Ratio Disciplinae Fratrum Nov-Anglorum.

A Faithful Account of the Discipline professed and practised; in the Churches of New-England.

With Interspersed and Instructive Reflections on the Discipline of the Primitive Churches.

Ezek. XLIII. 11. Show them the Form of the House, and the Fashion thereof, and the Goings out thereof, and the Comings in thereof, and all the Forms thereof, and all the Ordinances thereof; and write all in their Sight, that they may keep the whole Form thereof, and all the Ordinances thereof, and do them.

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AN ATTESTATION,
From the very Reverend
Dr. Increase Mather.

THAT the Churches of NEW-ENGLAND have been originally of the
CONGREGATIONAL Perswasion
and Profession, is known to every one.
Their Platform does expressly dislike and disclaim
the Name of INDEPENDENT. The Reason
why that Name has been imposed upon them,
was, Because they maintained, that a Particular,
and Organised Church, has entire Power within it
self, to manage the Affairs of the Kingdom of
CHRIST, and the holy Discipline belonging to
it, without a Dependence on any Superiour Power
on Earth. They Revere Synods, and Ecclesiastical
Councils, consisting of Elders, and Brethren, sent as
Messengers of the Churches, when want of Peace
or Light, shall call for their Advice; but they
A 2 Esteem
Esteem not stated Councils, or Synods, with a Juridical Power to be of Divine Institution.

What the Arguments were, which did satisfy them, that the Congregational Way is the way of Truth; 'Tis to be seen in the Books Published by those eminent Servants of Christ, who first settled Churches, in these Parts of the World; especially such as Mr. Cotton's Treatise of The Keys. There is a Book under the Name of that Great Man, called, The Way of the Churches, which was published by a Brownesical Author, without Mr. Cotton's Consent or Knowledge. But in a Discourse after that was published, he refers the Reader, who desires to know his Judgment about Church Discipline, unto his Book of, The Keys, and not that of, The Way.

Another of the most eminent Divines that ever New-England saw, was Mr. Thomas Hooker, Pastor of the Church in Hartford. The Survey of Church Discipline, drawn by him, is a most Acute, Accurate, Logical Composure; some look upon it as Irrefragable, Unanswerable. It had the Approbation of all the Ministers, that were then in that and the next Colony.

Mr. Norton also in his learned Answer in Latin to the Enquiries of Apollonius (a Dutch Divine) argues clearly and strenuously, in Defence of the Congregational Church Discipline: A Book whereof Dr. Hornbeck, the famous Professor in Leyden, expressed a singular Esteem.
I might have mentioned, what my Father has written, for the Defence of these Churches, in Answer to two famous Divines, Mr. Charles Herle, and Mr. Samuel Rutherford.

It is true, that for certain Modalities, there has been a Variety of Practice, in these Churches; as there was in the Primitive; But in Essentials, both of Doctrine, and of Discipline, they agree. The Eccentric are but few; nor are there so many late Innovations, as to deserve any notice to be taken of them.

We look upon Reforming Presbyterians, as our dear Brethren: Among whom we have in particular a most brotherly Affection, for those in Scotland. When any come from thence, furnished with Testimonies of their Good Conversation in Christ, they are as welcome to our Communion, as any Members of our own Churches. When the Persons of Both Perswasions in London became united Brethren, the Tidings thereof were highly acceptable to the Churches of New-England, in which they are ever so.

In the Title Page of our, Platform of Discipline, which was agreed by the Elders, and Messengers of the Churches in the Synod at Cambridge; 1648. it is said to be, Gathered out of the Word of God. It appears by the Historical Relation here faithfully given of what is Practised in the Churches according to that Platform, that it agrees as with the Apostolical Time, so with the Practises of the Christians in the Age next unto the Apostles; except
except in some Superstitions, which the Churches of New-England never had among them.

The Churches here, were Planted a noble Vine. Indeed it was not with respect to the Fundamentals in Doctrine, that our Fathers came into this Wilderness. For they agree to the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England, (as fully as any, and more fully than many,) of the Conformists in that Church. But it was with Regard unto Church Order and Discipline, that our pious Ancestors the Good old Puritan Nonconformists, transported themselves and their Families, over the vast Ocean to these goings down of the Sun. On which Account, a Degeneracy from the Principles of pure Scriptural Worship and Order in the Church, would be more Evil in the Children of New-England, than any other People in the World.

May what is here performed, (with an Erudition, as well as a Fidelity, which I hope, will Recommend the Work,) be blessed for their Direction and Establishment in the Good old Way, in which their Fathers have walked; The Writer of this Ratio Disciplinae will then have cause to rejoice in this his Labour.

Boston.
10, d. X. m. A. D. 1719.
Ætatis, LXXXI.

Increase Father.
THE

Introduction.

THOSE English Colonies in America, which are distinguished by the Name of NEW-ENGLAND, were formed upon the Glorious Design of ereding CHURCHES, wherein the Reformation should be carried on, unto further Degrees of Scriptural and Primitive Purity; that would be allowed by the Times in Europe, no yet wholly recovered out of the Antichristian Age.

The Planting of these CHURCHES, (which having obtained Help from GOD, on the Day) was one of the MAGNALIA CHRISTI in that Age that has passed over the MISTRY whereof has in a large Volume, which at this been given to the World. There may be a more interpretation, if This should now be said, for it has been often said, That as the Almighty of
this Country, (which has many more than Twice seven times Seven Golden Candlesticks illuminating of it,) have heretofore, even to a Proverb, said as Ill, as those that Adversaried the Ancient Piccardines, thus it has been also observed, That Remarkable Blessings from GOD have recompened the Good Offices, that well disposed Persons have done unto it. Instead of making any such Observation, it is enough to say, There are those in other Parts of the World, who wish well unto the Country, and have at Heart the Interests of it: A Country which one of the most celebrated Pens in Great Britain, could not mention, but in those Terms; A Place of as serious Piety as any I can bear of under Heaven. It is partly with an Eye to the Satisfaction of such Good and Just Men that an Account of the Churches here, and what they are, and what they do, is now to be exhibited; And, no doubt, One Effect of it will be, that it may bespeak a Continuance of Good Offices, from such as are the Friends of Pure and Undefiled Religion. And the Best of Protestants in Europe, will Judge, how far a People, whom a Great Man in an English Parliament vouchsafed once to call, The Best of Protestants, be worthy to be look'd upon, as their UNITED BRETHREN.

With such, and with all that have reigning in them, the Generous and Catholic Spirit of Christianity (whereof One has given us this true Pourtraiture, C'est Esprit universel, qui ne compose point toutes ces Distinctions Charnelles, Lesquelles divisent aujourd'hui tant des petits Esprits dans le Monde, (A Catholic Spirit which is above the carnal Distinctions,
tions, that make such Divisions at this Day, among the Narrow Souls of the World] it will be far from any Prejudice, but, we are well assured, it will be very grateful unto them, to understand, That the Differences between PRESBYTERIAN and CONGREGATIONAL, seem hardly to be known in this Country. Tho' the Discipline Recommended by the SYNODS of these Churches, be that which we call CONGREGATIONAL, yet it is their Desire and Study, that a Good Man, who long since wrote an Unio Reformantia, should not be mistaken, when he said, The Congregational are a Choice, if not the Best part, of the Presbyterians. Reforming Presbyterians retiring sometimes from England, and Scotland, and Ireland hither, have been as heartily esteemed and embraced here, as any of the Pastors born and bred in the Land; and as the Churches of New-England have imposed nothing on them, that they could conscientiously have any Scruple of; (Especially not Re-Ordination:) thus they have not only conformed unto the Customs of the Churches, but have even made Conscience of doing so. Yea, Tho' the Churches of New-England cannot admit of many things, which they reckon Deformities retained in the Church of England, according to its present Canonical Constitution, yet they cannot see, why they may not claim to be Real, and even some of the Soundest Parts of the True Church of England, according to the Intention of the first Reformers. And therefore in an Address of the New-English Ministers, unto the Earl of Bellomont, when he was Governour of New-England, they not only affected this People
to be, A Nation of Nonconformists, which those in Scotland, justly look upon as their UNITED BREE THREN; but also declared, their Churches to be those wherein the True Doctrine in the famous Articles of the Church of England, is owned and preached with all possible Purity, and the Primitive Discipline, which even the Liturgy of the Church of England wishes to see restored, is practised. They will with Satisfaction understand it, that not only those of the Scotch and French Communion, are admitted into Communion in the Churches of New England, when they come with Testimonials to ask for it; but they make only the Substantials of Religion, or that Vital Piety wherein all Good Men are united, the Terms of Communion among them, and they do with Delight see Godly Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, and Antipædobaptists, and Lutherans, all Members of the same Churches, and sitting together without Offence about their lesser Differences, (in the same Holy Mountain) at the same Holy Table. And if it should now be said concerning them, to the Governours, that come over with the Royal Commission, to take the Charge of them, this will not be the First Time that it has been said:

While our Churches are not built on any Foundation but the Maxims of the Everlasting Gospel, plainly Exhibited in the SACRED SCRIPTURES, and know no Terms of Communion, but the Indisputable Points of that solid Piety, wherein all Good Men are united, we assure our selves that Governours, who have no Partiality for little Parties in Religion, will count them Worthy of their Protection, and will comment.
commend them to the Royal Fav'our upon all Occasions.

