise to pretend (with enthusiasts) to immediate vision, or a spirit of prophecy ; both the

matter and manner of their writing, sufficiently convinces, that these proposals are their own sentiments ; they durst not put, a, Thus saith the LORD upon them ; such an inscription is too heavenly and royal for such coin ; for both they and we know, according to, *Deut.* 30. 12. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may know it, and do it ? there is no need to send messengers to that court, to learn by immediate and extraordinary information, either the laws of our duty or interest ; for that God hath made all things sufficiently plain, by this time of day, either by scripture or reason, for the conduct and government of his churches ; yea, of the subjects of his universal intellectual MONARCHY in this world.

2. As to ancient revelation ; holy scripture, that best, tho' not the biggest of books, is the saints library, and the clergy-man's pandects, whence he takes the rules for the management of his trust ; so that it is very amusing, that the bible should be forgotten in drawing up such schemes as these ; as tho' the usage of the popes conclave, which turns the bible out of doors for a wrangler, and gives the chief seat to tradition, &c. were here in fashion. Indeed, I cannot but esteem them very unfortunate *proposals*, to be turned so naked into the world, as not to have the least tincture of scripture to guard them from contempt ; no, not so much as a citation, that might admit of so much as a strained consequence in their defence. And so, tho' less prophane, yet they are also less politick then the most desperate of heretics, who always bring their errors on the stage, guarded with scriptures, and craftily endeavour to make their citations look with such an aspect, as tho' they were encampt on their side. But here we have nothing for our faith to lean on, but so many austerer *Ipse Dixits*, as bitter pills of death for the churches to swallow, without any of the confection of heaven, or the sweet manna sprinkled upon them ; or else only so many naked human presumptions, as arrows or bolts, too rashly shot out against the sides of our churches, and no word of scripture to tip or feather them. Nay, it is very memorable, and I account fatal, and to be observ-

ed that GOD, that sacred title of the almighty, with which the holy scripture does so abound, is not once named (as I can find) in the whole treatise ; as tho' the most sacred titles, as well as sections of that heavenly book, would move fears, and irritate jealousies, rather than pour down solace and comfort upon this undertaking. Therefore, in a word, the whole bible is thrown by as a sealed parchment, or as one that never prophesies good to such adventurers. Therefore these proposals being apprehended as sea rovers, and indicted upon the statute of piracy ; and upon examination being found without the prince of princes colours, and yet doing great mischief, in assaulting and wounding his churches and lawful subjects, on their honest occasion : being bound on a voyage to their own country they can no ways in justice escape, but must pass under the sentence, and endure the pains of death, for they are taken fighting without commission.

3. As to R E A S O N.

Ratio Ratio, Right reason, that great oracle in human affairs, is the soul of man so formed and endowed by creation, with a certain sagacity or acumen (in many particular examples, sharpened by the constitution of nature, by grace and study) whereby mans intellect is enabled to take up (*pro Medulo*, or in a degree) the true idea or perception of things agreeable with, and according to their natures. So that if we bring these proposals under examination by the laws of reason ; we must enquire, whether they are agreeable with the nature and constitution of the churches, if they fully harmonize with their principles of essence, then they may be enroled for canons ; but if they jar, and are plainly repugnant, we may then lawfully censure them, and pronounce them irrational. Whether these churches are constituted by scripture or reason, yea or no, that is not our question, but being of such a frame or constitution, as they now are, and always have been ; all who pretend to support and preserve them, and yet take such measures, as will utterly overthrow and dissolve them, such repairers have apparently deserted the dictates and government of right reason.

And here we may collect an induction of some few hints of certain particulars for evidence ; the platform asserts a classes to be no gospel form of church order ; the proposals say it is, or they abuse our credulity. The proposals orders the association to have the first cognizance of church cases ; our government says, no, it belongs to the jurisdiction of particular churches. The proposals gives power to the association to limit elections, and to direct them ; but our government says, no, it will not consent ; the election of officers is the prerogative of the churches, and they went, as yet, part with it, &c. So that when we can by the rules of grammar, resolve yea and nay, to be the same voice and word then you may reconcile the proposals and the platform ; that certainly whatever there be of religion, the method is apparently disagreeable with common reason.

4. As to the P L A T F O R M.

I shall represent it by a kind of a short prosopopa, thus, viz. enquiring whether the proposals are reduced from this fountain, the platform with all its chapters, and with one joint consent, as plain as the tongue in their heads can utter it, say, that ever since it possess the government, so much as dream'd of them. It may say with destruction, (*Job* 28. 22.) we have heard of the fame of these things, with our ears, but never imagined so much as a seminal virtue in our own being, for their procreation ; but rather starts with the news of their approach, out of fear of its own dissolution, from there repugnant and formidable nature. Therefore as in a grievous fright from surprize, cries out with *Athaliah*, treason, treason ! And begs that zeal and conscience, those two solicitors for the crown, will at this grand court of *Oyer* and *Terminer*, implead and prosecute them as traitors to the prince of peace, and felons to these churches, Christ's loyal subjects. So

I come,

2. To enquire into the nature of these proposals, by surveying their composition and properties.

1st. Their composition.

They seem a conjunction of almost all the church-

governments in the world, and the least part is congregational. Indeed, at the first cast of the eye, the scheme seems to be the spectre or ghost of presbyterianism, or the government of the church by classes; yet if I don't mistake, in intention there is something considerable of prelacy in it, only the distinct courts of bishops, with the steeples of the churches, tythes, surplice, and other ornaments, do not shew themselves so visible, as to be discerned at the first look, yet with a microscope you may easily discern them really to be there in *Embrio, et in Rerum natura*; for this is a known maxim, *Quod necessario Subintelligitur non dicitur*. What is necessarily understood, or lies hid in the intention of a design, is really there, by a just interpretation; therefore these proposals which dare revolt so far at a step, as these have done, must needs understand no less in their aim, than an enobling government for clergy-men, which our princes and parliaments have adorned the churches with. This seems rational, that those which never stick at robbing the churches of such an immense treasure, as the proposals carry off, will never stand, Shall we! shall we! at the offer of a bishoprick, which is a barony with all its rights, and royal appurtenances.

There is also something in it, which smells very strong of the infallible chair, to assume the power of making rules, to ingross all principles of process, the right of election, the last appeal, the negative vote, and all superintending power in matters ecclesiastick, as the prerogative of clergymen, distinct from all other estates, and ministers in government; or thus, for the clergy to monopolize both the legislative and executive part of canon law, is but a few steps from the chair of universal pestilence, and by the ladder here set up, clergymen may, if they please, clamber thus high; for when they are invested with what is in these proposals provided and intended for them, who then can controul them, but the Almighty himself? as was said of those daring men, *Gen. 11. 6*. And now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do; for who can now withhold from them infallibility, or stop the direful and definitive sentence?

Who can limit their power, or shorten their arm in their executions ? Their bulls can now upon any affront, bellow and thunder out a thousand terrible curses ; and the poor affrighted and invall'd laity, both princes and subjects (being here at in the grave, put under one and the same topick) must forfeit their salvation, if they don't tamely submit, and obediently become their executioners ; for that it is now evident, that all power is if not really given, yet formerly stolen, and in intent bequeathed to them.

2dly. *Their properties.*

1st. Property, is disorder. Order is both the beauty and safety of the universe ; take away the decorum whereby the whole hangs together, the great frame of nature is unpin'd, and drops piece from piece ; and out of a beautiful structure we have a chaos. These proposals are therefore very mischievous, if not in matter, yet in the manner of production ; they are full of disorder, being things born out of due time, their conception is without countenance, from the rule of order. Indeed, there is no statute to be found that will justify the first coitus of the parents, neither will any allow their social life ; that the birth must bear the attender, of being both begotten and born, out of lawful wedlock, and so in point of honor fall under the censure of the *Levitical law*, and must be kept back from promotion ; for, *Deut. 32.* “ A bastard shall not enter into the congregation.”

That to pass all other remarks, if we are under mistake in the assertions ; I then demand and enquire, where is that lawful authority, which published legal banes, with the consent of all the interested persons, and the regular consummation of the match ? If any rule can be found to shelter and honor the conception and birth, let it be produced ; and it escaping other felonies with life, this scandal shall be taken off ; but otherwise it must remain as a bar to the tenth generation.

The 2d. Property is usurpation. The proposals apparently usurp the church prerogatives. It has been asserted, and it is true, these churches have been settled upon the platform of their own government for

upwards of sixty years ; they have often revised and re-inforc'd the establishment, both as the principles of their confociation and union in general, and the form of government, for every church in particular. Then for these propofals without licence to affume a legislation, and form of a government, fo repugnant to their own, can be no lefs than ufurping a dominion over them, contrary to the rule, *1 Pet. 5. 3.* neither as being lords over God's heritage. Laffer acts againft empire, hath coft many a bold man his head ; What ! for a particular knot or juncto of gentlemen to nake fo bold with a fettled government, as to pick out all the enobling royalties, liberties and enfranchizements in it, and facrifice them to their own ambition ! It is enough to put mankind into an uproar.

It is fresh in memory, that when some of our English princes (and one would think, if any men may, they may be allowed to afpire, yet when they) have prefum'd on lefs things than thefe propofals reach after, in gratifying their aim at an abfolute monarchy, when as they have not dared to lay out with fuch freedom, a new form of government, with a wide mouth, gaping to devour the English liberties, (as thefe propofals do the churches,) but only with much fecrecy, covin and policy, they have by fome more clandestine, meafures been intruding upon the antient liberties of the English nation. Every one knows what direful convulfions this has bred in the bowels of the kingdom. And may it not ferve to enliven this plea ? To invite all fuch who are with *Plato*, owners of a great genius at inventing new, or modelling old government, to try their fkill in altering the English monarchy, and fee how it will be probated. That is, fuppofe you fhould venture to interdict the royal affent, or convert the prefent monarch into a duke of *Venice*, or difsolve the lords in parliament or (rather in harmony with this fcheme) turn the burgefles and knights of the fhires (as a fort of men not fit for politics in parliament) out of doors ? And whether our fovereign, the peerage, or fubjects of English liberties would take it well ? And whether christian men may make bolder with the eftablifhed government of *Chrift's churches*, than with that which belongs to

civil affairs ? In honor to the *New-England* churches, and with veneration for the English monarchy, I dare assert, that there is in the constitution of our church government more of the English civil government in it, and it has a better complexion to suit the true English spirit, than is in the English church, or any other, both as to the legislative and executive part of government. Indeed, considering how things are at home in church and state, I have been sometimes ready to query, why the nation should be so enamoured with their civil, and yet so careless and regardless of their gospel liberties, so as to trust their consciences, with their clergy, more immediately, and yet wont venture their estates with their learned judges, without the privilege and mediation of juries ; as tho' they were more careful and wise in securing their estates than their souls, and valued one far more than the other. But I shall go on with the comparison.

1. As to the legislation ; our *New-England* convocation admits, and the government does profess the fraternity as necessary to the being of all synodical assemblies, that as far as legislation spiritual, is left to men, and as they have a great treasure, viz. their salvation embarked, so they have a great interest in the management of it ; and herein they agree with the English caution and wisdom, in the modes of civil government of the empire ; for the commons are one great estate in the civil legislation ; and they have a great power in the management of that great trust.

2. As to administration, or the executive part of government, our *New-England* government grants a juridical power to the fraternity, and makes them proper judges in all ecclesiastical cases and administrations, on persons cognizable, or that must pass a trial juridice ; which is agreeable with the constitution, nature and practice of the civil government of the empire ; for under the prosecutions of law, no English subject in life, limb or estate, must be past upon, but by the judgment of his PEER'S ; yea, in all pleas of the crown, such confidence has the government put in the loyalty and discretion of the commons, that our English juries are stated arbitrators, and umpires between

our prince and his subjects. Yea such a dependance has the whole nation in keeping these liberties in their own hands, that they reckon the commons in parliament and juries in the common wealth, to be the great pillars of English honor and liberties, and they esteem them as ramparts built by the wisdom of our ancestors to defend us from tyranny and slavery.

That considering the affinity in these two constitutions, one would be ready to query, whether the heroick true English spirit is not parent to both? Or whether they are not equal debtors to the gospel, for their original? The improvement of this comparison is briefly this; suppose some of the great ministers of state should venture to sweep away all those civil enfranchizements which are English-mens birth-right, and set up an arbitrary power, with a pretence of doing justice and judgment in the kingdom, by more concise and expedite measures, whether they might not be seized? And whether the statutes would not be chains strong enough to hold them, as traytors, to a well formed government, and then laid fast by a mittimus for great usurpers? And whether the plea will not hold in just proportions, on the other side of the comparison?

3d. Property Riotous. The nature of a riot may (in part) be thus described, it is an unlawful assembly of more than three met in one place, to do an unlawful act, as violently breaking down of walls, and pulling up of hedges, and wrongfully entering into other mens rights and possessions, and that in affray and terror of the people. In managing this plea, I shall only desire that the illegality of the assembly which formed these proposals, with the objects and things they intend, and the ancient boundaries which they plainly invade, together with the fearful apprehensions that many good and sober people in the vicinage have concerning the enterprize, may be critically examined; and I doubt not but when we obtain the suffrage of this honorable court, it will determine, the impleaded criminals are of a riotous nature, and so the indictment will stand more valid against them.

4th. Property, Sacrilegious, &c. 5th. Property, Rebellious.

It grieves me to utter the epithites agreeable with the nature of these proposals ; yet they must blame their own nature, but not my justice, if I give them but their due ; for I find them in the breach of a royal statute ; yea, I think of a penal law. This is plain, they take away the liberties, privileges, discipline and government of these churches, all which are established to them by the law ; and that not only by their own canons, but by the laws of this province, as by a royal Magna Charta, viz. in an act for the settlement and support of the ministers, page 3. in these words, “ The respective churches in the several towns within this province, shall at all times hereafter use, exercise and enjoy all their privileges and freedoms, respecting divine worship, church-order and discipline ; and shall be encouraged in the peaceable and regular profession and practice thereof.”

This act (as one says on the great charter of English liberties) deserves to be written in letters of gold, and hung up in all our houses of Gods public worship, to signalize the zeal (in the presence of God, angels and men) of the authority of the throne and empire, for the establishing of these churches, and Christ's interest in them. Now, considering that the power, policy, and grace of the English crown, should, thus lock up the churches treasure for them ; and set such a centinal, with the flaming sword of justice in its hand, to dread and awe intruders, it must needs be a very bold action, (if it been't plump rebellion) to attempt or design such a sequestration or imbezement as the proposals DO.

6th. Property, Unfaithfulness, &c.

7th. Property, Ingratitude.

For the stewards of great families, when advanced to honor, and a profitable trust, by the free election and grace of noble-men, when their lords are laid down to rest, and sleep too securely, or are gone out of town, with this presumption, that their estate is secure, it being put under the care of loyal trustees, and thankful servants ; now for such trustees and stewards, upon such opportunities to pocket up, or load away the riches of the family, and set up for themselves, and leave the proprietors beggars, whom they found in wealth and plen-

ty, is both infidelity and ingratitude. Now let the churches be pluck'd and deplum'd, as the *proposals* intend, and they are after the possessing a fair estate, become bankrupts : And let those stewards that are guilty, answer for the robbery ; for my part, I will have no share in it.

8th. Property, Impolicy.

And I am sure there is great store of this in these proposals ; I shall instance but in two particulars.

1. In timing the challenge that is here made, to brave a rich and powerful enemy at so great a distance, and invite him by sound of trumpet to a pitch'd battle, when surprize and ambushments might be laid, and do the work with the expence but of a tenth part of the blood which this may cost. This is not agreeable with the art of war ; *Achitophel* would have put a derision upon such measures. *Jacob's* sons when taking a bloody design in hand, first contrived to stupify and blunt the courage of their enemies, and then came upon them by surprize, ere they could arm in their own defence, (tho' it does not justify their cruelty, yet it magnifies their subtilty) for thereby they brought their design about ; whereas if they had gone a more blunt and daring way to work, *Simon* and *Levi* had not been half a breakfast for the *Hivites*. Gen. 34. 25.

So here, had the churches been convened, and no noise made of of this design, they possibly (tho' their treasures are fortified by right, and so in safety, and their troops more, ten to one, than their enemies) yet by ambushments or surprize, they might have chanced to have been coakered or conquered out of all, by being flattered, over-awed, or over-argued, into a surrender or submission ; but we may now rationally hope the alarm will rouse the whole camp, and each squadron will rebound it to the next with a *hinc Proximas Urit Ucalagon* ; and so the plot may upon a defeat, blame its own bad conduct, more than its fortune.

2. The design itself (*Quo ad suam Executionis*) let it come to birth, as is designed or desired, and the very heavens would either frown upon, or laugh at it for its folly : If we examine the climate of the country, the degrees of latitude, and the severe stars that chiefly go-

vern, there is no good policy in the design ; so that, methinks the universal frame of nature cries it down for a *Non compos-mentis* ; for there are no such great creatures as are here conceived, can fare in hard cold countries as the camelion does in warm, there must be a very great hoard to support them ; and nature does honestly confess, she cannot answer the bills of fare, which belong to their table, and do her duty to the royal exchequer ; and this must be maintained, or all breaks to pieces.

Again, let it be considered, whether it been't great intellectual weakness, or want of policy, for one generation to contrive needless loads for the next, especially when they may get as well to heaven, without carrying such packs along the road ? It has been universally the humour of mankind, according to the laws of nations and nature, when roused by the regular dictates of self-love, to endeavor that every following generation might be more lightsome, free, noble and happy than that which did immediately preceed.

They say the *Chinees* dig clay and use it not, but leave it heapt, or in pits, mellowing for the next age. Every prudent man builds his house for duration. The prince enlarges and betters his dominions. The peasant sweats to advance his estate, and then each leaves all in greater triumph to their heirs.

The *Kentish* Yeomanry are had in honor to this day, for not stooping to the conqueror, till they had conditioned, and thereby secured their fair estates of lands in fee and free-holds for ever from all forfeiture by felony, according to their country proverb,

The father to the bough,
The son to the plough.

Such is the merciful fore-sight of mankind, and his charitable care and fore-cast for such as shall follow, tho' they may never be seen or known by their wise progenitors.

But here is plainly a conspiracy very heterogenous to such judicious acts of human providence ; a design plainly, if not perfectly, to enslave, yet to bring posterity into needless vassalage and thraldom.

This is an acknowledged verity amongst wise statists,

as might be proved by the following table.

That that monarch who has the command of the seas, can at his pleasure command any maritime country. And so, those men who have the command and empire of the conscience of mankind, can command their estates, and indeed whatsoever else is grateful to them.

Then, whereabouts are we in our politicks, when we have delivered up the royalties that are challenged? and in what a weak capacity shall we leave posterity in? Nay, these virtuoso's themselves seem to be hardened with the ostrich against their own natural issue, unless the thing would chance to spring up as quick as *Jonas's* goard, and hang as full of pearls and diamonds, as the seas, and rocks of *India*, and they themselves shall have the first shake, and fill all their coffers, with this harvest, or at least, that they are assured that they can and shall entail their offices as securely as their lands, upon their own children; as was the order of priesthood, and the fashion of the house of *Levi*. But alas! These modes are all worn out and made null; and such mens sons, as we are now treating of, fall in with the multitude, and must carry their equal share of the common load; that should the project prevail, under their management, (might they but look up out of their graves in about half an age) they may complain in elegy, after the manner of *Virgil* with his, *Sic vos non vobis hos ego versiculos feci, Tubit alter Honorem*. These verses I made, but another man carries away the honor. So these gentlemen might e'en say, we have contrived to greaten the clergy, and with bees have filled a rich hive; and built a fair nest well feathered, but our posterity we see, is never the warmer, nor will they lick their fingers of it; and not only so, but are the men that must make up the tenth sheaf, and deliver the tenth cock, calf and lamb unto others out of poor demesnes. And also it may justly beget a mournful remembrance in posterity of their parents, and make them often look with a sad countenance upon their fathers graves, not because they are dead, but because they had not ended their days sooner, viz. Before this scheme (so oppressive and cruel to their small freeholds) had taken effect under their management.

2. We come now according to engagement, to take a survey of the proposals in their distinct sections.

S E C T. I.

THAT the ministers of the country form themselves into associations, that may meet at proper times to consider such things as may properly lie before them.

Answer. There is no doubt or question to be made, but that the ministers and pastors of Christ's churches may meet in greater or lesser numbers; for they are masters of themselves, and no more accountable how they spend their time, than other men are; but to meet at certain times and places, as political incorporate bodies, or in the form of classes, for the exercise and management of government, this must be determined by some precept issued from a legislative power; and without this, such who give the advice, and exhibit the call, are very despotick and arbitrary; and those who attend it, are servile in their submission; for that there is no man in his right wits will take this honor unto himself, "but he that is called of God, as was Aaron, Heb. 5. 4." The offer or invitation, bids defiance to our constitution; for our platform denies the classical state of the church under Christ, Chap. 2. Sect. 5. Therefore this is a daring article, in the criminals case; and as it strikes at the vitals of our government, it must in the TRIAL bear weight accordingly.

Sect. And that each of these associations have a moderator for a certain time, who shall continue till another be chosen, who may call them together upon emergencies.

Answer.

1st. What limits shall be assigned for the precincts of every distinct association? Or may we conclude the best model is to follow the civil distinctions made by the counties? And if so, then the pastors of each classes are scattered through a territory of twenty or thirty miles square, more or less, and then it must needs follow, that the moderator, to discharge his duty, provide messengers to cite all these distinct gentlemen upon any emergency; but the great difficulty is,

what kind of messenger it must be, whether king *Solomon's* tell-tale bird may be trusted with matters of such importance? or, whether the moderator must re-imburse him? Or, must he go on his own cost, contrary to equity in that law? *1 Cor. 9. 7.* "Who goeth to warfare on his own charge?" It is apparently an error, that care hath not been taken to find horse and man, and baiting-places for both on this journey, otherwise for a legislative power to prescribe chargeable offices, and leave them destitute of a temporal support, they must of necessity die to save charges, or turn mendicants, or hope in their travel to meet with the prophets juniper-tree; all which are as disagreeing with good reason as the proposal it self.

2. The moderator has an unlimited power during the prorogation of the assembly, (1.) He must judge of emergencies, that he may summon the members; and being left vested with such a prerogative, if after he has made his citation, he recants, he can then countermand his own order, though the gentlemen should be all-mounted, and ready to move. (2.) If there chance to be an emergency of common concernment, if he finds his own favorites involved in the guilt and danger; he then gives no notice, but stifles the business, and so cheats the company. (3.) And upon any disgust, it is now at his mercy to null the whole frame; for he must be in place till another be chosen; and how will they get together, if he will not give the word? Unless they are creators of themselves the second time, as they were the first. That to institute such charitable designs without a fund, and tie such trust and dominion on the shoulders of men after such a lax and careless manner, and leave them at such loose ends, as easily to make fools of men; for my own part, I slight such methods in government.

S E C T. II.

THAT questions and cases of importance, either provided by themselves, or by others presented unto them, should be upon due deliberation answered.

Answer.

I suppose there is no intent to erect a young or

mock-royal society, or that all questions and cases of experimental philosophy be admitted; if it should be so, I think this some-what touches upon the prerogative of the crown, and may be called in question, under the head of high misdemeanors, if not *Pro Crimini lese Majestatis*; but howsoever, tho' there be no distinction made, yet we will take it in a more charitable sense, and that the proposal (in intent) is wholly confined to church matters; and if so, we must then enquire, how many deep questions can be found in our country, grown mouldy with the *Gibeonites* bread, for want of wise handling.? Or can we find any such heaps of gordian knots, as *Opprobria Theologorum*? The reproach of divines laid up against this consistory meet, to untie them, that we must needs molest our old settlements for their solution? For my own part, I cannot comprehend the proposal, unless it be a plot to introduce the enemy, that is in the rear, that is, by making shew of great illuminations, we may be dazeled with their lustre, and thereby the more easily taken in the snare here laid. But however, to conclude, as the wise says of things more physical or artificial, *Eccle. i.* So I may say of questions and cases, there are none new under the sun. They have been all well spoken to; every learned casuist, is full of them, &c. And *Ames* and *Turretinus*, &c. For a few shillings will do no more in a month, for an inquisitive mind, than this proposal can do in the tedious apprenticeship of many years, then certainly, computing by rules of proportion, we can no ways expect that the clear gains should countervail the great damage we shall sustain by swapping governments upon these terms.

S E C T. III.

THAT advice be taken by the associated pastors, from time to time, ere they proceed to any action in their particular churches, which may be likely to produce any imbroidments.

Answer.

This is very dishonourable, and also a very unreasonable incroachment upon the officers and government of the churches.

It divests the officers of the free exercise of that of-

fice-authority, which Gods word and our platform places in them ; read *Platf. Chap. 10. Sect. 8, 9.* These are to feed and rule the churches, they are to receive the accusations, and prepare them for the churches hearing. This section of the platform fixes both process and judicature in particular pastors and churches, without any limitation ? But the proposal allows no process to be opened, till letters of licence be obtained, from the classes. But why may not all other persons in office be thus fettered, as well as the pastors of churches ? Are these the only students of wisdom and righteousness, that are strangers to the nature of actions, to the rule, and the application of it ? All other officers, in trust and commission, who are wise and loyal, execute the hardest articles in their employ ; and who may say to them, why do you so ? Our judges never stick to hang a man, so long as their commissions and the law will bear them out, and they themselves are left, to be interpreters of both. And that this proposal is a sanctuary for officers against a storm ; alas ! the most that we can make of it, is a covering of fig-leaves, and may serve for a harbour to cowards and fools, but not for men of spirit and conduct. The dream of an embroilment, can never counter-poize duty ; if men are trusted with duty, they must consult that, and not events. If men are placed at helm, to steer in all weather that blows, they must not be afraid of the waves, or a wet coat.

It is certain, it was no dimunition for *Timothy* to carry *St. Paul's* cloak and parchments from *Troas*, *2 Tim. 4. 13.* Yet for particular pastors in the management of church-government to do little more than to carry the copies and parchments of associations about the country, and hang up their decrees on the pillars of churches, according to the order of the proposal can never entitle them to such a tribute of love and honor as the scripture does assign them, as the purchase of their great merits, *1 Tim. 3. 5. 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13.* Such bequestments, as these from the fountain of honor, must signifie more than some such poor low servile business (no ways too high for *Jereboam's* priest to execute) as is laid out in the proposal, but especially if they

have but some one head man to conduct and draw up the conclusion.

Sect. That the associated pastors do carefully and lovingly treat each other with that watchfulness which may be of universal advantage.

Answer 1st. Whether watchfulness is proper, or a term applicable to persons so qualified; so sacred, and in so high a function as those who are here intended?

2dly. Whether to institute watchmen over watchmen, be not the way to distribute the clergy into inferior and superior degrees, and so *ad infinitum*, &c. or at least till the churches of this country (for you must know this is one proposal made for their support) be supported and well ordered by suffragans, metropolitans, and other great pillars of those churches, where clergy-men in higher orbes, inspect those in the same order, who are beneath them in trust and dignity?

3dly. But if you intend honestly, only the watch of one brother over another, as is the duty of all christian people, one towards another, then I cannot understand the sense of the word, as applicable here, with the least good meaning or syntax imaginable.

1st. For tho' there is a design of new modelling of men, and bringing clergy-men into another form of society; yet there is no intent divulged, that they shall co-habit, bed and board together upon certain charters, as the fryars or benedictines, in their royal monastries. Indeed, the section might have been ingrossed with the first canons of the *Dominicans*, or *St. Bennets* laws, when first entring upon their monastick life; but it no ways agrees with this constitution.