There is no need of Reporting what is the Faith professed by the Churches in New-England; for every one knows, That they perfectly adhere to the CONFESSION OF FAITH, published by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and afterwards renewed by the Synod at the Savoy: And received by the Renowned Kirk of Scotland. The Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England; also, are more universally held and preached in the Churches of New-England, than in any Nation; and far more than in our own. I cannot learn, That among all the Pastors of Two Hundred Churches, there is one Arminian; much less an Arian, or a Gentilist. Yea, the Neo-nomian and Antinomian Errors, about the great Point of, A Sinners Justification before GOD, which a while since bred such a Scandalous Contention among the Nonconformists in England, have not yet straggled over the Atlantic, to disturb this happy People.

— Fœlices olimium sua si bona norint!

It is well known, that the Points peculiar to the Churches of New-England, are those of their Church Discipline.

And we shall therefore in the first Place, offer a Sum of their PRINCIPLES.

We will proceed then to Describe the PRACTICES in which they generally manage and uphold.
uphold their Principles. And that the Story may be the less In¬sipid, we will take the leave to Salt it now and then with Inter¬spersed Notes of what we find practised in other Churches; especially in the Primitive: [Wherein you will also Ex¬cuse the Complement unto Vossius and Henninsiis in leaving the little Greek we use without the Encumberance of the Novel and needless Accents upon it: Yea, since we are in a Book of Primi¬tive Things, we will hope to be excused, if the want of Types in our Press, compel us to give what little Greek we use, in Capitals: For the writing of Greek otherwise than in Capitals, was introduced in later Ages, by the Monks of Egypt, who borrowed the Smaller Letters now used, from the Coptic:] Which will be the more easily pardoned, when 'tis remembred that in our brief Remarks, we shall a little imitate what was done in the Ratio Disciplinæ Frat¬trum Bohemorum, written by that In¬comparable Comenius, who once had resolved upon coming over, at an Invitation to become the President of Harvard-Colledge in this Country, if he had not, by being invited unto Sweden, been diverted from it.

2. For the PRINCIPLES of these Churches; they are declared in their, PLATFORM OF CHURCH-DISCIPLINE; which has been so often published, and is in so many Hands, that there is no need of giving here a New Edition, or indeed any Abridgement of it. And there is the least need of such a Repetition, because their Principles will be all along sufficiently discover
ed; by their Proceedings, and the Methods and Customs obtaining among them, which are now going to be related. Let this only be here observ'd, and still Remembered; Those Reverend Persons of the Presbyterian Way, who published their Fals Divinum so many Years ago, do expressly say, That they agreed with the Things of the greatest Concernment in it; and that those things wherein they differed from it, were of lesser Consequence, wherein their Debates were not Contentiones but Collationes.

But Besides, and indeed, Before, the Platform, there were several Treatises long ago published, wherein the Principles of these CHURCHES were, as with Loud-sounding Trumpets, proclaimed unto the World.

One of them was, the famous COTTON's Book of, The Keys; Which the celebrated Rutherford approv'd, as being sound in every thing; except (as he thought) that of not giving Authority quite enough to Synods. The Memorable Owen, attempting to write an Answer to that Book, was instead of Confuting it, so Conquered by it, that he came entirely into the Sentiments of it; and so liv'd, and so held, and so wrote, all the rest of his Days.

Another of them was, the Responso to a Syllage Questionum sent hither from Zeland; which Answer was written in Latin by the famous NORTON, at the Unanimous Desire and Order of the Ministers then shining in the Country. What Satisfaction
Satisfaction it gave, may be gathered, from the Attestations of Dr. Goodwyn, Mr. Nye, Mr. Simpson unto it; Yea, and from the Respectful mention, with which Dr. Hornbeck magnifies the Reason and Candour of the Author, even in those Points, wherein he dissents from him. Dr. Fuller also in his Church-History has these Words upon it; Of all the Authors I have perused concerning those Opinions, none to me was more Informative, than Mr. John Norton, One of no less Learning, than Modesty, in his Answer to Apollonius, Pastor of the Church in Middleburgh.

The Church-State of New-England, even in these Exhibitions of it, is, by reason of Strength now come to more than Fourscore Years; But the Strength holds; it is to be hoped, that it will not be soon cut off; or indeed ever fly away.

Some have, suddenly enough, pronounced the Churches of New-England, as too little agreed among themselves in the Affairs of their Ecclesiastical Policy.

But certainly, there is a General Agreement among them in these Articles.

First. A People resolving to adhere unto the Maxims of the Everlasting Gospel, and live unto GOD according to all the Rules of Incontestible PIETY, and appearing in a competent and a convenient Number, to form an Assembly for the Worship of GOD our SAVIOUR, in all His Institutions, may Associate for that Purpose; and
and (if their Assembling will be no evident Prejudice unto the Kingdom of GOD, and Welfare of Men, in Societies already formed for that Purpose, whereof they ought to be the Members,) they have a Right so to do.

Secondly. A Body of such People, so Associating, are an Instituted Church, and have all the Rights of a particular Church belonging unto them; A Spiritual Corporation, which has Power to observe the Appointments of our SAVIOUR, and Elect what Officers He has appointed for them, and Censure such Offenders as may prove Roots of Bitterness unto them.

Thirdly. The Pastors that such a Church has chosen to Watch for their Souls, qualified for their Work, and Accepting the Charge, have a Power to manage the Public Sacrifices of the Gospel in their Flocks, and particularly to administer the Sacraments of the New Testament unto the proper Subjects of them.

Fourthly. Every Church thus formed as a People for the Praise of GOD, ought, in Things of common Concern, which will affect the Tranquility, or demand the Acknowledgement, of other Churches, bound up in the Faith and Order of the Gospel with them, to pay a great Regard unto their Advice, and ask for it on recurring Occasions.

Fifthly. The Sacred Scriptures are the Sufficient Rule for Belief, and Worship, and Manners, among the People of GOD; And a Brotherly Fellowship is to
to be maintained with all Good Men, in the Things wherein we apprehend them to follow these Divine Directions.

At the same time they are for extending Indulgence further than they can Communion, and are for an Indulgence of Civil Rights in the State unto all that approve themselves Faithful Subjects, and Honest Neighbours, and such Inoffensive Livers, that Humane Society cannot complain of Disturbance from them.

True ELEUTHERIANS will consider, how far any further Agreement may be Necessary: And whether those unreasonable Sons of Procrustes, the Narrow-soul'd and Imperious Bigots for Uniformity, will do Religion any real Service, by the pressing of it.

Behold, The Puritanismus Novanglicanus!

§. Such a Foundation being laid, the Superstructure is now waited for. It will be seen in the PRACTICES of the Churches, which are now going to be related.

[Let it be remembred; The Indians in the Massachusetts Province, are all Christianized; except the Eastern Salvages, which have been Antichristianized by the Papish Missionaries. Among our Christianized Indians, there are not only many Worshipping Assemblies; but also a Number of Gathered Churches walking in the Faith and Order of the Gospel: And these endeavour in all Points all possible Conformity to the English Churches of the Country in their Administrations.]
We Proceed unto the Methods and Customs, IN THE CHURCHES OF New-England.

ARTICLE I. The Gathering of a CHURCH.

§ 1. A Number of Christians, either swarmed into a New Plantation, or finding the Church to which they have belonged, grown to such Circumstances, that it may be for the general Advantage
Advantage to have a New Church formed in the Neighbourhood, first settle their Number, and assure themselves that their Number is Competent and Resolved for the Undertaking.