2dly. For, as for the occasional meeting of men, eminently sober and virtuous, what business can be supposed for a watch, for about the space of twenty four, or forty eight hours in such examples? Very bad men will hold out longer than so, in a good behavior, under the awe of but some one venerable person, or a grave *Cato*.

3dly. And when these eminent persons, members of the association, are dispersed to their own proper precinct, the proposal surely does not intend they shall follow the chargeable example of princes, who usually

keep spies in each others courts, to inform themselves, how things are managed there; for its plain, the charge and expence in managing such a watch as this, will reduce all-clergy-men to this dilemma, - That they must either vote up the salary, or vote down the method. But then the thing it self is not fair; for it would seem as tho' they watched more for the halting than the help of each other. But as for the proposal, a riddle I found it, and a riddle I leave it.

Sect. And that if any minister be accused to the association where he belongs, of scandal or heresy, the matter shall be there examined, and if the associated ministers find just occasion for it, they shall direct a calling of the council, by which such an offender is to be proceeded against.

Answer. I must boldly and freely enquire, whether this is an honest answer to the question propounded in the head of the proposals? Or whether in reality this is the supporting, preserving and well ordering the interest of the churches there meant? If you mean as you speak, I am sure there is either some dishonesty or some misunderstanding between the question and the answer; for it can't possibly be otherwise, unless the parts of speech are lately become a chaos, and all words are not only of the doubtful gender, but such unreasonable epiceens, that not only both kinds, but both contraries are signified in them; or thus, that to build, plant, repair, pluck up, pull down and demolish, are all now become convertible terms; for take away these high prerogatives from the churches, and you take away their being. These and such like royalties, are their *Formalis ratio*, or the formal cause (*per Quam Res est id quod est*) by which they are, what they are; and this will be very evident, if we do but read a short lecture on the churches essence anatomiz'd, or let their essential and constituent parts and powers be viewed in the history, and philosophy of their own beings, and we shall quickly discern your mistake; for that end read platform, chap. 5. sect. 2. Ordinary church power, viz. of privilege belongs to the brotherhood, and may be acted or exercised immediately by themselves. And more directly to the case in hand,

look into chap. 10. sect. 6. Where there we read, If an elder offend incorrigibly, the matter so requiring, as the church had power to call him to office, so they have power, according to order (the council of other churches, where it may be had, directing thereto) to remove him from his office; and being now but a member, in case he add contumacy to his sin, the church that had power to receive him into their fellowship, hath also the same power to cast him out, that they have concerning any other members.

Now herein we find an essential article in the government and being of these churches, that they have and hold such jurisdiction over their own members; that the highest tribunal ecclesiastical on earth, is there; and that their own delinquent private members, and publick officers are tryable only there, and there they must receive the definitive sentence, and abide the execution of it.

And if so, then I shall make bold to revive my query again, viz. Whether the proposal is either honorable, civil or honest, thus to tumble down at one blow, this high seat of authority? and to break open our prison doors, and loose the fetters of our great offenders? and at the best, to take them out of our hands, and make their mittimus to foreign pastors to do justice upon them, and yet in the mean time, to profess, they are doing us no other injuries but only repairing and mending our churches? Again, whether this is fair, and work-man-like amongst honest men?

But to make a stop here, I must remind you, that this head is not to be passed over slightly; for this is the one thing in the essence of our churches, it is their peculiar enfranchizement and birth-right, and we may not sell it with *Esau*, at a cheap market; if we do, we undo ourselves; for indeed you must know, here lies the marring or making of our churches; here is laid up their strength, and here hangs the pick-lock of their treasure; for by this key stolen, or wrinched out of their hands, the churches of Christ in the world, have been exposed and plundered, for more than a thousand years, and

many of them have nothing at this day left them, comparatively, but a poor, starved, shabbid implicit faith, and a dull, fatal blunt and blind obedience, that a man would scarcely give a groat for both of them. In a word, the usurpations of the pastors, since the great revolt, having unshackled one another, and broke loose from the restrictions they are justly subjected to, under the churches power of privilege, has utterly undone the christian world, from this root of bitterness and pride, from this seed sprung up, the man of sin, as we have it in an anomalous author, viz. the *Eletherians*, page 4. In words to this purpose, "Then a little priest had an opportunity to establish himself, then there appeared in the temple of God that anti-christ, who calls himself the vicar of Christ." And then the same author going on to discover the original of this monstrous birth; he says thus, "Anti-christ was conceived in, by, and from certain affectations of ecclesiastical preheminencies." As tho' he should say, the first spawn or embryo of that insolent *Hector*, or aspiring *Nimrod*, (who first robbed the laity of their christian liberties, and then hunted down the potentates of the world, and brought them as a rich spoil, into his habitation of violence) took its commencement from this principle, viz. from the clergies assuming to themselves this ecclesiastical preheminance, viz. first their obtaining an exemption from the cognizance of the churches, for the crimes, and then in possessing themselves of the sole and absolute jurisdiction (by a despotick government) over the churches themselves.

But however things have been hitherto, I shall no longer uphold the debate, by revising the abuses that have been done to the christian churches by an ambitious clergy, in the ages past, which might more amply be discovered, by tracing the foot-steps of the great apostacy: But I shall end the whole dispute on this head, by drawing up a protest, and denying the jurisdiction of the court, erected and opened by the proposals, as being perfectly disagreeing and repugnant to our former settlements, and present constitution.

S E C T. IV.

THAT the candidates of the ministry undergo a due trial by some or other of the association, concerning [their qualification for the evangelical ministry ; and that no particular pastor or congregation, imploy any one in occasional preaching, who has not been recommended by a testimonial, under the hands of some association.

Answ. To monopolize (in the great articles of trade) some very rich species, and of such use for the good of kingdoms, that they must needs perish without it, or be greatly injured by excessive sales, is accounted by good common-wealths-men intolerable ; for such men or companies, so invested, can, with *Joseph* in *Pharaoh's* court, buy and sell a country at their own prizes ; even so, when these churches have delivered up the right in their candidates to the classes, they may then go a begging to their doors for their ministers, and be contented to take what they are pleased to put off, and at their own lay.

Obj. But you may object, *Ex omni Ligno, non fit Mercurius*. Therefore the judicious must determine and set their mark upon what is merchantable, and throw by what is refuse ware, or else there may be great damage done for want of caution. And thus we come to the plain point in hand, which is to be debated by disputing this question, viz.

Quest. Whether a trial by association is preferable to the old custom of the churches, in promoting their candidates for the ministry to public trust ?

Answ. In the reply, I shall, first, consider our candidates under trial ; as to their qualification ; and (secondly) implead the proposal on a just prejudice from the corruption of the clergy.

1st. We may consider our candidates under trial, as to their qualifications, (1.) As to their human learning ; and here we absolutely object against the trial of associations, as bootless, useleſs and perilous, both to them and to us.

1. As to the association, it is no diminution, or trespass upon the laws of honor or truth to affirm,
“ That the settled ministry in general (with some rea-

sonable exception) is less expert in grammar and points of philosophy, then our learned children are at the degree of junior batchellors," and that from dis-use, proved from all experience, *Nam usus Promotos facit*; and also for the sake of more divine studies, which croud out those first ideas a great pace, according to that observation, on a learned memory, *Imago Imaginem Expellit, Aliisq; Aliæ Succedunt*, for as one wave thrusts out another, so one idea another. Therefore it is pity to expose such venerable persons to the hazard in this service, least when they become posers of others, they should be posed themselves. I do remember an odd story when I was at college; it was retained as a reproach on a very divine & worthy person; tho' he was bred in *England* a good scholar, and also had been a school-master, and had taught the grammar in his young times, but yet having laid by in a great measure, the use of such things, for the sake of more valuable and heavenly speculations, being at the solstice, and one of the corporation, ventured in the hall, to propose this question, to one of the commencers.

Quot sunt Cæla!

To which the lad with saunse enough, yet with a grammatical niceness, only answered,

Sed Studi

Mascula Duntaxat Cæles vacitabis et Argos:

That prians head will in likelihood be kept bleeding from one generation to another, by reason of some unlucky strokes, if this form be established, and that to the great detriment of those who strike the blows.

2dly. To US. Accademical learning we profess to be a very essential accomplishment in the gospel ministry. It is introduced by the ordinary blessing of God upon human endeavours, to supply the place of the cloven tongues, and those other miraculous gifts and indowments of mind, imprest upon Christ's ambassadors, whereby fisher-men commence (*per Saltum*) doctors of divinity; and in an instant were stock'd with such principles of religion, reason, and philosophy, that they were capable to dispute with *Athens* it self, and baffle the greatest wits she could produte, in defence, and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, *Acts* 17. 18.

Thus it is very reasonable that the churches should be well assured of the sufficiency of the learning of those persons, e're they presume on the ministry ; yet there is a fairer way in view, fuller of honor and safety, than what the proposal directs to.

Our accademy is the store-house of learning, and this all mankind will assent to. When you have lost the company of the muses, there they are found in their freeholds, where they hold the ballance of honor amongst the learned. This is the place, if not, of the goddesses *Minerva* or *Apollo*, yet the *Bethel* or temple of God himself ; the God of wisdom, where he, as chief architect, with his under workmen, form wise and learned men, & where you may have them wrought off at first-hand : Then certainly here we are to secure our credulity and confidence in this affair ; here we are to know whether they be of the right stamp, yea or no.

That of all men living, the best and most infallible standard for the philosophical accomplishments of our candidates, is the judgment of the honorable president, and noble fellows of our famous college ; for this I am sure must needs stand for a verity, that the judgment of a real honest and skilful artificer (keeping close to his shop) concerning the nature and qualities of an edge-tool which he hath wrought, and hammered on his own anvil, out of its first rude matter, must certainly excel him that hath been long from the trade, that only takes it, turns and tries the edge slightly, or has but a transient view of it : so that hence we may fairly infer, that (as to human learning) *Harvards Commendamus* is most valuable and sufficient, and justly supplants these testimonials.

2. With respect to the more evangelical qualifications of the gospel ministry, we shall be ready to honor the sufficiency of the associates, yet must take liberty to object a few things.

1. Suppose we, that the trial is made *per Contionem ad Clerum*, by preaching a sermon, in audience of the association, and I think this is the way proposed and generally agreed upon, as the square or rule most agreeable with gunter, to take the dimensions, length and breadth of our candidates by.

Reply 1. What can a sermon do at deciding this question? for that the most sensible and valuable, who are usually most humble and tender, are liable by this stupendous examination, to be baffled by their own timidity, and quite dash'd out of countenance by their own fear. Alas! upon their first entrance upon the stage, to appear in so august and awful a presence, this must needs dis-animate and put their thoughts into a ruffle, as having in their affrighted minds the resemblance of their going into the Spanish inquisition, rather than dwelling amongst the softer measures of the gospel? *Luther* himself, (that unparallel'd instance of spirit and magnanimity, as I remember of his life) hardly ever got over something of a panick fear attending him, through the course of his ministry; and indeed men of the quickest senses are most liable to these paroxysms. Then surely to put our tyros to this test, which may daunt and dispirit the greatest hero, is no ways proportionable, especially seeing they may under the inspection of learned, honest and judicious men, both pastors and churches, and thereby under covert of more private invitations (with all their natural fear) creep into this noble work, and keeping on, as their courage and strength will bear the journey, may, gradatim attain a just and sufficient probation, as our learned youth have hitherto done.

Indeed, the bold and brazen, who can make a greater figure with half the stock, by many shirking tricks, and dissembling artifices, defended and supported with confidence and delivery, may obtain the *Euge Juvenis*, that they no ways deserve, as will be found, when they come to be detected by a more dilatory search, or a more tedious *Analysis* made of them. That, to conclude, as the proverb is, *Una Hirundo non facit ver*; one swallow makes not the spring; so in this tryal, one good or mean sermon cannot determine the man, or umpire his case.

2. Suppose the tryal must be made, and the question determined by a person's conversation. And this is a very great article in the state of all serviceable men, and especially in the ministry, 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. Being ensamples to the flock. Then certainly a

more intimate converse and society, is a very invincible plea. By the laws and customs of *England*, the vicinage must be allowed, as affording the most competent judges, when persons reputation lies at stake in criminal cases, because they are presumed to know somewhat considerable of persons and cases of their own knowledge ; and so more capable of giving a just verdict. So in the case, what do those persons know of our learned youth, who make up the association ? Our candidates appear on a certain day, (as blazing stars once in an age, and are gazed on, and then they vanish) Now what judgment can be made on a mans conversation, by such a transient view ? unless they must be handled in this consistory, as persons that have been bound to the peace, and in open court are to be delivered from their recognizance by three our-cryes ?

3. Suppose the whole stock of ministerial qualifications must be enquired into, and judgment must pass by the direction of the apostolic law, 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. *Tit.* 1. 6. 9. *Let them be blameless, sober, apt to teach, &c.* and add what more you please, which the scripture mentions, to fill up the character of an evangelical minister, to compleat him in all his gifts and graces, either in his beginnings, or in his riper state ; and it is most apparent, that our particular pastors and churches, with the learning, experience, grace, wisdom and discretion they are owners of, can make a more upright, judicious and solid tryal ; and give a better account of our candidates from their frequent converse with them, and their occasional and repeated preaching amongst them, than the wisest association in the world can do ; and it is easier dissembling with the latter, than the former, unless the association will take them home, and both winter and summer them.

Now then, considering that their degrees with the express testimony of the college (when particularly desired) are sufficient testimonials of their learning ; and the experience of their other good gifts and ministerial qualifications, obtained by converse, and their occasional preaching, has been the chief test and tryal for our candidates ; and by these methods they have

been approbated in order to settlement in office-trust ; and this has been the custom of the country and churches for near four score years. Wherefore to conclude this argument, I make this proclamation, That if any person or persons disaffected with our old settlements, and way in church conduct, will produce one example led into the publick ministry by this practice, which has justly offended him, and he will or can evince this to be the blameable cause, we will then surrender the custom to your mercy.

2dly. I shall now implead the proposal on a just prejudice or presumption of corruption in the clergy, tho' we are in charity for the present, yet in this way proposed, we have no assurance for the future, against the corruptness of such societies ; and let any sober man observe, and he will find abundance of poor tools under the mark of the office, where these measures, and such like, are in force and form. How oft is it repeated, that poor sordid, debauched wretches are put into Holy Ordes, when as they were fitter to be put into the stocks, or sent to bridewell for mad-men, than to be sent with their testimonials, to work in Christ's vineyard ? How long have the *Indies*, the seas, the provinces, and many other parts of the empire groaned under this damnable way of cheating God of his glory, and the world of salvation ?

Simony we know began almost as early as the christian church, and has prevailed amongst clergy-men to a prodigy. The sacred things of God's house have been a trade and merchandize, which has beggared churches, and filled the clergy in some kingdoms with a sacriligious and exorbitant pile of wealth, and the world with a flood of debauchees ; and this proposal puts us into the way to open the shop-windows again, and expose the same wares to sale upon a little indulgence in our country ; for who can render a reason that the same opportunities, the same temptations, the same corruptions, the same nature, and the same power, would not produce the same effects ? or that the same climate, seed, ground, and manner of culture, should not yield the same grain at harvest ?

And what have we in pledge for our security, more

than the fallacy and fickleness of human nature, when the power is delivered out of our hands?

Obj. You may object, that our candidates, thro' their own ambition, and the indulgence of particular pastors, thrust themselves into the work too young, and this our way will prescribe due boundaries to them?

Ans. 1. In general, *Paul* solves a worse case, than can be found (pick whilst you are weary for an example to quadrate with the objection, and render it forcible) amongst all our learned youth, who have hitherto adventured upon the ministry, *Phil.* 1. 18. What then? &c. as tho' he should say, "What's that to you sir?" if Christ be preached, all is well. And as to our case, we may say, Despise not the day of small things, all men must have a beginning, and every bird which is pretty well fleg'd must begin to fly. And ours are not of the nest where *Icharns* was hatch'd, whose feathers were only glewed on; but these belong to the angelick host, and their wings grow out from their essence; therefore you may allow them, with the lark, now and then to dart heaven-ward, tho' the shell or down be scarce off from their heads. And so we conclude with our charitable and divine apostle. "What then! if Christ be preached, whether in pretence, or in truth, either by old or by young, yet therein we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, &c." to see our own *Nazarites*, so forward and well-disposed, it shall add to our joy, and no ways increase our honor, unless our ambition should surprize us with fear, that such young stars should out-shine us.

2. In particular, where will you fix the *Quando*, and settle the precise æra, or period of time, for their beginning?

1. There is no college or statute-law yet enacted, to decide this question: Then of necessity you must do homage to long and laudable custom, as to a superior authority, and honorable ruler; and where that fixes the time, you must submit; for custom, when full of days, and of noble examples, becomes the common law of a nation; and is as sovereign and pleadable, as the dictates of a parliamentary power;

at least it shelters from rebukes and calumny : That for any gentlemen to affront, talk high and frown at the early zeal and beginnings of our candidates, is but too much in imitation of the *Great Mogual of India*, who after he hath dined, orders his trumpets to be blown, to signify to the princes of the earth, that they have liberty now to go to dinner ; and when he hath finished his formalities, if they please, they may vail their royal bonnets, and thank him for nothing ; “ for where there is no law, there is no transgression.”

2. Under the gospel, we have no precise time, tho’ there was under the law, when to begin and enter into the ministry, the gospel knows no bar from time, where persons are other ways meetly qualified. Days and qualifications, are divers things, and the latter are the essentials of a minister of Christ. It is not, how old, but how capable a person is, which is the main point to be enquired after here. Therefore where (in some good measure) there is an honest life, a gracious heart, an orthodox head, and a learned tongue, there is no reason to send such youths to *Jericho*, with *David’s* messengers, (though their beards are not yet grown) to wait upon time and nature, for such an accomplishment ; for certainly those recited are the principal in the argument. It is a story in the history of *Persia*, “ That when the *Græcians* sent some very young noble-men upon an embassy to that court, the *Persians* reflected upon the *Græcian* republic, for sending beardless boys on so grave a message to so mighty a monarch.” To which the young *Græcians* very smartly answered, “ That if state policy did consist in beards, then he-goats would do for ambassadors, as well or better than men.” I must confess, I am some what of their mind ; and therefore I think it is not, how long men have lived, but how wise they are grown : GOD hath ordained praise out of the mouths of babes. *Jeremiah* pleads, he was a child, but that cannot null his commission for the ministry, *Jeremiah* 1. 6. *Paul* guards the ministry of young *Timothy*, by heavens authority, to defend him from censure, for audaciousness. What ! for a child to teach old men their duty ! Hold ! says *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. “ Let no man

despise thy youth." What shall not our Lord illustrate his grace and power in what examples he pleases? Has he not formed all the powers of nature? and does he not furnish them with their distinct virtues, &c.

Object. But you may say, days are full of wisdom, and youth of ignorance in the great affairs of salvation.

Ans. Not always and universally so; as in the examples just now recited, and in many others that may be named, called in at the third and sixth hour, *Mat. 20*. But however, if our candidates must never begin till they are without ignorance, or not till they have gained all points (*ad unguem*) in the vast studies of divinity, then it may be said of all our ministers, as queen *Elizabeth* was wont to say of bishops, when she visited the schools (study hard children, study hard, for) bishops are old men. So of necessity, all our ministers, must be very old men. But I think that is more agreeable with our necessity and state, both in nature and grace, which one of the ancients was wont to say of himself, viz. that whilst he studied to teach other men, he learn't himself. That considering theology, as well as art, is a long study, and life is very short, why may they not begin young? And also, considering that our churches are no ways over cluttered with candidates, there is no need to serve them as Christ did the money changers, who with a whip of small cords, he drove them out of the temple; and especially they having hitherto acquitted themselves in the main as men that need not be ashamed, and yet never any one of them, to this day, has been represented as learned or virtuous, or any way supported by these testimonials.

S E C T. V.

TH A T they together be consulted by bereaved churches, to recommend to them such persons as may be fit to be employed amongst them, for present supply, from whom they may in due time proceed to choose a pastor.

Ans. According to my apprehension, this proposal insults very daringly over the churches in two things.

1. By ingrossing the right of jurisdiction, not o

over the visible freedom and liberties, but conjugal and secret powers of Christ's virgin and widow churches. That it seems to me very adviseable (if this proposal may stand for a sound precept) that forthwith another office be erected, and put into the hands and under the government of a few men, exactly skilled in physiognomy, and deeply studied in the sympathies and antipathies of human nature, with an absolute superintending power to controul and direct all wooers in their choice for the marriage bed; for that there is many a fond lover who has betrayed the glory of wedlock, by making an unwise and unfortunate choice; and why may not particular beds be over-ruled, as well as particular churches? both being for the good and service of mankind, and for that both parties, husband and wife, pastor and church, by our sort of government, are bound for term of life, or so long as both shall live. Indeed, were our constitution in church order under the superintendency of a patron, or a lord bishop, who can send (*pro Tempore*) a curate, &c. and then recall him, and place another in his stead, the project might be very adviseable; but seeing these churches are settled congregational, and by their principles, the ordination is, as it were, the nuptials, or marriage day of two lovers, that nothing but death, or a bill of divorce (for betraying the glory of the union) can part; it is then good and reasonable, that they be left to choose as they best affect, and not forcibly be tyed up to a kind of Hobsons choice, one of these or none. This apparently puts too hard upon the churches liberties, and overthrows the government; for that our platform, in chap. 2. treating of the nature of the churches, asserts, sect. 5. That the state of the visible church since the coming of Christ, is only congregational; therefore neither national, provincial, nor classical; then what does this proposal do here?

Also, our platform asserts the free electing power of the churches, chap. 5. In these words, ordinary church power is that of privilege, such as belong to the brother-hood, whereby they design persons unto office. So also in chap. 10. In these words, the power

granted by Christ unto the body of the church and brotherhood is a prerogative or privilege which the church doth exercise in the admission of her own members, and in chusing their own officers. Now if Christ has given these high powers and authorities to his churches, he has certainly furnished them with skill and wisdom to manage them.

So we come to the second part of the affront in this propofal, and that is,

2dly. By its making a plain presumption of incapacity in the churches of doing their own proper work without their graces help. It is as much as to say, Alas ! Alas ! It is well known that the churches are generally a sort of plain men, little skilled in deep matters ; that there is apparent danger, if left in their elections to their own conduct, of introducing very illetrate persons and doleful creatures, to preach in the temple of God, as officers there. Now this is much agreeing with the old arguments, against the laity, who were described by the learned to be without the knowledge of the original languages, and other parts of polite learning, and so no ways fit to interpret scripture ; therefore it is very rationally enacted, that the BIBLE be taken from them, least they should study heresie and not holiness out of that divine book. But to pass by all such pleas, I shall come to the main point in plain terms, and that is this, our platform is our settlement, and it has secured to the churches these prerogatives, and they are part of their entailed inheritance ; and it is a vain thing to pretend to plead the incapacity of right owners and rich proprietors, especially whilst there is a competent set of senses left them. Indeed, when any gentleman can shew any precept, and produce a commission for the taking into their hands the estate of idiot-churches, they may then cite their intellectuals to a proper bar, and verdict going against any particular example, they then, *ipso facto*, become guardians, and may enter into their worship. But in the mean time, as to our own churches, and the whole constellations of them, and every individual or particular church amongst them remains *compos mentis*, and therefore must not be intrigued by such offers as these are.

But yet before I close this argument, I shall a little further humour the presumption of insufficiency here laid down ; and therefore I shall desire, that a survey be made of the state of the churches, and if their free election be found for this thirty years last past (and we will go no higher) have by the major part of voices introduced insufficient officers, then let the platform be null'd, and the proposal stand as a more valid canon. And in this inquiry we would know, whether the dictators will give leave (in drawing up the catalogue of defective elections) that they themselves be put on the back of the title page, and there stand as the errata of our old government ? Or whether they themselves are the only exceptions ?

But suppose we, when we have accomplished our search, we find their own, and all other elections for the main have hit right ; and if so, then whether we ought not to pay a veneration to the practice, as having more of Christ in it than we can in the ruffings of ambition presently find out, or perceive ? And whether after such long experience and good success, it may'nt be our wisdom to keep this *via Trita*, which we have found to be *via Tuta*, that is to say, keep the good old way of our blessed predecessors, lest going into a new and untrodden path, we fall into some ambuscado, and come off with broken bones and ruin'd churches ?

Quicquid Præcipiti via.

Certum Deserit Ordinem

Laetos non habet exitus. Boetius.

Rashly to leave the plain and good old way

Turns into mournful night, a joyful day.

S E C T. VI.

THAT hereunto may be referred, the direction of proceeding in any of their particular churches, about the convening of the councils, that shall be tho't necessary for the welfare of the churches.

Ans. Query, Who must give the direction, and judge what councils are necessary for the welfare of the churches. ?

Answer. The association.

Reply, I thought as much ; for the sole and whole power, is, by these proposals, resigned to them, as their

indisputable and undoubted right insomuch that their *Beneplacita*, the *Elicit* and free resolves of their will, shall and must be the absolute and uncontrollable rule of conduct; that is to say, the churches are to be in vassalage; and the association is to rule all by prerogative; so that forever hence forward, we may inscribe cross the door of the conclave (to notify the rule of the house) that imperial law,

Sic Volo, sit Jubeo, stat pro Ratione Voluntas.

We will and doom, none now can us withstand;
Our will is reason; for the churches in the land.

Indeed, when great men turn beggars for small booties, with the famous general *Baziliareous*, it signifies, the ebb of fortune runs low with them; but when they ask an ancient inheritance upon gift, it signifies either the donor to be in a languishing posture, and that his estate is like to escheat to the crown, through failure of natural heirs, or else great boldness in the beggars. But what should be the meaning of this demand, who can divine? I hope they don't reckon the churches to be making their last will, and design them for their heirs.

The churches in *New-England* are fairly possessors of this high prerogative, viz. Of convening councils necessary for their own well being, they are also as likely to continue as they were forty years ago, unless their own pastors should betray them. And they are also as capable of managing all instruments devolved upon them by Christ, as they were in the days of their youth. Then what can we make of this contrivement, viz. When the churches shall have occasion to seek relief by council (as sometimes the emperor, has been confined at the insolent threshold of his holiness, and upon his coming forth in his infallibility, this pile of temporal glory has been his horse-block; and so here) they must humbly wait at the door of the association, till they shall be informed. When, what, who, and where they shall have one. But not to interrupt the world with long stories, we must again here demur upon title.

Sect. That the several associations in the country maintain a due correspondence with one another.

Ans. If the platonick nation concerning the universal soul of the world or spirit of nature (whereby one body is affected by the operations of another at some considerable distance) were established for an infallible theorem, and these societies could circulate their intelligence by the power and *Echoes* of his mighty essence, the design might then be practicable ; or had we in all corners of our country, doves trained up to carry mails or packets of letters from country to country, there might be some hopes for supporting this mighty correspondence ; but to do it wholly by human means, the charge plainly threatens to eat out the profit.

But we may suppose the seat of these things shall be universally settled, fully butting upon the post-road, and what a mighty business is a six penny or four penny letter in such a good cause ? Nay, indeed that's no great matter in itself, yet these six pennys or four pennys, are like the sand on the sea shore, a great many of them put together grow very heavy, especially where wife and children are to be maintained upon 70 or 80 l. income per annum.

Wise men may do as they please, yet for my part, I can see no good policy in the proposal, unless you can court some rich potentate to espouse the cause, and sacrifice annually some part of his royal revenue to support the *Phantasia*.

Sect. So that the state of religion may be the better known and secured in all the churches ?