The Jews of old held, That less than Ten Men of Leisure, could not make a Congregation. 'Tis perhaps in Opposition to this Tradition, that our Saviour said, Matth. XVIII. 20. Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them. And hence Tertullian encourageth himself to say, Ubi tres, Ecclesia est, licet Laici. Nevertheless, because it has been apprehended, that a Rule of Church-Discipline in the Eighteenth Chapter of Matthew, cannot be well reduced into Practice, by any Number under Seven, and for more Reasons that might be rendred, Seven is the least Number that has been allowed among us, as capable to form a Church State for the Enjoyment of all special Ordinances; But usually there is a larger Number expected.

§ 2. The MEN who by mutual Conferences with one another, are come to a good Understanding and Resolution for the Gathering of a Church, are usually such as are already the Members of other Churches; and obtain an Allowance from the said Churches, for them to bear a part in this Action; which Allowance is usually signified in a Written Instrument. If any of them are not so, they give to these Brethren such an Account of their Qualifications for the Work now before them, and they are so satisfied in their Faith, and Repentance, and Behaviour, that they admit them into their Number.

§ 3. In
§ 3. In former Times, a Church of Brethren has been sometimes Gathered, without any One in their Number yet Elected or Expected by them, for their Pastor. And the Gathering of a Church has been the sole Work of the Day, without the Ordination of a Pastor. The Work has been carried on with admirable Solemnity, and left an Everlasting Impression on the Multitude of Spectators: A Work full of Holiness. But in later Times, a Church is rarely Gathered, without a Candidate of the Ministry, being one of the Number for the intended Coalition; who has been for some while a Preacher unto them; And on the Day of their Gathering, his Ordination is also solemnized.

§ 4. The Persons who are engaging and combining for the weighty Undertaking of Gathering a Church, set a part a Day to be spent by them together in Prayer with Fasting, that they may prepare for what is before them, and confess their Dependence on Heaven for Favours which they own themselves unworthy of, and obtain the Blessing of God; [On which Day, they privately together Sign their Covenant.] Sometimes more than one such Day; Sometimes in a Public Assembly, where the Neighbouring Pastors come to instruct and assist them. They think it proper to make a very Great Preparation for an Undertaking the most Holy, and Awful, and Heavenly, that can be on this side Heaven engaged in.

§ 5. In time convenient the Good Men of this Intention, (who from first to last, privately wait upon Pastors in the Neighbourhood for their Direction)
section) send Letters unto the Pastors and Churches of the Neighbouring Towns, (what number they Judge convenient) wherein they report what they intend, on a Day therein specified; and request that the Pastors with other Messengers or Delegates of the said Churches will please then to Countenance their Proceedings, at the Place also specified. The Pastors Read these Letters, to their Churches, and the Delegates or Messengers to accompany them, unto this Transaction (upon the Nomination of the Pastors, with Liberty then allowed for the Brethren, to nominate any more if they see Cause) are by some Vote approved and appointed for it.

§ 6. The Council of Elders and Messengers from the Churches of the Vicinity, convening at the Time and Place assigned, and choosing their Moderator, the Candidates of the New Church appear before them, and present unto them a, Confession of their Faith, and therewithal the Covenant or Engagement, in which they recognize their Obligations, to serve the Great GOD their Saviour, and to walk with one another, in the Faith and Order of the Gospel. They produce also the Testimonials of the Allowance which the Churches whereunto they formerly belonged, have given them to Transfer their more immediate Relation unto the Society now to be gathered. In the former times, the Brethren on this Occasion also exhibited, either Orally or in Writing, some account of each Man's Conversion from his unregenerate State unto serious Piety; or, The Reason of the Hope which is in him, that a Saving Work of Regeneration has passed upon him.
This is for sundry Reasons not now so much insisted on.

§ 7. A vast Assembly of Christians from the Vicinity usually come together on such an Occasion; and fill the Meeting House. But Care is taken to leave some vacant Seats in the Meeting House, for the Council; who now walk together unto it. First, the Pastors, and then the other Delegates of whatever Quality. The Associated Brethren likewise take a Place together, which is left empty for them.

A MEETING HOUSE is the Term that is most commonly used by the New English Christians; Tho’ as long ago as Eusebius, yea, and as Tertullian, the Term of A Church was used for it. And every Town for the most part, can say with Tertullian, Nostra Columba Domus Simplex; They have modest and handsome Houses for the Worship of GOD; not set off with Gaudy, Pompous, Theatrical Fineries, but suited unto the Simplicity of Christian Worship. Holiness of Places is however no more believed among them, than it was in the Days of Clemens Alexandrinus, who says, ΠΑΣ ΤΟΙΟΣ ΙΕΡΟΣ — Every Place is in truth holy, where we receive the Knowledge of GOD; or in the yet earlier Days of Justin Martyr, who says, ΕΝ ΠΑΝΤΙ ΤΟΙΘ τΗΣ ΗΣ — In every part of the Earth, GOD has promised that He will accept our Sacrifices.

§ 8. Ardent PRAYERS are then poured out, pertinent unto the Solemn Action then before them; wherein the Glories of the Great GOD, and our Saviour are confessed, and His Blessings on His Churches, are implored, especially on That which is now gathering.
A SERMON agreeable unto the Action is then also preached; unto which a Prayer is added.

The Prayers are usually made by several Ministers, which either the Council, or at least the Moderator of the Council calls thereunto.

After this the Moderator signifies unto the Assembly, That there are then present a Number of Christian Brethren [whose Names he recites out of a List before him, and at the reciting whereof they immediately stand up, in Token of their Disposition to proceed,] Intending with the Help and Leave of our Glorious LORD, immediately to gather themselves into a Church before Him. And he offers unto the Assembly, a Liberty to make any Objection, if they have any to make, against any one Person or Matter in the Present Proceedings.

Upon a Convenient Pause, no Man objecting the Moderator turns himself to the Council, and proposes to Them, that if they do approve of the Brethren proceeding unto the Action that is now before them, and Consent hereupon to receive them and regard them as a CHURCH of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, their Silence will be taken to signify it.

Hereupon the Moderator in very solemn Terms, does call upon the Brethren, that with Hands (and Hearts !) lifted up to Heaven, they now attend and consent unto the COVENANT of GOD, which is now to be read before them. So He reads, [while They keep their Hands lifted up to Heaven: Or at least lift them up at his Direction at the End of the Reading;] The main Article:
Articles in the Covenant of Grace, concluding with what more particularly concerns the Evangelical Church-State, unto the Duties whereof they now more particularly recognize their Obligations.

To this Effect.

We whose Names are hereunto subscribed, apprehending our selves called of GOD into the Church-State of the Gospel, do first of all confess our selves unworthy to be so highly favour-ed of the Lord, and admire that free and rich Grace of His which triumphs over so great Unworthiness; and then with an humble Reli-ance on the Aids of Grace therein promised for them, that, in a Sense of their Inability to do any Good thing, do humbly wait on him for all, we now thankfully lay hold on His Coven-ant; and would choose the Things that Please Him.

We declare our serious Belief of the Christian Religion, as contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and with such a View thereof as the Confession of Faith in our Churches has exhibited; heartily resolving to conform our Lives unto the Rules of that Holy Religion as long as we live in the World.

We give up our selves unto the Lord JEHO-VAH, who is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and avouch Him this Day to be our GOD, our Father, our Saviour, and our Leader, and receive Him as our Portion forever.

We give up our selves unto the Blessed JE-SUS, who is the Lord JEHOVAH, and adhere
to Him as the Head of His People in the Covenant of Grace, and rely on Him as our Priest, and our Prophet, and our King, to bring us unto Eternal Blessedness.

We acknowledge our Everlasting and Indispensable Obligations, to glorify our GOD in all the Duties of a Godly, and a Sober, and a Righteous Life; and very particularly in the Duties of a Church State, and a Body of People associated for an Obedience to Him, in all the Ordinances of the Gospel: And we thereupon depend upon His gracious Assurances for our faithful Discharge of the Duties thus incumbent on us.

We desire and intend, and (with Dependence on His promised and powerful Grace) we engage, to walk together as a CHURCH of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, in the Faith and Order of the Gospel, so far as we shall have the same revealed unto us: Conscientiously attending the Publick Worship of GOD, the Sacraments of His New Testament, the Discipline of His Kingdom, and all His Holy Institutions, in Communion with one another, and watchfully avoiding sinful Stumbling-Blocks and Contentions, as becomes a People whom the Lord has bound up together in a Bundle of Life.

At the same time, we do also present our Offspring with us unto the Lord; purposing with His Help, to do our Part in the Methods of a Religious Education, that they may be the Lord's.