Ans. Religion in its infallible original, the wisdom and authority of God ! in its infinite object, the ineffable persons and perfections of the divine essence ; in its means, the gospel of salvation : in its inspired, wakeful and capacious ministry ; in its subject, the inestimable immortal soul of man ; in its transcendent effects. (1.) In time, the charming peace and joys of conscience. (2.) In eternity, the joyful retreat and shouts of glory, is the most incomparable gift of *Paladium*, which ever came from heaven ; amongst all the favours of the father of lights, there is none parallel with this ; when disclosed in its beauty, it ravisheth all the intellects of the universe ; and challenge may be made, that the prerogatives and glory belonging to all the crowned heads in

the world, do bow and wait upon its processions thro' the earth, to gaurd it from its innumerable and inveterate enemies. Yet in paying our veneration and attendance, we must distinguish right, and place every thing properly, and the means must be proportionate with the end, and agreeable in their natures ; or otherwise whilst we go about to accomplish a good end, viz. the security of religion by improper means we may lose our attempt, and have no thanks, but be blamed for our pains ; for we must not do evil, that good may come.

It is certain, that the church of Christ is the pillar of truth, or sacred recluse and peculiar assilum of religion, and this scared guest, religion, which came in the worlds infancy from heaven, to gratify the solitudes of miserable man, when God had left him, hath long kept house with us in this land, to sweeten our wilderness state, and the renowned churches here, are her sacred palaces. Then certainly it is not fair for her lovers, under pretence of maintaining her, welcome in greater state, to desolate her pleasing habitations, tho' they stand somewhat low like the myrtle grove, *Zach. i. 8, &c.*

Sect. And particularly it is thought necessary to the well being of these churches, that all the associations in the country meet together, by their respective delegates, once in a year.

Ans. This is a great thesis ; and whoever was the father, the womb of it is very fertile, and big with articles of moment ; it comprehends a large territory, and a great treasure, we must therefore survey it by cosinography : And then nextly by the laws of the church stock.

1. The country contained in this proposal, by a just consequence, and from the nature of the design, must extend so far as we can find any gospel churches planted, or to be planted within the English dominion on the firm land or continent of *America*, there is no restriction made to exclude any ; and charity is a grace that would have every one virtuous, and equally privileged with means for that end ; so that we may begin our lines of latitude in the south, somewhat, northward of the capes of *Florida*, and then extend them to the north, to

some parts of *Nova-Scotia*, -if not to the bay of *St. Laurence*, and from those points on to the atlantic ; we must stretch our lines over-thwart, keeping equal longitudes, till we meet with other princes dominions.

Now this is a noble territory ; enough for an empire, and all English ; and why may we not be thus extensive for the good of the churches therein planted ? Other countries have sent their delegates near as far as this comes to, to wit, upon the conventions of his holiness. But, the mischeif is, the revenue won't hold out. But I have thought of one way, and that will do, if we can but obtain ; tho' I acknowledge it is somewhat chimerical, or whimsical ; yet tho' it be, the proposal has no reason to repine or find fault, for that it is its near kinsman.

The project is this, viz. Upon the great settlements which we hope for, between the two crowns, I advise, that petitions be made (if the articles of settlement will allow it) that either the rents of *Toledo*, or, some good stout gold mine in *Peru*, be reserved wholly to the use of this design, and if you are pleased to keep or settle within narrower limits, (when we know your territory) we can by rules of porportion and subtraction, compute the charge ; and if there be any over-plus, when your own charges are defray'd, the rest may be assigned to the next province, for such good uses. But however, let the petitions go forward, for you will have want enough of your share ; for I am sure your present supplies are not full enough for your daily bread, and these contingent and unexpected charges ; especially seeing they were never thought of, or provided for, in your first settlements.

S E C T. VIII.

AND finally, that ministers disposed to associate, endeavor in the most efficacious manner they can, to prevail with such ministers, as unreasonably neglect such meetings with their brethren in their proper associations, that they would not expose themselves to the inconveniencies that such neglects cannot but be attended withal.

Answer. This proposal seems to be founded upon the *Epicurian* doctrine of atoms ; for by the schem

which athiestical atomists give concerning the beginning of the world, by their account ; it was after this lucky manner, that is to say, there was before time a vast pile of incoherent atoms, which globically hung sleeping upon a centre-atom, without the least grain of sense, thro' the vast eternity, a *Parte Ante* ; but at least, & no body can tell how, they were inclined to throw off their present posture ; but being neither of one form, inclination nor propension, quickly great heaving and shuffling (from various sympathies & antipathies) began to be amongst them, that a chaos is presently rolled together, and in a little time, this magnificent and curious world, which you look upon, came out of the horrid womb of this distracted heap of atoms, and that without any help from a creating power, but by a wonderful good chance. Thus far you have the doctrine of atoms, which I could not well avoid, because of so much noble matter pre-existing, and represented in various shapes and forms, with a sound of motion, and various sympathies and antipathies appearing, and represented by the proposal ; but yet can hear of no superintending fiat, or any creating voice to over-rule, or say, *Let it Be*. But only if persons are disposed, or indisposed, the business must be managed as wisely as you can ; and if it should so chance, that some fine thing (never before seen in the country) should be made out of these materials, without the help of a creating power, the world would be a great debtor to the accident ; and the churches may they not be justly stript of their being to make room for it, and maintain it ?

But to be more distinct, and somewhat more close in my answer, I must remind you, that our blessed Lord commands us to pray, *Mat. 6*. Our father which art in heaven, &c. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. And if sincere, he hath promised, to stablish us, and keep us from evil. *2 Thess. 3. 3*. From these divine principles, the question is, whether those pastors are the stable or unstable, the reasonable, or unreasonable men, viz. Either those who have promoted this design in the country, or those who have withstood it ? And also where has temptation prevailed most ? And to put this debate under a brighter light, I will

make bold to recite a brief history of this matter, till we bring you to the nativity of these proposals, and to the day wherein they were born; with some present improvement of the history.

About thirty years ago, more or less, there was no appearance of the associations of pastors in these colonies, and in some parts and places, there is none yet. But after the country had suffered much in the slaughters and depredations committed by the heathen, and by many other afflictions, the neighbouring ministers in some counties, met to pray together, &c. and for no other intent, that I ever knew or heard of. But after they had continued their meetings for some years, and others following the example, began to converse together, and communicate cases, as best suited each person; and at last perceiving they were almost gotten into a classical form, before they tho't of it, they began to give their meetings the specious titles of classes, associations, and ecclesiastical conventions, &c. as securely as tho' these titles were a fruit growing out of our own constitution; and by degrees began to dream that they were really, and *de Jure*, what their new titles and late custom had made them only *de Facto*; and time increased their inclinations and purposes to compass a more formal and compleat settlement. It is certain, their opportunities were considerable, the keys of the church treasure being put into their hands. The more the main point is studied, the more glory appears to feed mens ambition, like the impression by the eye, on our great parents in paradise, *Gen. 3. 8.* The tree was pleasant to the eyes, a tree to be desired. Alas! Alas! empire and supream rule is a glorious thing! *Parcere subjectis et debellare Superbus*, is a very royal business. Now this conceit did begin pretty much to predominate, especially in some gentlemen that were inclin'd to presbyterian principles, men of worth and learning, who improving their advantages of sense and influence, to intreague others of a lower set of intellectuals, &c. bro't the business so near to a conclusion, as you find it in the last recited proposal, wherein you have the main of this history contained, like *Homers Illiads* in a nut shell. But to make short, and conclude my story; when they had thus far

advanced and ripened their design, out comes these proposals, like *Aaron's* golden calf, the fifth day of *November*, 1705.

Thus you have a short account how things have been carried on, relating to associations; and having a convenient crisis, I shall improve the history, to promote my present design, in a few particulars.

1. By considering the present duty of our erring pastors.

2. The justice to be done on these proposals.

3. Make some small astrological remarks relating to the date, which the clew of our history has bro't us to.

1. As to the duty of such as are involved in the charge, whether or no (upon a presumption that this history be true) they ought not to cease exciting others to wander from their proper post, and they themselves (if not by the open acts of the churches authority, yet) by the good government of their own wisdom, prudence and grace, be remanded within their proper boundaries, and there continue as stars within their own orbs, to influence and act, *Tam in Modis quam in stasis, quo prius*, according to the former usage, and the nature of their trust, and no more go beyond their own line, 2 *Cor.* 10. 16.

2. Whether these proposals here offered to view, be not like *Aarons* golden calf? And whether they ought not to be served, as *Moses* dealt with that, (*Exod.* 32. 20.) when he took it, and burnt it in the fire; and ground it to powder; for that it is very evident, that though it be but a calf now, yet in time it may grow (being of a thirsty nature) to become a scurvy ox, that will know no whoa, and it may be past the churches skill then to subdue it.

For I am not much mistaken (and *Pareus* too) *That great and terrible beast with seven heads and ten horns, described in the Revelations 13. was nothing else a few ages ago, but just such another calf as this is.* It was indeed finely shaped, and of neat limbs, when it was first calved; insomuch that the great potentates of the earth were much ravished with its aspect and features; some offered to suckle it on the choicest cows amongst

all the herds of royal cattle, (that it might be large) hoping to stock their own countries with the breed, and when it was grown to a considerable magnitude, to render it more shapely and fair, they put iron tips on to its horns, and beset its stupendious bulk with very rich ornaments, that they might make it the more awing to all beholders, and if possible, by such artifices to add to the natural pride and choler of the creature.

But alas, poor men ! they have paid dear for their prodigality and fondness ; for this very creature that was but a calf when they first began to feed it, is now grown to be such a mad furious and wild bull, that there is scarce a christian monarch on earth, unless the great *Anne*, their Sweedish and Prussian majesties, and their high mightinesses, with this exception, there is scarce a potentate in the world, the best horse-man or huntf-man of them all, that dare take this beast by the horns, when he begins to bounce and bellow. Indeed the emperor within these few years, has recovered so much courage, that he took him by the tail, to drive him out of his royal granges, being quite angry, and weary with his cropping and brouzing on the flowers of his imperial crown. But otherwise the beast generally goes at large and does what he will in all princes dominions, and keeps them in awe. Therefore to conclude, and infer, *Obsta Principis !* It is wisdom to nip such growths in the bud, and keep down by early slaughter such a breed of cattle. *Nam omne malum nascens facile opprimitur.*

3dly. In all the astrological remarks I have made, I find its nativity full of favorable aspects to English churches. The fifth day of November has been as a guardian angel to the most sacred interest of the empire : It has rescued the whole glory of church and state, from the most fatal arrest of hell and *Rome*. That had I been of the cabal, or combination, which formed these proposals ; so soon as I had seen and perceived the date, (as I imagine) my heart with king *David's*, would have smote me, and I should have cried out, *Miserere nostri Deus* : The good Lord have mercy upon us ; this is the gun-powder treason day ; and we are every man ruined, being running *Faux's*

fatè ! why gentlemen ! have you forgot it ? It is the day of the gun-powder-treason, and a fatal day to traitors.

Our measures certainly intend the blowing up the churches, as *Faux's* did the parliament ; that for my own part, I have such an awe upon my mind of this very day, that I have made a settled resolution, that of all the days of the whole year, I will never conspire treason against my natural prince, nor mischief to the churches on the fifth day of November.

And so farewell, gentlemen, for I dare not join with you in this conspiracy.

P A R T. II.

S E C T. I.

TH A T these associated pastors with a proper number of delegates from their several churches be formed into a standing and stated council, which shall consult, advise and determine all affairs that shall be proper matter for the consideration of an ecclesiastical council within their respective limits, except always the cases are such as the associated pastors judge more convenient to fall under the cognizance of other council.

Ans^r. Seeing it is the first time we have in these proposals heard of a standing council for these churches, and tho' the whole doctrine of it is not precisely or in terms contained in this section, yet that we may pass over what remains more briefly, when I come upon each following section, I will therefore make a stop here, and discourse this subject, in its several distinct branches, and make but one work of it ; and I shall thus methodize the business.

1. I shall observe the seeming favor to the lay-delegates here offered to them in this proposal.

2. Survey the nature of the council.

3. Inquire into its original.

4. Take an account of the work which is assigned it.

5. View the time appointed, certain and uncertain.

6. Inquire for the place where it is to meet.

7. And lastly, discourse its maintainance.

1. We must observe the seeming favor the lay-delegates or fraternity of the churches are treated with in

this proposal; for at the first tender, they seem very honorable to be invited into the association, as tho' they were to be established members of this council; and were to be equal sharers in the authority and government in it; yet do but mind the connection of both parts of the proposition, and you will find there is nothing of this nature intended for them. But only by a specious shew, they are invited to establish the associations on their tottering basis, and that is soon done, if all parties are agreed; and from the fraternity, there is no need of any more formalities, than paying homage to their authority by this act of submission and obedience here proposed; and so soon as this is done, you shall find the fraternity very fairly released at the door of the sessions, every man repairing to his own home. It is an observation, on the monarchy of bees, that the drones formerly supposed to be not only a lumpish, but a useless bee, yet it is of that nature, and so essential a member of that common-wealth, that it is really the male bee, and does impregnate the females, who are the sole labourers in that kingdom, but when that crisis is over, the poor drones are by common consent banished, as a great incumberment. So in our case, alas! what can be expected, when the lay-delegates have done the former jobb, but that they shall be laid by, for their wisdom and capacity is no ways admired in these proposals. And it has always been found that the laity are a clog to clergy-men, when they begin to soar a-loft, or above their proper sphere; and if you will but view the proposal again, in the hindermost part of it, you will see a back-door very artificially finished and left upon latch, for their exclusion; for tho' they are called to be members of the council in the first part of the proposal, yet by exception made in the last part, they are to sit upon no case but what the associates please; and seeing it is at their dispose, you may rationally and forcibly conclude, that those who have made it their business to unpin the whole tabernacle, and have but this choar to do, and then all is their own, will now finish their work with a wet finger, upon the aforesaid compliance. For you must note,

that after they have admitted the brethren, and viewed the certificates of election from the several churches, containing some congratulatory complements, to honor the new constitution and government, as is usual in all states, and having also treated the delegates with the civilities of the house, and also with a long and tedious harangue of the mighty blessings these new settlements plainly predict and promise the country, &c. the delegates are then advised, there is no case at present depending fit for their cognizance, but what are upon file, the associates have already considered about it, and referred to some other council best known to their graces. And so good brethren, you are now with many thanks for your obedient attendance, released till *Latter Lammas*, or till the *Greek Calands* come about.

And here we may dig a grave to bury all our ancient privileges in, and hang our harps upon the willows, and when we are thus wasted, should you call us in once more to sing one of the songs of Sion, all our notes must be *Elegie et De tristibus*, yet the broken accents, and lowly murmurs of our sorrow will serve for elahs & sweet diapasons, in your conquering song of triumph.

2. We must nextly, survey the nature of the council, which cannot be sooner, and with better advantage (to represent the true idea of it to every mans understanding) than in a brief definition, thus, the council is to be standing and stated, to meet once in the year at the least, and at other times as each association shall please to determine, to enquire into the condition of the churches, and advise such things as may be for the advantage of our holy religion. Thus you have the nature of it laid out in terms very concisely.

But if a longer description, according to the genuine sense of expressions in the proposals, will better suit you, and give a better impression of its nature upon your thoughts, we may then describe it thus,

It is a council of human invention, stated and settled to convene once in the year, yearly, during the revolution of the heavenly bodies, and at other certain times of the year, so as to keep its course parallel with our high and superior sessions of the peace, if the creators please; and to consult, advise and determine all affairs within the reach of ecclesiastical councils, and especially, &c.

And thus, we being a people swimming in such plenty, that all our chargeable measures both domestick in our private families, and public in church and common wealth, being not near sufficient, to take off our waste, and superfluous streams, and our riches and stores so plainly over-loading us, we have here formed a creature, that will help to sup up all, and feeding upon our full baskets, we shall find, that the further we go with *Esop's* load, the lighter we shall grow ; then who will not admire the wisdom of the invention ?

3. Our next task is to examine the original of this council, which inquiry, may be resolved into this disjunct proposition, viz. This council in the result of the will, obeying the understanding in its last dictates, erring or not erring.

The question being thus stated, it is at every man's liberty, to take the part in the disjunction which best likes him. I suppose the proposal arrested and brought to trial, will plead, not erring, or not guilty, as is usual with all criminals, when indicted ; and therefore seeing you expect to be cleared by the jury, you must give us an honest account, who set you on work, and what rule you were guided by to assure us that your intellectual powers were free from error in forming this council, and we will give you room enough in your own defence.

For,

1st. If you can produce evidence from the canon of scripture, in express terms, or by sound consequence, and prove *New-England* churches are obliged to form a standing and stated council, or that you are to do it for them, &c. we will submit. But no such canon can be found. The proposals then incur a heavy premunire for making so bold with a settled government, and no text to warrant the attempt.

2. Is it by any authority, derived from the civil government of the country by law, or practice, that this council is here erected ?

1. By law, if there be any such law, you have liberty to plead it in your own defence.

2. By practice, has the civil government ever set such an example ? Have they ever intrencht upon the privileges of the churches in the least degree ? And in their own orb, are they not more exemplary ? Don't all men keep to commission ? Are they not curious in maintain-

ing all settled forms, as the limits and boundaries of all mens actions and interests? Nay, is not the exalted head of this body politick in his whole ministry, careful to steer all his actions by his commission, and the precept of law? Is not the least error (tho' made by jealousy, and not found in reality) that looks but like an arbitrary action presently drawn into complaint, as a great grievance, and common neufance? If it be but in dream, that the exchequer appears toucht, without a precept, or the wings of our civil liberties clipt, or so much as a feather be pluckt from them, is not the country here and the court at home filled with complaints? What means all this? And yet must these churches, formed by principles of piety and honor, and under the steerage of a wise and just government, bear whole cart loads of injuries, and have all their liberties violated? And at last have a stated antichristian arbitrary council, that can cut their throats for all the wise regulation, that is in it, be thrust in upon them and both scripture and the wise fathers of the common wealth, no patrons to it? And what must we swallow all this? This must needs be a very heavy meal to digest!

Ut opes et Lamentabile Regnum-----Eruerint?

They spoil our kingdom, and our courage dash,

They take our wealth, and leave us nought but trash.

3. Is there any certificate, order, or vote, from the churches, as the womb of this council? If there be, the propofals shall then pass for the innocent midwife, and no harm shall come. But, alas! If we search all church records, the pursuit is blankt! Therefore it must stand for a daring intrusion upon the churches power of privilege.

It is and will be acknowledged, with great justice and satisfaction, that the pastors of the churches are in a high station, as they represent the great shepperd, and their trust is noble and great; They are rulers, and to conduct all transactions, &c. But yet must never infringe the churches power of privilege in any branch of it? It becomes the holiness, wisdom and honor of the ruling officers at a crisis, when the churches are in exercise of this power, not to allow themselves to dictate too imperiously: They must never indeed, in all their ministration, talk with such an elevated language, as in the 3d section of the 2d part, in these words, viz.

That each church chuse and depute one or more (private members) to attend their pastor in their stated session, &c. As tho' the high commission court was returned from exile, and now opened, and some of your graces were to be lord chancellor; This plainly carrieth too high a crest. What! to consider yourselves as a distinct estate from the churches; and to send out of your higher house your orders to be obey'd in the lower house, &c? But, I say, this is not right, for in concerning and calling of councils the churches are your superiors; and upon a severe interpretation of their canons, they may, if they please, leave you at home. For tho' you have been elected once into office, yet in the exercise of this their power, you stand but competitors with other principal persons, for their choice and election, to determine you members of an ecclesiastical council: Possibly this doctrine may seem to be but a very crude dose. But yet I assure you, it is approved by a college of very able and learned physicians; and I hand it to you as I find it made up in the churches chest of medicines, platform, chap. 16. sect. 2. The efficient cause of ecclesiastical councils, or synodical assemblies, next under Christ, is the power of the churches sending forth their elders and other messengers, &c. sect. 3. magistrates have power to call a synod, by calling to the churches to send forth their elders, and messengers, &c. for the constituting of a synod, is a church act, sect. 6. Because none are or should be more fit to know the state of the churches, nor to advise of ways, &c. Therefore it is fit, that in the choice of the messengers for such assemblies, they have special respect unto such, viz. elders: That certainly if you expect your council shall escape condemnation, you must then produce the *Probatum est* of the churches, or else it perishes under this tryal.

4. Can you shew any patent for the imperial chamber of our mighty monarch, to take into your hands (that you may new model) these churches (the royal demesnes of Christ Jesus, the prince of peace) as an excheat to the crown? Or have you commission with instructions from thence to erect within the province, such costly and formidable assemblies, as are here projected? Nay, if you can find or pick up amongst the old statutes, that are not quite worn out, or produce

one venerable preceptor example throughout the whole English empire, for the government of church or state therein ; we will state your case, and grant you one imparlance (with due time) if you can make any reasonable presumption, it may be had for your justification ; and in the mean-time, I shall venture to recite a few principles of the English government, that are like the *Vena Cava*, or great arteries in nature, which circulate the blood and spirits thro' the imperial body ; and if they don't all with a joint voice (like a jury in their return, where no man dissents) condemn your council and whole scheme, you shall still have a good delivery, and be set free.

Principle I. There is no one of the three estates of the empire, can make a valid act to bind the subject, or institute any new forms of government.

It is certain the parliament, that supreme court, by an united voice, is very transcendent ; it makes null, enacts, and abrogateth all laws, statutes and ordinances concerning matters ecclesiastical, civil, martial, maritime, &c. Therefore all acts, institutions, creations of trust, corporations and offices, either originally and immediately, or by a fair consequence, derive from this fountain the imperial crown, enriched with many prerogatives, and adorn'd with many ample flowers ; they were there planted by the creating power of the nation, and no English monarch can at pleasure enlarge that garden with a new species. That to meet with such things as these now under debate within an English province, &c. Query, Whether they are enacted by single men, or small factions ; or by the united voice of the kingdom ? If not by the latter, they must die traitors to the empire, as transgressing against the essentials of its constitution, and liberty of conscience is no city of refuge here.

Principle II. All English men are privileged by and strictly bound to the law ; that's the fruitful reason of all good, and rule of duty. To be bound to the peace, or the good behavior, is to be bound to the law, that's every mans master and guide. Query, Whether these proposals, and this council, have not put a slight upon this dominion ?

Principle III. The vengeance or vindictive justice of the nation, flames (in the sanction of the law) against all transgressors.

Every one that breaks the law, breaks from the rule of his duty and trust, and in a degree violates the power of the nation, and usurps the whole legislation; therefore in the execution of these direful sanctions and penalties affixed to the statutes, the omnipotent power of the nation, revenges the glory of its own independence and unaccountableness upon its insolent subjects, according to that, Gen. 2. 17. *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Therefore I may say to this council, *Memento Mori.*

Principle IV. Every great person is under the awe of the law, either as directive or coercive.

It is the saying of those who are skilled in the law, That *Reg in Regno Suo, Superiores habet, DEUM et LEGEM*; The king has in his realm two superiors, GOD and the LAW, tho' he is only under the directive; but all his great subjects are under the coercive power of it. The nobles and great ministers in church and state look upon the law, as the watchful eye of some direful numen. The superior clergy-men, the great bishops of the kingdom, tho' they appear masters of such prerogatives, yet they have nothing but what they derive from the law; and the laws are their boundaries, saying *Hitherto ye shall go, and no further at your peril.* That, those great men might as well have undertaken with *Archimides*, to have removed the earthly globe (upon condition) as to have done such a thing as this. What! to alter the constitution of church-government, which is established by the statute and canon law of church and nation? This is to blow up the kingdom. *Ergo*, put out your matches, and dissolve your trains.

Principle V. All English men live and die by laws of their own making. That they are never pleased with upstart law-makers.

Principle VI. That English government and law is a charter-party settled by mutual compact between persons of all degrees in the nation, and no man must start from it at his peril.

Query, Whether these proposals have kept to the articles of this great covenant?

Principle VII. Englishmen hate an arbitrary power (politically considered) as they hate the devil.

For that they have thro' immemorial ages been the owners of very fair enfranchizements and liberties, that

the sense, favor or high esteem of them are (as it were) *extraduce*, transmitted with the elemental materials of their essence from generation to generation, and so ingenerate and mixed with their frame, that no artifice, craft or force used, can root it out. *Naturam expellas furta licet usque recurrit.* And tho' many of their incautelous princes have endeavoured to null all their charter rights and immunities, and agrandize themselves in the servile state of the subjects, by setting up their own seperate will, for the great standard of government over the nations, yet they have all along paid dear for their attempts, both in the ruin of the nation, and in interrupting the increase of their own grandure, and their foreign settlements and conquests.

Had the late reigns, before the accession of the great *William and Mary*, to the throne of *England*, but taken the measures of them ; and her present majesty, in depressing vice, and advancing the union and wealth, and encouraging the prowice and bravery of the nation, they might by this time have been capable to have given laws to any monarch on earth ; but spending their time in the pursuit of an absolute monarchy (contrary to the temper of the nation, and the ancient constitution or the government) thro' all the meanders of state craft : It has apparently kept back the glory, and damp't all the most noble affairs of the nation. And when under the midwifry of *Machiavilan* art, and cunning of a daring prince, this monster, tyranny and arbitrary government, was at last just born, upon the holding up of a finger ! Or upon the least signal given, ON the whole nation goes upon this HYDRA.

The very name of an arbitrary government is ready to put an *English* mans blood into a fermentation ; but when it really comes, and shakes its whip over their ears, and tells them it is their master, it makes them stark mad ; and being of a memical genius, and inclined to to follow the court mode, they turn arbitrary too.

That some writers, who have observed the governments and humors of nations, thus distinguish the *English*.

The emperor (they say) is the king of kings, the king of *Spain* is the king of men, the king of *France* the king of asses, and the king of *England* the king of devils ; for that the *English* nation can never be bridled,

and rid by an arbitrary prince. Neither can any chains put on by disoptick and arbitrary measures hold these legions. That to conclude this plea, I find not amongst all the catalogues of heroes or worthy things in the *English* empire, peers to these undertakers; therefore we must needs range them with the arbitrary princes of the earth, (such as the great *Czar* or *Ottoman* monarch) who have no other rule to govern by, but their own will. And therefore under this branch of our discourse, and their arbitrary measures, I shall venture to annex the following theses, as conclusions fairly deducted from the premises, and leave them to consideration.

Thesis 1. They have out-king'd; all kings on earth whose prerogatives are bounded, and their kingdoms governed by law.

Thesis 2. They have out-bishop't all the bishops of Great Britain, whilst they themselves have acted with such lawless liberty, and left the bishops fettered in the statutes.

Thesis 3. They have out-pop't the pope himself; who is head of an hierarchy, supported by certain laws, acts and ordinances, for the maintaining an harmony or union between head and members. So in the next place,

4. We come to survey the work cut out for this council.

Cato that great and grave philosopher, did commonly demand (when any new project was propounded unto him) *Cui Bono*? or what good was like to ensue? Now in this present business, the definition pretends to make a satisfactory answer to such a question, viz. In the employment of this annual council; and that is to enquire into the condition of the churches, and advise such things as may be for the advantage of our holy religion.

It is certain, considering the nature of the creature here formed, there had need be some *Herculean* labour assigned. Those who are purveyours; and must provide quarters, will find it very chargeable, that it had need do very extraordinary business. As once king *James* the first said to a big-lim'd country fellow, who came to court to be a porter; some that knew him, told the king how many bowls full, and quarters of mutton he would eat at a meal, says the king to the fellow, You firrah, that eat so much more than other men, if you cannot do so much more work than other men, by my so'l (says the king) I'll hang you. So here, there had need go a handsome stock of small cattle, and other expences

to maintain one sessions : that if it has confidence to meet, and is treated with an ordinary allowance, if it can't do abundance of work, it will be waste charges, and great incumberment.