And all this we do, flying to the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, for the Pardon of our
many Errors, and praying that the Glorious Lord who is the Great Shepherd, would prepare and Strengthen us for every good Work, to do His Will, working in us that which will be well pleasing to Him; To whom be Glory forever and ever. Amen.

This done, the Moderator makes a Speech, wherein he declares unto the Brethren, their Acceptance into the Number of the Churches, and mightily exhorts and charges them in the Name of the most Glorious LORD, that they endeavour now in all things, to live according to the Profession which they have thus made, not only before Men, but in the Presence of the Great GOD, and of His Holy Angels; and he invites the whole Assembly to give Thanks unto GOD, for the Blessings of the Gospel, which they are led now to take Notice of.

§ 9. In former times, it was no rare thing for the Publick Solemnities of a whole Day, to be assigned unto that one Action, of Gathering a CHURCH, and to defer unto another Day the Action of Ordaining a Pastor to the Church: But in later times these two Actions are generally carried on together; that is to say, on the same Day that the Church is Gathered, the Pastor of the Church is also Ordained. Sometimes on these Occasions, the Action of gathering the Church has been managed more privately in the Presence of the Delegates from the Neighbourhood: and contenting themselves with such a private and previous Management of that, they have then gone to the Meeting-House more publicly, in a great Assembly to carry on that other Action of Ordaining.
Ordaining the Pastor of the Church. But many Good Men rather choose and wish, that this great Action, may be done in as publick a Manner as may be; For 'tis indeed one of the greatest Things that can be done among the Children of Men; 'Tis a Glorious Homage paid unto the Son of GOD, and a Testimony born to His Religion; 'Tis rarely performed when in the Hands of a wise Moderator, without Floods of Tears in the affected Spectators, and lasting Impressions of Piety upon them.

§ 10. The CHURCH-COVENANT thus used in the Churches of New-England, is by Intelligent and Considerate Persons, looked upon as no other than the Covenant of Grace more particularly applied unto the Duties and Concerns of particular Churches. Particular Churches are in their Apprehension an Institution of our Lord Redeemer; and there are particular Duties, which the Members of these Churches owe unto their Elders, and unto one another. The Church-Covenant is but an Acknowledgement of the Obligations to these Duties lying on the Members of the Churches. No Body denies that GOD commands Men to acknowledge their Obligations to the Duties of their several Relations: But then it appears very plain, that the more explicit they are in such a Transaction, on such an Occasion as that of Gathering a Church, 'tis the Better on all Accounts; And the Great King whose Name is Venerable, is always to be served with our Best. It is an Ancient Maxim not peculiar to the Persons of the Congregational Way, Fede*rata Conjunction constituent Ecclesi·m. And indeed, it seems beyo

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all Contradiction, That where Men do not, Im-
plicitly at least, Agree, and Engage to Worship
our Saviour together, according to His Laws,
they cannot be esteemed, a Church. But then,
if an Implicit Covenant be of such Importance to
the Being of a Particular Church, 'tis argued, sure-
ly an Explicit Covenant is Expedient, Profitable,
Desireable. Without something of this Nature,
'tis asked, How can there be such a Joining and
Cleaving together, as there was Exemplified for
Christian Churches, in that which was the Mo-
ther of them all! Acts ii. 42.

Antiquity is no Stranger to this Notion. 'Tis
Tertullian's Description of a Church, Corpus sumus,
de Conscientia Religionis, et Disciplinae Unitate, et
Spei Fœdere: Which is as much as to say, A Body
United for the Consciences Observation of the Duties
of Religion, by an Agreement in Discipline, and a CO-
VENANT of Hope for Eternal Blessedness. The
same Tertullian, in his Apology, says, that the
Christians then Assembled, Ad Conœderandum
Disciplinam; which intimates, that they had a
Discipline, and a COVENANT for the Disci-
pline.

Pliny the Governour of Bithynia relates, in his
Letter to the Emperor [which our Tertullian also
refers to,] That some Renegado Christians, being
Examined about the secret, but sacred Conventi-
cles of the Faithful in those Primitive Times,
confessed no worse of them than this; That
they entred into a COVENANT, † To do no dis-
honesta Thing in the World.

† Ne Furta, ne Latrocinia, ne Adulteria committerent,
ne Fidem fallerent, ne depostum abnegarent.

In
In the Apology of Justin Martyr, who lived within a few years of the Apostles themselves, we find the Christians who were admitted into Church-Fellowship, agreeing in a Resolution to conform in all Things to the Word of GOD: Which seems to be as truly a Church-Covenant, as any in the Churches of New-England.

And these Churches hope that they shall not hear that Reproached as a New Invention, which was practised in the Second and Third Centuries.

The famous Dr. Hornbeck, a Professor in the University of Leyden, who wrote in Defence of the Presbyterian Church-Government, has published his Approbation of what the New-English Divines Cotton, and Mather, and Norton, wrote in Defence of their Explicit Church-Government.

And Zepperus writes it as the Manner and Order of the Churches in Holland; That when any Persons are admitted unto the Lord's Table there, they make a publick Profession of their Faith before all the Church; and likewise COVENANT, that they will continue in that Faith, and lead their Lives accordingly.

Several Synods in Holland have required Personal Covenanting with GOD, and the Church; and the Incomparable Voetius highly applauds their doing so.

One of the Episcopal Way complains of the Reformed Churches in France, That they would not admit a Man to the Lord's Table without a Promise (or COVENANT) of continuing in the Faith. 'Tis no more indeed, than what we find provided by their National Synods; That none were
were admitted as Members of the Reformed Churches in France, without a publick entering into a COVENANT of GOD, with Submission to Discipline.

The very learned Parker gives this Account of the Reformed Churches, (whereto Persecution had exiled him) That when any Person seeks for Admission into Church-Communion, his Name is published in the Congregation, that if any one hath ought to object against the Person propounded, he should acquaint the Elders therewith. If nothing is brought against him, he is admitted, but not without a Solemn COVENANT with GOD, and the Church: And to the Church he promises to walk as becomes that holy Fellowship: That he will submit unto the Discipline of the Church; and that he will watch over the Brethren of that Communion, according to the Command of CHRIST.

In fine, the Churches of New-England appear well satisfied with the Words of the famous Baxter. I conclude, That whatsoever some particular Persons may be guilty of, there is no real Difference between the Presbyterians and Independents, in the Point of Church-Covenant. —— GOD forbid, That any Faithful Minister of CHRIST, should fight against that which is profitable to the Well-being of a Church, merely because the Church without it may have a Being. Then must we plead for Hunger and Want, and Calamitous Diseases, that leave us but the Being of Men. Nature and the Scripture Precedents in the Old Testament, and the Doctrine of the Apostles; and the Ancient Practice of the Churches, do satisfy us of the Usefulness of holy Covenants, prudently, seriously, and reasonably made.
If the Church thus formed, have proceeded (as they usually do) unto a Good Agreement about a Person to be their Pastor, the Ordination of this their Pastor is also consummated, at this Time, in the Assembly, immediately upon their Confederation. The Methods of it are to be fetched out of the ensuing Article.

ARTICLE II.

The Dismissing of a PASTOR.

§ 1. WHEN a Church wants a PASTOR, they do first, by Prayer with Fasting, humbly supplicate Our Ascended Redeemer, who giveth such Gifts unto Men, that He would give unto them, A Pastor, after His own Heart.

Then (except the Providence of Heaven have otherwise laid Prospects of Supplies before them,) upon Consultation with the Christian Inhabitants of the Town, ask Information from the Ministers in their Vicinity, or from the Governors of the College; What Young Men, may be most likely to be serviceable unto them. And being thus, or otherwise informed, the Committee whom the Church usually have to act on their behalf, in such an Affair, invite one or more of these Candidates, to preach a few Sermons among them.

Hereupon they hope for an Opportunity, to observe whether any of these Candidates answer the
the Character which a famous Council at Carthage required in one to be ordained; Before all things, to have a good natural Wit, to be apt to teach, to be moderate in his Conversation, to be sober in his Life, to be diligent, humble, affable, full of Compassion; to be learned, to be instructed in the Law of the Lord, to interpret the Word of GOD soberly and prudently, and to be able in a clear and plain Manner to explain the Doctrines of Faith.

One Reason why the Churches have been here-tofore less Explicit and Accurate, than otherwise they might have been, in a Solemn Examination of those whom they Elect and Ordain for their Pastors, has been, because they never Elect any but such as are already admitted as Communicants at the Holy Table in the Churches. And the Churches admit none, but such as give them full Satisfaction of their being Sound in the Faith, and Persons of a godly Life.

§ 2. If there be a Candidate, for which they take a singular Liking, perhaps, they Renew their Invitation unto him, to preach the Word of GOD among them, in a more Constant Way, for some Time convenient. Or, However in Time convenient, the Brethren of the Church meet and pass a Vote of this Importance;

That they will make an orderly Procedure, with all convenient Expedition, to choose and call Mr. A. B. unto the Pastoral Care over them; Now, upon Trial being satisfied of his Ability, and Fidelity, for the Discharge of that Office unto them.

The Church after this, have a Meeting with the other Inhabitants of their Neighbourhood, who are not yet arrived unto the State of Communion.
municiants; When they do all together put it unto the Vote, Whether they have no Objection against the Choice of Mr. A. B. to be the Minister of the Place; but shall concur to support him in the Exercise of his Ministry.

Except the Major-Part of the Inhabitants (inclusive of the Communicants) do agree to this latter Vote, the Act of the Church, does not in the Law, make the whole Taxable in the Maintenance of the Minister which the Church doth chuse.

In Case of a Difference between the Church and the Inhabitants on this Occasion, the Law provides the Remedy of a Council, from three Neighbour Churches, to decide, Whether the Inhabitants ought to acquiesce in the Choice, wherein the Church has gone before them.

§ 3. Tho' the Law of the Place, about the Chusing and Settling of a Minister, (which has had the Royal Sanction) be a very wholesome Law, and have much of the Gospel in it, yet there grows too much upon the Inhabitants, who are not yet come into the Communion of the Churches, a Disposition to supersede it, and over-rule it; Many People would not allow the Church any Privilege to go before them, in the Choice of a Pastor. The Clamour is, We must maintain him!

Some of our Divines having been on such an Occasion consulted withal, have exhibited their Sentiments in these Conclusions.

A Body of Christians Associated for all the Ordinances of the Gospel, are a CHURCH of our Glorious LORD, which have among other
other precious Priviledges, a RIGHT from HIM, To choose their own Pastors.

The Churches which have recovered the Exercise of this RIGHT from the Oppression of Man, under which many Churches of the Reformation are to this Day groaning, ought to keep the Precepts, and the Favours of the Lord, and not easily part with what He has given them.

To introduce a Practice in the Choice of a Pastor which being followed, may soon bring a Pastor to be chosen for a Church, which few, yea, none of the Church have ever Voted for, would be to Betray and even Destroy a most Valuable RIGHT, that such a Society has a Claim unto, and many Evil Consequences are to be expected from it.

Nevertheless a CHURCH in the Exercise of its RIGHT, ought in all possible Ways consistent therewithal, to consult the Edification and Satisfaction of their Neighbours; especially of those on whose Assistance, to carry on their Affairs, they may have much Dependence.

The Church ought so to manage their Choice that if the Neighbours have any just Dissatisfaction, all the Respect required by Scripture, Reason, and Gratitude, may be paid unto it.

To express the Condescension, in the close of these Conclusions, the Churches, do sometimes, by their Vote, make a Nomination of Three or Four Candidates; For every One of which the Majority of the Brethren have so Voted, that whomsoever of these the Choice falls upon, it may still be said, The Church has Chosen him.
And then they bring this Nomination unto the other Inhabitants, to join with them, in a Vote that shall determine, which of them shall be the Man.

But what must be the Age of the Candidate? Without any Information from the Gentlemen who have (like Bartholomaeus Agricola) written, De Aetate incuntium Officia; We know, not only what was the Age of Admission to the Exercise the Priesthood under the Mosaic Law; but also, how critical the Gentiles were about it; Alexander ab Alexandro sets the Age, when One would think it fitter to lay down than to take up an Office; And we have Cicero's Exclamation; Quae major Contumelia est, quam venire in Sacerdotium imberbem Adolescentulum? Nevertheless, in these Days of the New-Testament, there is nothing certain defined about the Number of Years, which a Minister of the Gospel, must have passed before he be ordained. Some Councils have set a Number of Years for it; But the learned Reizius passes a Censure on them, as having done Incautelously; and he brings the Instance of Timothy, who while he was but a Young Man, so discharged the Evangelical Ministry, as to be no dishonour to it: And the Words of Bullinger have their Weight in them; Hominem Ingenia, non a Vetusitate, ut Vina, aestimanda sunt; sed ab ipsa probitate et Eruditione. Accordingly the Churches of New-England, consider not so much the Age, as the Worth of a Candidate for an Ordination in them. And their Glorious Lord often blesses them with Elibu's; They often see very Young Ministers, who give them
§ 4. Now they proceed unto a Salary, to be offered unto the Minister, whom they have chosen. [To which there is usually added somewhat also, which they call, A Settlement, in order to some Subsistence of his Family, in Case he dy among them.] This no doubt, will be moderate enough: But such as they may think will suffice a Divine of that Order, which Erasimus has described in his Preface to his New Testament. Is mibi THEOLOGUS est, qui non Syllogismis Arte contortus, sed Affectu, sed ipso Vultu atque Oculis, sed ipsa Vita doceat, afferendus esse opes Christiano, non esse fidendum hujus Mundi Praefidius, sed totum opor-
tere pendere de Caelo.

There have too frequently all along been culpable Proceedings, and a Withholding of more than is meet, in the Churches under the Dispensation of the New Testament; relating to this Affair: And they that have abhorred Idols, have yet committed Sacrilege. Besides more early Reservations of the Church-Stock, only TOИΣΔΕΟΜΕΝΟΙΣ, Chrysostom tells us, that in Elections, those of the Competitors that had Estates of their own carried it, because the Churches would save the Charges of maintaining them. Yea, some Councils expressly, and finfully enough, provided, That Ministers, tho' learned Men, should subsist themselves on some honest Employment, with a Proviso, which 'tis a Wonder how any Wise Men could propose it, That it be no Prejudice to their Office. And how strait banded this way many Professors of
of Religion in the Churches of the Reformation have been, hath been known and felt, and thousands of times complained of.

The Churches of New-England have not so learned Christ. They make the most publick Recognitions, of their Obligations to that plain and just Law of Christ, They which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel. And a Decree of a National Synod of the Reformed Churches in France, has been considered among them; which ran in those Terms; 'All the Churches shall be desired to shun Ingratitude unto their Ministers, a Sin too rife among us; and take special Care, that they be more respected and their Labours better rewarded: Not to enrich and fatten them, but to give them a becoming and sufficient Maintenance.

In some Churches, the Salary of the Minister is raised by a Voluntary Contribution; especially in populous Places, and where many Strangers resort; But in others, a Tax is levied for it; there being too much Truth in Luther's Words *. The Ministers of the Gospel would have a poor Time of it, if they must rely on a free Contribution of the People for their Maintenance. In those (which are almost all) Parts of the Country, where the Stipend of the Minister is raised by a Tax upon the People, the Case is thus. The Laws of the Province, having had the Royal Approbation to ratify them, they are, The Kings Laws. By these Laws, it is Enacted, That there shall be a Public Worship of

* Deo r praest et misere viverent Evangelii Ministeri, s ex libera Populi Contributione silent sustentandi.
GOD in every Plantation; That the Person
Elected by the Majority of the Inhabitants to be
so, shall be looked upon as, The Minister of the
Place: That the Salary for him, which they
shall agree upon, shall be levied by a Rate upon
all the Inhabitants. In Consequence of this, the
Minister thus Chosen by the People, is (not only
CHRIST's, but also) in Reality, The Kings Mi-
nister. And the Salary raised for him, is raised
in the Kings Name, and is the Kings Allowance
unto him. If the most of the Inhabitants in a
Plantation, are Episcopalians, they will have a
Minister of their own Perswasion. And the Dis-
fenters, if there be any, in the Place, must pay
their Proportion of the Tax, for the Support of
this Legal Minister. In a few of the Towns, a
few of the People, in Hope, of being released
from the Tax for the Legal Minister, sometimes
profess themselves Episcopalians. But, when they
plead this for their Exemption, their Neigh-
bours tell them, They know in their Conscience,
they do not as they would be done unto. And if a
Governour, go by his Arbitrary Power, to super-
fede the Execution of the Law, and require the
Justices and Constables to leave the Episcopalians
out of the Tax, the People wonder, he is not
aware, that he is all this while, forbidding, That
the King should have his Dues paid unto him; and
forbidding the Kings Minister to receive what
the King has given him. However, the generos
Condescensions that have been sometimes made in
this Matter, are such, that the People of New-
England have therein. Exemplarily, admired the
Doctrine of GOD their SAVIOUR, and have done
what
what has not been ordinarily exemplified among any other People. Sometimes the Quakers also, have given some Occasion for Uneasiness. But, Where Quakerism is troublesome, some Towns are so wise to involve the Salary of the Ministry in a general Rate for all Town Charges, and so the Cavils of those, who would else refuse to pay the Rate for the Ministry, are obviated.