Now, if this be all that is here proposed (in my opinion) the creators are very defective in their proportions ; for tho' the work mentioned is in itself good work ; but it's all done already to their hands, there is nothing of this nature neglected in *New-England* churches ; at the least, no means or methods wanted ; but as God says, *Jer. 5. 4.* " What could have been done more for my vineyard, that I have not done in it : " may properly be applied to the churches here, and all for the advantage and good of our holy religion ; that, in a word, there is no want in this country, unless it be the want of good and honest hearts ; and I suppose you have none of those to bequeath, *Mat. 25. 9.* Upon the first view of this stupendous business, I was ready to fancy, whether or no you had dream'd of, or seen king *Henry* the eighth a coming with his old case and question, which involved the pope, his conclave, and all the accademies in *Europe*, and whether you were getting a mighty casuist ready, to take the kings conscience into consideration ? Or, whether you had news of the old *Arian* war, its breaking out again, that you should in such haste, (without citing other estates for the defence of the kingdom, but only by virtue of your prerogative) run up such a formidable and costly redoubt ? But if it be all come to this, and there is no more to do ; than what every pious and wise man does every day, every week, and every sessions, it is even another fit or paroxysm of the mountains bringing forth, as the poet says, *Par-turiunt Montes, &c.*

But to humor what would seem serious in the proposal, I shall consider both parts of the work distinctly.

The first is, to enquire into the condition of the churches ?

Ans. Now whether this precept, so full of sweat and servitude, may not vie it for merit, as equal in pains with any of the great prelates in *Europe*, in their laborious visitations ; who when they come into some capital town in the other part of their diocess, and being treated with the solemn formalities of sumptuous feasts by the nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood, and

having spent the biggest part of their pastoral visit in glutting themselves with honor and full tables; at last begin the other part of their work, and inquire (possibly) how many parishes in this great town, and whether there be any chyrurgeons, phyicians or school-masters, that do good to their neighbours without licence? Or, whether there be any new *Golgotha's* to be dedicated, for the securer retreat of the dead to that place? Or, whether the parish curates read service well, and observe to time their particular lessons; with the canonical days? And especially, whether the bells are kept in good order? All which makes up a noble piece of service, to requite a crown or kingdom for the revenues of a barony! And, whether it may be thought, that our great and yearly council, will come a whit behind the afore-said ministry in the first or last part of service mentioned? And whether if they do but equal them, we may not be thought to have made a wise settlement? But notwithstanding we shall grant, the proposal makes mention of a christian duty; for that it becomes all men, who bear a love to Christ, to enquire into the state of his churches, both for the manifesting their love to men, and directing their prayers and gratitude to GOD. Therefore,

1. As to their outward and temporal state, we may inform ourselves, by virtue of neighbourhood, by christian travellers, and public letters of intelligence: and thus we may rationally, and with very good moral certainty know the state of the churches, both in other countries and our own; and thus good *Nehemiah* informs himself at *Shushan*, how it fared with his brethren at *Jerusalem*, Neh. 1. 2, 3.

2. As to their moral state (which consists in their profession, faith, manner of worship, discipline and conversation) this is discovered particularly, by their directories, confessions of faith, platforms, rubrick, liturgies, and other canonical systems, made public for that end, &c. And considering, that whatever of this nature is necessary for the advance of religion, is well adjusted in this country, it must needs be but a vain repetition, or senseless tautology for a council to meet yearly or quarterly for this end, viz. To enquire what news, or whether New-England's confession of faith is the same this year, as it was last? Or whether all the

churches, their manner of worship, is this sabbath as it was the other? And as to their conversation (which may seem to lie most out of sight) sufficient provision made by the principles of our wise platform (for upholding the communion of churches) for our inquiry and information here also. And thus we come to the other part of this good work, viz.

2. To advise such things as may be for the advantage of our holy religion.

Answer. Query, Whether or no there been't published weekly from the oracles of God (and that with great soundness and zeal) more truth in a day than all *New-England* can practise in a long time after? And whether all the churches and the whole land are not honor'd and addrest, from week to week, in such measures by infallible truth, if not by infallible men? Or whether or no these methods dont divulge the whole mind of God to each plantation?

Or, whether these gentlemen have any secrets of wisdom, not yet made known? Or whether they intend to serve the churches, as some great philosophers and profound artists in medicine serve the world, viz. such who carry some great inestimable *Catholicon* to the grave with them?

And whether they will be thus hard hearted in religion, as the other are in philosophy, unless we will gratify them with this piece of prodigality here exacted? I must acknowledge I have little patience towards these things, that under such a specious shew and pretence, such a direful catastrophe should be shrowded! I must needs say, its plainly some of *Joab's* friendship, when he spake quietly and peaceably to *Abner*, smiled in his face, as his friend, but stabbed him to the heart, under the fifth rib, that he dropt, and died.

But however, I shall endeavor, to rescue myself from all impatience, and with deliberation sum up my answer, in an appeal to your own reasons concerning those several created trusts, which God has established, and cloathed with his own authority, every one of which is acted with great vigor, and success; and whether you think you can do more than all these for religion? Or prescribe something new which they never tho't of. As

1st. Civil authority, in two great branches.

1. Legislative power (that civil omnipotence) is do

ing very great things for religion, by their proclamations, and all penal laws enacted for the crushing of immorality and vice, and all their wise and exact precepts for the support of justice and piety. They are opening many civil channels, whereby they are conveying judgment, justice and righteousness down our streets, from the great fountain. Nay, this great and dread assembly puts awe upon all mankind. And the more daring and desperate are kept within compass, from a sense of this most terrible seat of thunder hanging over their heads, & upon every affront ready to break in strokes of vengeance and woes upon them, especially if they grow beyond the reach of common law.

And in ordinary cases.

2. The executive power, or ministers of the law, are like a standing camp to awe, and a flying army to beat off the enemy; they have their spies and scouts out in every quarter to observe his motions, and break his measures, viz. In the innumerable numbers of all sorts of civil officers; and thus by the sword of justice they hunt down sin, and impiety in the land. They are a terror to evil men, and a praise to them that do well; for the civil authority, by their wise and just precepts, their personal and noble examples and zealous administrations, out-do *Plato* himself with all his moral reasons; for they can turn a Sodom into a Sion and keep Sion to be Sion evident by the history and chronicles of several governments of God's ancient people. *Nam Regis ad Exemplum Totus Componitur Orbis*. For chief rulers, by their good or bad measures, can make or mar, kill or cure a nation, in a moral sense.

2 *The churches.*

View once more, from some lofty promontory or *Pisgab*, those goodly tents and tabernacles of Israel! Listen! Is not God with them, and the shout of a king amongst them? Are they not as valleys spread forth, and as gardens by the rivers side, which the Lord hath planted? And yet, not with standing, may we, must we under your conduct, break up their fences, to give them to another sort of culture? Nay, consider well! Are not the flowers better wed, and the weeds more kept down, than in most of the inclosures in the world, belonging to the great husband-man? And may you not (in reckoning up of means) allow us peculiarly to

ascribe to their government, and other of their measures agreeing with the nature of it in dressing the ground ? But I will not enlarge this head ; it is obvious enough from their ministry, from their faith, their discipline and conversations.

3. *The nurseries of learning.*

1. The inferiour schools, where the leaven is laid hid and kneaded in the soft dough ; *Et Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros*, &c.

2. The college (that artillery garden from whence we receive our most expert soldiers of Christ, and whence Christ's troops are supplied with chief commanders, who lead on to storm the strong holds of the common enemy, and secure our great ally, religion) this is the seminary of learning and virtue, and the success is almost a miracle, unless for humiliation we must secret the great grace and gifts of God which flow from that fountain, and are dispersed through the land.

Query. Were a council called, of all the learned heads of the whole universe, could they dictate better laws, and advise better measures for the acquirement, of learning, the increase of virtue and good religion, than are in that royal province ?

4. The families of the country with their oeconomy and family religion ; if we take a survey of the whole land we shall find religion placed in the body politick, as the soul in the body natural. *Nam est Tota Anima, in Toto Corpore, et Tota in Qualibet parte* ; that is, the whole soul is in the whole body, and whole in every part. That were any other part of the body organized besides the head, it would be capable to exercise reason, &c. So religion is placed and exercised in its principles, virtues and governments through the families of the country, so many families so many little sanctuaries.

I do acknowledge, there is no general rule, but has its exceptions ; but under this caution I may affirm, there is no such spot of earth in the earthly globe (so belaboured with family devotion, reading Gods word, catechizing and well instructing youth, with neat and virtuous examples, and divine prayers, *non ex Codice, sed ex Corde*, not out of books, but out of hearts, the solemnizing sabbaths, and family attendance on public means) as is *New-England*. And if so, then what need have we of this late invention ? Therefore to conclude,

I shall, for my part, with the jealous *Lacoon*, enter a caution against taking down the sides of the city, or opening the walls of our Sion to let in this Trojan horse; and let all Israel say, amen! For, blessed be God, tho' we want to have our hearts renewed daily, but as for means, tho' we have no glut, we have plenty enough, and want no new institutions.

We come now to measure, and find out the time appointed for the council.

1. Certain, viz. Once in the year, at the least, all the associations in the country, and according to the most plausible interpretation of the proposals, one or more lay-delegates shall join and meet yearly and every year in the great assemblies.

Answer. As *Austin* says of time, *Vivo in Tempore, Loquor de Tempore, sed Nescio quid sit Tempus*, I live in time, I speak of time, but yet I know not what time is. So I do imagine, the dictators did not well weigh time by exact ballance, in all its contents, sense and meaning, when they carved out such a large portion to this illegal claimer. Time is justly esteemed precious, in relation to heaven and grace, and also very valuable with respect to the interest of nature and this life. Therefore, care should be had, that it ben't squandered away wastfully. Our natural lives, healths and honor, families and estates are all very significant and costly things, and their dependance is much on the well husbanding of time, insomuch that in hard & penurious climates, the inhabitants had need be very saving of time for the support of all these great interests, and especially seeing there is so much time already set off for religion.

As, 1. The seventh part of time is assigned by the wise author of time, and that well improved, will do much for the support of religion.

2. There are great proportions (out of the time left to our dispose) frankly bequeathed for the good of religion, as in courts, churches, college, school, families, closets, and in many other sacred intervals, breathing spells, from the hurry of business, to render men more sedate and heavenly (called time out of season) and all for the service of religion; then to add and make this offering also, without a divine mandate, is but a work of superarrogation or superstition, and so will prove not only a needless, but an extravagant victim.

And moreover, to add a just aggravation or two, to set forth the evil in the imposition, I shall, with them, conclude the plea.

Aggravation I. Is taken from the great and sufficient care and provision made by the 15th and 16th chapters of our platform, for the convening of occasional and needful councils, for the service of the churches, and support of religion upon all emergencies. Then what need we throw away so many years of time at a venture, as is here tendered in the proposal, before our necessities or occasions call for the expence; unless we would in imitation of the *Rhodian Coloss*, or *Egyptian Pyramids*, erect a monument of our vain glory and pride, more than of our prudence, policy or duty.

Aggravation II. Is taken from the great affront, real and rational, done to empire.

1. *Real*, In making thus bold, with the time and estates of loyal subjects.

2. *Rational*; For let us but consider, that about three hundred men (gown men, and sword-men) with twice the number of attendants, which will make up near a thousand strong (and all well hors'd and provided) to be mustered, no man living on earth can tell for what, cannot be well resented by crowned heads, those admirers of order: That the project carried on, may breed jealousies in the heart of our prince, lest that *Ket*, *Cade*, *Straw* or *Tyler* have pitch't upon an oak of reformation again, with an intent to over-hawl the government, &c. And especially seeing the crown was never advis'd of any such thing (as is propos'd) by the regular forms of empire. There is danger of losing our time, and the credit of our loyalty together; that all things considered, the best way will be, for us to keep well, whilst we are well; and therefore let every man and society be advis'd to improve their time wisely, keep in their post, and honestly study to do their own business, which God, law and regular settlements has intrusted them with; and we may then hope things will go well with us, and our holy religion.

2. *Uncertain*, viz. When the creators please, and can agree, for the more particular time is best left to the determination of each association, as the proposal affirms. And thus we are left very uncertain, when, where, or whether it will ever be; so that I perceive, you have no

great dependance upon it, neither must we: The wisdom of civil government hath another sort of conduct. Such things are not left to discretion, for that would be indiscretion, and the way to turn the world into a bedlam, or the dwelling-place of mad men. And in the example before us, suppose the arbitrators (when the question for the time is propounded) should differ, and hotly dispute the matter; and some should plead, it was best to be in the winter, and some in the summer; some argue for the fall, and some for the spring, according as every mans temper leads him; and at last, referring it to a majority of voices, should they (for want of an odd man) lock it by an equal vote, and so keep it like a game at chess, for several years on the table, and neither side get the mastery; we may then in our distresses hollow whilst our throats ach, & no help comes; for they have voted themselves fast (like two bucks in their own horns) and can't stir for our relief.

6. We must, according to promise, make some enquiry, whether this council is to meet, or for the place of meeting?

It is held in opinion, that castles in the air, and immaterial substances do not occupy place; philosophy assigns them no more then a *Ubi*, where many may exist in *Puncto Indivisibili*, or on the point of a needle; and if this council is (as I apprehend it) belonging to that conjugation or catalogue of beings, it will then have this privilege belonging to it, viz. There will be no house to build, nor house rent to pay.

7. We come now (in the last place) to consider its maintainance, by three queries.

1st. Query, Whether the churches in their expiring, must (as all criminals do) pay for their own execution, and their estates be confiscate, and reserved as a fund, yielding a certain stipend per annum, to support their executioners?