How many of our Ministers, do yet generously spend very much upon their own Estates: And how unfairly and untruly, some of them have often been defrauded of their Dues; and how patiently and holily they have encountered their Temptations, has been known unto their Glorious LORD.

§. 5. Things being thus prepared, the Brethren of the Church, do by a renewed Vote, now declare, That they make Choice of Mr. A. B. to be their Pastor; and appoint certain Persons to wait upon him, with a Report of this their Vote, and consult with him about a Day for his Ordination.

In these Proceedings there is a Seasonable Care taken, That if he were a Member of some other Church, he have his Dismission, (his Relation declared to be transferred,) unto that which now have their Eye upon him, to be their Pastor; that as near as may be, according to the Primitive Direction, They may choose from among themselves.

§. 6. The Day for his Ordination being agreed upon, the Brethren agree with him; what Churches they will desire to be present at the intended Solemnity. Letters are then addressed un-
to each of these Churches; 'Informing them;
that they have made Choice of such a Person
for their Pastor; and Requesting them, that they
would by their Elders and Messengers, afford
their Presence and Countenance, and Assistance, unto his Ordination; [At the Time and
Place now specified:] and concluding with such
Expressions of holy Affection and Charity as
would be dictated by our holy Religion, on
such an Occasion. The Letters are Subscribed
by such of the Church, as are judged most
suitable to do it, In the Name of the Church.

The Brethren use to make Choice of some
Neighbouring Pastors, (among those whom they
have sent unto,) to perform the IMPOSITION
OF HANDS in the designed Ordination; And
One among them to make the Prayers, and give
the Charges in that Action: Unto which One at
least, they privately some Days aforehand, signify what they have thus Noted, that so he may
prepare to answer their Expectations. And in all
those Points, they have a private Conference
and Concurrence with the Person that is to be
ordained.

Sometimes the Church leaves it unto the Mi-
nisters of the Council, at their coming together
on this Occasion, to determine, Who of their
Number shall take part in the Imposition of Hands,
at the Ordination.

§ 7. When the Council of the Neighbouring
Pastors, and the Messengers whom the Churches
address'd unto, have chosen to accompany them,
do come together, unto the House assigned
them,
them, and formed themselves into a Council with the Choice of their Moderator, [where the Deacons of that Church are now attending upon them,] the Church send some of their principal Brethren, to inform them, that they have desired such a Reverend Person (unto whom accordingly they now apply themselves,) to manage the Votes, and give the Charge in the Ordination to which they are now approaching: And what Reverend Persons they have desired for to join with him in the Imposition of Hands.

The Council then (if they have no Objection to make against the Intentions of the Day,) appoint one of their Number to give the Fellowship of the Churches, in their Name, unto the Person that shall be ordained.

Thus we find in the Primitive Times; A Pastor elected by the People, was ordained, (as Eusebius expresses it,) *With the common Consent of the Bishops in the Vicinity.*

The Council then walk in order, with the Person to be ordained, unto the Publick Assembly: which is usually a very thronged one: But with some Seats left appropriated; some for the Council now convened; some for the Brethren of the Church whose Vote is anon to be called for. For as *Jerome* of old, *Requiritur in Sacerdote ordinando, etiam Populi præsentia.* And *Cyprian* would have the Pastor Established in the Presence of all the People, who have narrowly observed his Conversation.

§. 8. The Day is (or should be!) kept a Sacred Fast unto the Lord.
In former times, on the longer Days, it was no unusual Thing, to have Two public Meetings, both a Forenoon, and an Afternoon Service, on this Occasion.

The Custom has been, that among the other Exercises of the Day, the Person expecting his Ordination, does by Praying and Preaching before the Assembly, give some Discovery, that he understands the Work, to which he is now to be Separated. Several of these, have been afterwards published, by which it may be seen, how compatible to fine Gold, have been the Nazarites.

Of later Times, 'tis grown Customary, if there be time for it, for some Elder Divine also to give a Sermon proper for the Solemn Occasion; and for some such to make some of the Supplications.

Yea, Sometimes the Person to be Ordained has of late been excused from Offering any Sermon at all on this Day; it being (by some) thought more decent for some Elder Divine, to deliver such Things as are most proper for the Day.

When these are over, The MODERATOR, mentioning the Reason of their being thus assembled; First, applies himself unto the Elders and Messengers of the Churches there present, and signifies unto them, 'That if they have any Objection to make against the Ordination, which is now otherwise to be proceeded in, they have now an Opportunity to offer it.'

None being offered; (after a due Pause) he then applies himself to the whole Congregation, and particularly to those who propose to sit un-
der the Ministry now to be established, with an
Intimation, 'That if any of the People know
any thing, either in the Doctrines or the Morals
of the Person, who now stands a Candidate for
an Ordination, that may be a just Objection a-
against him, they have now a Liberty to tender
it.

Nothing being tendered, he now applies him-
sel unto the Brethren of the CHURCH, who
have called the Assembly thus together, desiring
them, That, if they abide by their Choice of Mr. A.
B. to be their Pastor, and will according to the Word
of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, submit unto him as
their Overseer, and One who is to Watch for their
Souls, they would signify it by lifting up their Hands.
'Tis very certain, That the Right of a Church,
To Chuse its own Pastor, was Recognized and Ex-
ercised, in all the Times of Primitive Christianity;
Yea, 'twas one of the Last things that the Man
of Sin ravished from the People of GOD. The
Liberty in this Matter, with which our Ascended
REDEEMER has enfranchised and enriched
His Churches, appears to have been so concea-
ed by His Apostles, that when we read, [ Act:
XIV. 23. ] They ordained them Elders in every
Church; it is evident from the known use of the
XEIPOTONIA, which was used in it, that the
Text is to be read, They had by the Suffrages of the
People, created them Elders in every Church. The
Apostles only Præsided, and the People under
their Conduct Elected. The taking away of this
Privilege from the People, is by Calvin justly cal-
led, Impia Ecclesiae Spoliatio; A Spoil impiety com-
mited on the Church of GOD. Yea, Our Eng-
lis
lish Bibles themselves, until they had undergone Episcopal Correction, at this Text, put in the Words, By Election; and the Margin had this Note; The Apostles did not thrust Pastors into the Church, thro' a Lordly Superiority, but chose and placed them by the Voice of the Congregation. All Antiquity confesses the Part which the People had in the Choice of their Pastors. The Emperor Constantine, writing to those of Nicomedia, could say to them, That it was in their Power, to make Choice of what Pastor they pleased; and it freely depended on Their Judgment. And the Council of Chalcodon, speaking of the Church at Ephesus, could say, That such a Bishop should be given them, as should be elected by the Consent of those whom he was to feed. Yea, this Right was most notoriously claimed by the, Plebs obsequens Praecepta Dominis, et Deum metuens, the godly People, in the Cyprianic Age; It was then Incontestibly allowed, Plebs ipsa maxime habeat Potestatem, vel eligendi dignos Sacerdotis, vel indignos recusandi! The Power of Electing and of Rejecting their Pastors, let the People have it.

We all know, what Confessions of this Matter, the Protestants in defending the Reformation, find themselves compelled unto.

But, no Wonder! When Father Paul himself, in his Treatise, Of Beneficiary Matters, expressly says; 'Pope Leo shews amply, that the Ordination of a Bishop could not be Lawful or Valid, which was not Requir'd by the People, and Approv'd by them; which is said by all the Saints of those Times; and St. Gregory thought Constance could not be consecrated Bishop of Milan, be-
ing Elected by the Clergy, without the Consent of the Citizens, who by reason of Persecution retired to Genoa; and he prevailed, that they should be first sent unto, to know their Will; A Thing worthy to be noted in our Days, where that Election is declared to be Illegitimate and Null, in which the People have any Share. Thus, (a, Rara Avis in Terris!) An Honest Romanist. Even in Rome itself, the People Elected their Bishop, until the Twelfth Century. And a Council in the middle of the Seventh Century, makes the Ordination of a Bishop to be Void, where he is not Elected by the People. No wonder, that Protestants, and especially New-English Ones, lay so much Stress on the Choice which a Church makes of a Pastor. Even Bzovinus the Jesuite, gives diverse Reasons, why the Popular Election of Ministers continued for many Ages, and even to the Days of Charlemaign; One is, That Pastor and People may have a Due Love to one another. Yea, Upon quoting an Order of a Council at Rome, Ab omni Ecclesiae eligatur consecrandus Episcopus, and an Order of another Council at Clermont, Episcopus vnumium consecrandat Elezione, a Learned and Worthy Presbyterian (Mr. Lauder) of Scotland, carries his Remark so far, as to say, 'Hence it is evident, That Persons are Constituted or made Bishops, by the Election of the People, and not by Ordination which is performed by the Bishops.

§. 9 Their Suffrage being then given the Moderator turns to the Person, whose Ordination is now carrying on; signifying, 'That since he observes the Call unto the Ministry of the Gospel, and
unto the Pastoral Charge of the Flock in this
Place, which has been given him, it remains
for him to declare his Acceptance of it! The
Expectant (whom in the French Reformed Chur-
ches they called, The Proposan,) hereupon turns
himself to the Assembly with a Declaration of
this Importance; 'That with an humble Reli-
ance on the Glorious Head of the Church,
for His Gracious Assittances, he does accept
of the Work, and Charge to which he is invit-
ed; Requesting the Prayers of all Good Men
that he may obtain the Mercy to be found Faith-
ful unto the Lord, and unto His People.

The Moderator now goes on to say, that such
and such Persons having been desired to join in
the Solemn Imposition of Hands, on the Person
who is now to be set apart, for the Special Ser-
vice of the Sanctuary, they shall proceed unto
it.

Dioscorus the Bishop of Alexandria, was ordain-
ed by no more than Two Persons; nevertheless,
the Council of Calcedon owned him, and fre-
quently termed him, The most Reverend. The
odd Ordination of Evagrius, we say nothing of.

The Churches of New-England, have not yet
limited any Number, as necessary to this Action;
though rarely fewer than Three, have been em-
ployed on this Occasion.

They then laying their Hands on his Head, He
who was chosen to that Service, makes an ar-
dent Prayer unto the Glorious GOD; particular-
ly, Acknowledging the Glories of the enthroned
JESUS,
Jesus, and the Great Things done for and in the Church, by that Prophet, and Priest, and King thereof; and Petitioning the Lord now to accept that Servant of His which is here set apart for the special Service of His Gospel and Kingdom in the World.

The Prayer being finished, he proceeds, (Their Hands continuing still imposed,) with a Speech unto the Person under their Ordination, which is a most solemn and awful Charge unto him faithfully to attend the Duties of his Ministry: In some such Terms as these.

"Whereas you, on whom we now, to declare so much, do Impose our Hands, are called unto the Work of the Evangelical Ministry in the Church of the Living GOD, and unto the Office of a Pastor in the Particular Church of the Lord, with which we are now assembled; we do now introduce you into that awful Station. We therefore charge you, before the Great GOD, and our SAVIOUR the Glorious Head of the CHURCH, That you take heed unto the Ministry which you have Received from the Lord, plainly, and faithfully, and watchfully to fulfil it, and as one that must give up an Account unto Him; That you feed the whole Flock whereof you are now made an Overseer; and therein study to shew yourself approved of GOD, and a Workman that needs not be ashamed; That you Pray without Ceasing, and give yourself to Reading and Meditation, and Preach the Word; Instruct, Reprove, Exhort, with all the Long Suffering that becomes a Servant of GOD; That you administer the Sacraments of the New Covenant; & as
as a Wise and Good Steward of those heavenly Mysteries; That you impartially dispense the Discipline, with which the House of the Lord is to be ordered, and His Kingdom expressed and maintained, making a Difference between the holy and profane: And, That you be an Example of the Believers, in your whole Conversation, with all Piety and Charity, endeavouring to exhibit the Graces of that Lord unto whose peculiar Service you are now devoted. And, If you keep this Charge, We declare unto you, That the Lord of Hosts will give you a Place among His Elect Angels, who doubtless, do now stand by as Witnesses of the solemn Action, wherein we are now engaged; Witnesses to the Bonds and Vows of GOD, which you have now with all possible Solemnity taken upon you; yea, We declare unto you, that if you do this, when the Lord JESUS CHRIST shall appear, you shall appear with Him in Glory; He who is the Chief Shepherd, will then give you a Crown of Glory, that shall never fade away.

Hereupon in another Prayer (Their Hands remaining still imposed) he proceeds to recommend the Person thus ordained, unto the Mercies of the Glorious LORD; Beseeching the Holy Spirit of the Almighty, to possess him, and mightily improve him, and asilf him, and succeed him; and make him Faithful unto the Death; and be also gracious unto the Flock which is now committed unto him.

This being done (and the new Pastor having received Prayers by the Hand, as the Phrase for it was among the Ancients;) The Moderator declares
clares unto the Church, that this Person is now their Pastor; Advising and Exhorting them to acknowledge him as one set over them in the Lord, and esteem him very highly in Love for the sake of his Work, while he Labours among them.

The Moderator then signifies to the Assembly that a certain Minister then present, is chosen by the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, to give in their Name, unto the Person thus ordained, The Right Hand of their Fellowship.

It was required in the Ecclesiastical Discipline of the Protestants in France; The Prayer being ended and the new Pastor standing up, Two Deputies of the Synod or Colloque, shall in the Presence of all the People give him, THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP. So 'tis in the Discipline of their Neighbour Brethren.

The Minister now steps forth, and before the whole Assembly, having spoken what he thinks fit about the Evangelical Affairs of the Churches, he applies himself unto the newly Ordained Person; Telling him in the Name of the Churches, What they Wish, and what they Hope concerning him; and that in Token of their acknowledging him, as a Minister of the Gospel regularly ordained, and of their Satisfaction in the Proceedings of the Church, which have thus invited him unto the Exercise of the Ministry, he does now give him the Right Hand of Fellowship: (and so he gives him his Right Hand:) Even as James, and Peter, and John of old, unto Paul and Barnabas; owning a Fellowship in the Service of the Lord.
The Speeches on these Occasions, are now usually Concise and Short. But formerly, they were sometimes Ample and Copious. Yea, several such Speeches have been preserved in our Printed Monuments.

That this Action may be illustrated, here shall be one Instance given of such more extended Speeches; and the rather because of some Illustrations upon the Affairs of the Churches contained in it.

The Churches of New-England, tho' in their Congregational Constitution, they do the most nearly of any answer the Primitive, (which are now proved for to have been such beyond all Contestation,) yet from the very Beginning have renounced the Name of Independent; and have justly and wisely declared against such an Independency, as would leave them Unrelated to each other, and Unconcerned in each others Interests. Every particular Church is to consider it self as a part of the Catholic, and owes a Duty to the whole Visible Church of our Lord in the World. Our Churches therefore are Consociated for mutual Communion, and mutual Assistance, and have so much Dependence on one another, that in Things of a more General Importance, and in such Things as may Affect the Vicinity; they abhor to Act alone. Upon that Passage in the Epistle to the Romans, The Churches of Christ salute you, I remember, that not only our great Calvin observes, The Holy Spirit would mutuo Amoris nexus devincire, bind the Churches of the Lord fast to one another in the Bonds of Love: But also Grotius himself has
has this Note, The Communion to be maintained between particular Churches, is here intimated and animated.

One special and singular Occasion for this Communion of Churches, is when a Pastor is ordained in any of them; one for whom the Acknowledgments, due to such an one, are expected from All the Churches in the Neighbourhood.

In Pursuance of this Intention, the Delegates of the Neighbouring Churches which were addressed for their Countenance to the present Action, have commanded the unworthiest of their Number, in their Name, to express their Fellowship, with this Church of the Lord, on the acceptable Occasion that is now before us.

It is not enough to bear me out in the Action which I am now called unto, That there is the same Action done, among our Brethren in the Reformed Churches of Europe; They are Scriptural Precepts or Patterns, from which we are to fetch our Warrant for what we do. And, O Churches of the Lord, Your Beauty and Safety will be in keeping forever close to such a Warrant in all your Administrations! 'Tis in the sacred Scriptures that we find the Ministers of GOD, giving the Right Hand of Fellowship to one another, owning their Fellowship in the Service of our Saviour, when they perceived the Grace that was given to them.