2d. Query, Whether the contingent fees of the sessions, or the free and voluntary contribution of clients, may be thought a medium sufficient? Or,

3d. Query, Whether it must not be here, as it is in some civil cases, under the cognizance of a very peateable and good natured justice, that for the healing of a difference amongst neighbours, advises them to agree, &c. and so let every man bear his own charges.

But how it is, or which way they intend to raise a support for a standing council, yearly, and every year I cannot find out ; there is no stipend settled, or provision made, in the canons, which give it being.

It is certain, in the history of Gods works, he first makes his house, &c. then furnishes his table with great varieties ; and then invites his guests, and makes them welcome ; and so it is with all regular created efficient both rational and natural ; but in this scheme there is nothing done for the support of the new born infant, but like a run-away dam, you leave it to the mercy of the heavens. But possibly the relief is stored up in your creating power ; so that if the charitable churches will but find a cradle for the first night, and naturalize it, you will by your creating fiat, soon find a fortune, if all the tythes in the province will do it.

Thus, according to engagement, we have passed thro' the several heads, relating to the standing council, and I think by the *Analysis*, it is sufficiently resolved into its first nothing ; and therefore in what remains, I shall be more brief in my answer.

Secl. II. **T**HAT to this end, these associated pastors, with their respective churches shall consociate and combine.

Ans. There is plainly an *Hysteron* and *Proteron*, (a preposterous speech, or misplacing of terms, pastors and churches) in this section ; and tho' in rhetorick it breaks no great squares, yet in politicks, where the just boundaries of governments are to be set out, the mis-placing some great words, may ruffle the whole scheme ; so that according to the more wary idiom of our church government, it should be written thus, viz. The respective churches, shall consociate and combine, and their pastors shall attend and minister, as their duty does oblige them.

Secl. III. **A**Ccording to what has been by the synods of these churches, recommended, that they act as consociated churches, in all holy watchfulness and helpfulness towards each other.

Ans. *Titus* the *Roman* general, is very honorable for his great pity to the *Israelites*, in many examples that fell into his hands ; but all this while he was in siege of that famous town and temple, and designed to root them out of house and home, or subject them to the mercy and pleasure of a conqueror.

So here. Tho' you smile upon us, in reciting some of the principles of our own government, (for which we thank you (yet still we must observe the noise of your mattocks, that we may meet with your trenches, for you are still carrying on your works, and undermining us.

Sect. IV. **I**T is propounded, as that which from our beginning, has been recommended, &c.

Ans. You seem to reflect upon our beginnings, with a singular air and aspect, when you find any word or passage, that falls in with your design, as tho' you were sensible those things were very argumentative and binding; and indeed they are so. Then why can't you fall in with the whole settlement, and say to yourselves; what need we stand puzzling our heads for new schemes about church-government? There is one from our beginnings, that is compleat, being adjusted by the laws of honor and assigns to all parties their due, and gives to officers rule, power and honor enough; therefore let us, now we are met, order a new impression, and so break up. For alas, alas! What need you, like the thievish bird; pick here and there a straw or a feather in our yards, to build a new nest? or now and then gather up a kernal, or a grain out of our first fruits? The whole plantation and crop is yours, if you please to make use of it; and it will be your livelihood, as it has been hitherto; only you must remember to pay the quit-rent, as honorable tenants, and not take yourselves to be lords of the manor.

Sect. V. **T**HAT the association shall direct, when there is occasion, for this council to convene, on any emergency, and shall direct whether the whole, or only a certain number of these confociated pastors and churches shall convene on such occasions.

Answer. The beg'd prerogatives of clergy-men come so thick in this place, and smell so strong of the popes cooks and kitchen, where his broaths and restoratives are prepared, that they are enough to strangle a free-born English man, and much more these churches, that have lived in such a clear air, and under such enlargements so long a time. For indeed, (forsooth) four score years has brought (not our hogs, but) our innocent flock to a fair market, if it is come to this, that clergy-men may buy and sell them (as the Romans did the Jews) thirty for a penny, or at least say, pro

and con, at their pleasure, upon all the high immunities and ancient liberties of the churches, lyon-like (who claims the whole prey, and leaves no share to his allies, *vel Actum est de Amicitia*) all is mine (says he) or farewell friendship.

Seet. VI. **I**T appears agreeable with the present condition of our churches, and from our beginning acknowledged, that no act of the council is to be reckoned, concluded and decisive, for which there has not been the concurrence of the major part of the pastors therein concerned.

Answer. 1. The specifying act, that impowers, any member for an ecclesiastical council, is the churches election or delegation, according to our government; so that the members sent, are invested with the power, and represent those who send them; The officers have no more of this power devolved upon them, than any member, and therefore can challenge no more right (as elders) in a major or in a negative vote, than any others, as is very apparent in all representative bodies; therefore all acts must be determined by the majority of the whole, as in the house of commons, tho' made up of men of many different characters, when in their own countries, both as to their trust, learning and wisdom, and other distinguishing qualifications; yet the meanest man there has as great a force and power in his vote or suffrage, as the best man in the house, for that they all equally represent the nation, one man as much as another: So in this case; for that the churches and officers were never yet since *New-England* stood, held or accounted two distinct estates in an ecclesiastical council. Therefore,

2. Your challenge plainly defines your intention, that is to null the power of the churches, and set up yourselves, as the subject or fountain of a superintending power. And then, if the churches may have so much favor as to represent themselves by their lay-delegates, in a council you shall see meet to call, you must needs allow them to be a distinct house and estate. And if so, then you must grant them the privilege of a major vote, as well as yourselves, and so nothing can be acted but by their compliance also. But I must acknowledge, I have no plenipotentiary power to settle articles of agreement, for the infringing any of the rights of the churches, and therefore must draw up my memorials or

complaints of incroachments upon ancient lines and boundaries, and so leave them.

Sect. VII. **T**HE determinations of the councils, thus provided for the necessities of the churches, &c.

Ans. Let any man read the 15th and 16th chapters of our platform, and then judge, whether the necessities of these churches are so urgent as this proposal, with too much falacy insinuates, or whether they are any ways in *Esau's* straits, who thought he might sell his birth-right for a mess of pottage, if not to save his life, yet to gratify his peevish and distrustful hunger.

Sect. VIII. **I**F a particular church will not be re-claimed, &c.

Ans. This whole long section is the third way of the communion of churches, laid out in the 15th chapter of our platform, almost *Totidem verbis*, or, in so many words. And whether or no the annexing some of the principles and rules of our vindictive and more public justice to the scheme, will sufficiently atone for the dissolution of the whole frame, which is intended by you?

C O N C L U S I O N.

THESE proposals were assented to by the delegates of the association, met according to former agreement at B-----, Sept. 13th, 1705, to be communicated.

Ans. The church of England has been wont to look upon us as men out of our wits, therefore they term us phanaticks, or mad-men, but much more now. What! for men to break from the government they themselves have established by consent and practice, and arbitrarily to rally together, and draw up a direful sentence (if not in terms, yet in intent) for the dissolution of a country full of the best churches of Christ in the world, and then (as it were) upon the bold sound of a trumpet, to excite others to ratify the dead warrant, in order to execution! What can this import or signify in the thoughts of considerate men, but a vertiginous brain? We might have learned better, and more caution, from that mother church of the nation, if not from common reason; for though the sovereign confides in the loyalty of the English clergy, yet to maintain the grandure of government, and keep in good repair that common fence, which keeps every man in his station, therefore, according to the law and custom of England, the convocation, both the higher and lower house of that learned and

august assembly, neither debates nor transacts any matter whatsoever, but what our sovereign by commission expressly alloweth of, according to his prerogative; so that certainly to acquit yourselves for wise men you should have done no less (in a matter of such weight & moment) than have petitioned the public authority for commission, before you had ventured thus far.

Object. But possibly some may say, We have petitioned authority to establish our councils, since we have drawn them up in form.

Ans. This is to be preposterous, and agrees with that illegal way of hanging men and then judging them; but however, it seems they turned a deaf ear to your demands; and well they might, for they are too wise men to alter the laws of the province, long customs and orderly settlements of the churches to gratify an implicit faith in the stark-naked *Ipse Dixits* of any men; that unless you can produce a mandamus from the crown, or a precept from a higher court, which by its divine authority shall awe and direct them, you may always expect such entertainment in your precarious addresses; for most certainly you beg at the wrong door. For you beg without a brief.

To be commended to the several associated ministers in the several parts of the country, to be duly considered.

Ans. And why not commended to the general court, as has been the custom of our beginnings, &c. or why not commended nextly to the several churches? By the question proposed, the comfort, support, and well being of these churches was peculiarly pretended, then why might not they be nextly advised with, for their approbation or esteem? For if you intend it for a new suit, or change of apparel, or a set of armour for this army in banners, it must be the only way to try it on, it being now so near finishing; and if it be done work-man-like, you will have the credit and they the comfort of it; but if it prove too strait-laced, or should they feel themselves as *David* in *Saul's* coat of mail, and should shrug at it, and say, we cannot go in these, we have not proved them; yet they may throw all by and keep to their own old suit, which is not yet half worn, and the worst come to the worst, you may by any lawful writ recover your wages of those who set you on work to blow at this forge.

That so what may be judged for the service of our **GREAT LORD**, and his holy churches.

Ans. You acknowledge, and so do I, that these are holy churches, and (through the grace of their great Lord) they being so; then why should they be interrupted in their government and discipline, which has been a peculiar means for the advance and promoting holiness among them? They are strict in their government; curious, yet charitable in their admissions; in the election of all officers, they are nice, cautious, judicious, and in the main hitherto very successful. They are eagle-eyed in their watch; duly hot, and impartial in their process and exemplary acts of justice; and so dependent and free from arrogance, that they acknowledge themselves accountable under the eye of the confociation, for their administration; and freely and without covin, render an account of their actions, and are willing to receive advice, &c. Then why should you disturb them?

You acknowledge them to be holy churches, and you may well! Then certainly they are the bethels, where God dwells; and from his grace and presence, so illustrious in them, why mayn't we conclude, God has said, this is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it? And will then any good man have an hand in pulling down these tabernacles of the Almighty? No! rather let every man involved, say, as once *Job* did, I will lay my hand upon my mouth; once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further, lest I am found fighting against God; for it is most certain, all men will find themselves over-matcht in such a war.

Be proceeded in.

Ans. I think we are proceeding in the best method we can for the present, for the service of these churches. That is to say, the criminal proposals being now at the bar, and having been indicted upon several statutes; and evidence for proving matter of fact, being legal & sufficient, the case is now to be delivered to the great jury of trials, viz. The impartial reason of the churches, and there having been no such deed done, or seen, from the day that this good people came up out of the land, from the other side of the great sea, unto this day, consider of it, take advice and speak your minds, *Judg.*

And upon due deliberation, if under the conduct of law and reason, you shall bring in guilty ; then I petition for the crown, that justice be done in this following manner, not by banishment, præmunire or perpetual imprisonment ; but that the propofals be sentenc'd to die the death of hereticks, and their ashes be exposed to the four winds ; that the whole scheme may, beyond all hope of retrieve, be lost in oblivion. And let the churches, according to their platform, recover and maintain their authority, liberties and lustre, so long as the sun and moon shall continue.

The date,——*November the 5th 1705.*

Ans. Blessed ! Thrice blessed day ! Uphold and maintain thy matchless fame in the kalender of time, and let no darkness or shadow of death stain thee ; let thy horizon comprehend whole constellations of favorable and auspicious stars, reflecting a benign influence on the *English* monarchy. And upon every return, in thy anniversary circuits, keep an indulgent eye open and wakeful upon all the beauties (from the throne to the footstool) of that mighty empire !

And when it is thy misfortune to conceive a monster, which may threaten any part of the nations glory, let it come crippled from the womb, or else travel in birth again, with some noble hero, or invincible *Hercules*, who may conquer and confound it.

The last binding vote.

At an association meeting, the fore-going propofals were read, and assented to.

Ans. Whether for a small juncto of gentlemen, without being orderly called (as a committee of wise and learned men to survey an old government, and make their report) by any supream authority ; for them of their own heads, to meet and draw up articles against, and in imitation of the highest and most regular state on earth ; to vote up a scheme of their own inventing, and thereby sign the condemnation of a grave ecclesiastical government, which has been adjusted by the rules of equity and honor, and for the security of all persons and parties interested and involved, and regularly settled and established by all the churches in the province ; and owned ratified, and honored by the civil authority of the empire ; and eminently blessed by God, through a long series and

succession of years ; now whether such a daring action as this, can be placed under any of the topicks of political or moral wisdom, either of the fear of God, allegiance to their prince, or love to their country ? Or whether or no they don't for their defiance to the churches, in this bold and terrible vote) rather merit a page in the chronicles of time, and there in capital letters, be written, not an association of wise, but, a faction of disorderly, &c. and impolitic men ?

The introduction to personal signing.

P R E S E N T.

Answ. A council of war (by adjournment met, without commission) consulting the most plausible way to blow up the walls of our Zion. But where the place was, or the persons who were present in this rendezvouze, shall never be told by me, unless it be extorted by the rack. And tho' I have endeavoured with freedom of argument to subvert the error, I will never stain their personal glory, by repeating or calling over the muster-roll.

Therefore, as *Noah's* sons cast a garment upon their fathers nakedness, so (leaving them in the crowd) their names (for me) shall repose under a mantle of honorable pity and forgetfulness.

Yet wishing they may never more harbour such thoughts, or promote such a design as is projected by these proposals ; but hereafter when temptation makes its signal, let them rather trespass upon gravity, by following the hounds in the forrest, or by a more submissive and moderate way (to baffle the enemy, and wear off the impression) let them write on the ground, or with the famous *Domitian*, spend the time in catching flies, rather than contrive how to subvert or alter the government in the churches, by such despotick measures especially in an empire and province so charmed with such enchanting liberties as ours are. For otherwise they may chance to bring, if not an old, a new house upon their heads, according to that saying, *Debile fundamentum, fallit Opus.*

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*A work if done, and no foundation laid,
Falls on the work-mens head ; thus they are paid.*