In the Name of the Churches who have done me the Honour, to employ me in expressing their Sentiments on the present Occasion, I now declare, That we have an abundant Satisfaction
tisfaction in the Choice which this Church has made of the Pastor whom we have now seen ordained; And that we shall be ready to Assist and Strengthen this Holy Flock of the Lord, and this their Shepherd, unto the best of our Capacity, on all Occasions. I declare that we Accept the Person thus ordained, as one regularly brought into the Pastoral Character; one that has the Legitimate Vocation and Investiture of a Minister of the Gospel. And since the Scriptures of the New-Testament, have so evidently asserted, the Validity of an Ordination by the Hands of the Presbytery, and informed us of no Order in the Church superiour to it; since the Catalogus Testium Veritatis, as I may call it, or the Testimony of the Faithful in all Ages, has afforded such a Cloud of Witnesses unto the Truth of this Assertion; and since I cannot understand, that there are any Churches in the whole Continent of Europe, I say, I know not of any Protestant and Reformed Churches in all the Continent of Europe, which do not subsist upon an Ordination, from an Order not superiour unto that of our Pastors; I know not why we should be so Unwise, not to say, profane, as to confess the least shadow of a Reason, Why the Validity of our Ordination should be questioned.

But then, I am to declare what we Desire for, and what we Expect from the Person, whose Ordination to the Evangelical Ministry has been thus far proceeded in.

Syr, 'Tis our Hope, that you will in the Discharge of your Ministry, study to Approve yourself a Workman that need not be ashamed; Be
an hard Student at home; and a good Steward abroad; that you will have such a Delight in your Work, as an excellent Person once unjustly silenced from his Work, had for his, when he could say, No King ever swayed a Royal Scepter, with such Pleasure, as I have in Preaching the Gospel of my Glorious Lord: But then, That you will carry on your Work in such a Holy, Devout, Experimental Manner, as has been observed of several famous Ministers of whom 'tis recorded, That they never durst Preach any Sermon unto others, until they had first sensibly got some good by it themselves. May you, Syr, particularly receive your Burdens (as the Camels do) upon your Knees; and keep always in the Praying Posture that you may be carried thro' them. 'Tis our Hope, that in your Ministry, yea, and in your whole Behaviour, you will have your Eye upon a Glorious CHRIST continually, and be a Star always leading your Neighbours unto Him. You will observe the Description once given of one, for whom a Preferment was Designed, Nihil ardet, nihil appetit, nihil somniat praeter JESUM CHRISTUM: To know, and serve, and Resemble a precious CHRIST will be the Top of your Ambition. 'Tis our Hope, That you will extend your Pastoral Cares with most engaging Adaptations, to every part of your Flock, but very particularly the Young People in it; Instruct them, Advise them, lay the Charges of GOD upon them, and with irresistible Importunity perswade 'em to Early Piety; Be earnest with them, and never satisfied until you see them come to Religion in earnest.
I will add but one Word more. The Churches of the Neighbourhood hope it of you, That you will be Faithful to their True and Best Interests; That is to say, That you do your part for the preserving them, upon the Glorious Foundations of Conformity to the Laws of our Saviour, which was the professed End of these Plantations. A New Meeting-House erected by a Church of our Brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, had those Words engraven on the Walls of it; Built not for a Faction, nor a Party, but for promoting Faith and Repentance, in Communion with all that Love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity. It is the Glory our Churches, that this noble Motto belongs to them, Not for a Faction or a Party, but for promoting Faith and Repentance, in Communion with all the true Lovers of our Saviour. And the Sentence of a Worthy Man, who walked in our Way, expresses the Spirit which our Christians generally make Profession of; I will be one with every one, that is one with Christ. Such the Terms of their Communion, that we see godly Presbyterians, Independents, Episcopalians, Antipaedobaptists, and Lutherans, all in the sweet Harmony of Piety, sitting together at the same Table of the Lord in them. Nevertheless they think it their Duty, and yours too, Sir, to be steadfast in that scriptural Purity, wherein we shall express our Loyalty and Chastity to the Glorious LORD who is our Lawgiver; and who continues His Favour to them that Love Him, and keep the Second with the Rest of His Commandments.
In Token hereof, I now give you, Syr, The Right Hand of our Fellowship; —— And at the same time when we take you into ours, we carry you to him who holds the Stars in His Right Hand; There we put you; There we leave you; There we hope you will find a Crown of Life laid up for you, which the Lord at His appearing will give to them that Serve Him.

In the famous and holy Churches of Bohemia, the Minister at his Ordination, had no sooner given his Oath unto God and the Church, to persevere in the Duties of his Ministry, but the Ordainer called for the Seventeenth Chapter of John to be read, saying, That your Faith of Help from Heaven may be confirmed, hear your Eternal High Priest thus praying for you! And as the Historian says, Raro absque Lachrymis auditor. Syr, Let the Seventeenth Chapter of John, be now your Consolation, and let the Assurances it gives you fill you with Tears of Joy.

It was an Article given in the Charge to Ministers in ancient Ordinations, Think on Eternity, Think on Eternity! Be faithful, Syr, and then know that you have before you an happy Eternity. When your Great Master shall bring you to walk with those who stand by, even the Elect Angels who stand by as Witnesses of what is done this Day, and of the Charge which you have this Day received, you will not repent of your Laborious and Assiduous Endeavours to serve His Kingdom in the World: You shall receive sufficient and Eternal Recompences.
But our Fellowship is extended, and must accordingly be expressed, unto the Flock, which now see ordained for them the Pastor which they have Elected.

You see, My Brethren, the Person to whom you are now to pay the Respect that is due unto your Pastor; and we hope his Conduct will be such as to deserve it. What that Respect is, you need no other Monitor to inform you, after you have read, 1 Thes. V. 12, 13. We beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; & to esteem them very highly in Love, for the sake of the Work they do. Yea, The common Rules of Reason, and of Conscience, will soon lead you to your Duty, if you will but hearken to the Dictates. This Pastor is yours; His Time is yours; his Strength is yours; his Talents are yours; his very Life itself is yours. He must Live with you; and if his Master call him, he must Dy for you. Do you now consider, Syrs, what you owe to him! Won't you Love him, and Prize him, and Pray for him, and Support him? He will meet with Temptations know from other Quarters; I beseech you, let there be nothing in your Carriage towards him, that shall add unto his Temptations, and grievously discourage him. You will in this Matter find a sweet Reciprocation of Benefits. The more Good you Get by him, the more you will Do for him. And the more you Do for him, the more Good you will Get by him. Yea, GOD will reward your Kindness to him with such Spiritual Blessings, of Souls thriving under his Ministry, as will carry rich
rich Compensations with them. Syrs, This is 
he, from whose Ministry you look to be pre-
pared and ripened for the Heavenly World,
and see your Children brought thither after you;
And O! the Satisfactions with which you will 
meet each other in that Glorious World; when 
you shall say, Great GOD, I bless thee that ever 
I saw the Face and heard the Voice of this thy Ser-
vant; And he shall say; My GOD, I bless thee 
for all the Good, which thou didst employ me to do 
for these thy Chosen Ones! A Satisfaction and a 
Consolation, beyond what any Tongue may 
declare, or any Heart conceive!

All this is done, as the Reporter of the like 
Usages among the more ancient Churches in 
Europe, expresses it, Spectante et plerunque illacry-
mente populo; before a Bochim of well-affected 
Christians.

A Pertinent Psalm (such as the XXIII; or 
part of the LXVIII; or part of the CXXXII.) 
is now sung; appointed by the new Pastor; who 
then pronounces the usual Blessing with which 
the Assembly is dismissed.

The Council with other Strangers of Note re-
tire, according to a Direction then given; where 
(to use the Words of the Bohemian Discipline) 
Caenatur modestè, cum Timore Domini, piis et amicis 
Colloquis.

For these things the Churches of New-Eng-
land have no Forms among them; and being 
well established in the Things they find the leids 
want of any Forms. They are instructed & united 
in the Substance, and their not being tied unto 
Forms,
Forms, does, but give them the Delight of the more Variety, in Expressions and in Circumstances. They may say, as Comenius of the Rites in the Bohemian Churches*. If we should only recite prescribed Forms, what would there be to excite Attention? We are free, to stir up Zeal, by varying upon Occasion, with Treasures taken out of the Holy Scriptures; whence it comes to pass, that the pious Auditors continually find new Affections raised in their Hearts, when they are present at the Transactions among us.

§ 10. In some Churches of the Reformation (bordering upon Switzerland) the People, after the public Performances of a Candidate have recommended him to them, Chuse him for their Pastor; Whereupon the Minister only preaches an Inauguration-Sermon, and so without any further Ceremonies of Ordination, goes on with the Exercise of his Ministry. 'Tis not so in the Churches of New-England; Except a Person has been once already ordained. But in this Case, a Minister (suppose Removing from a Church here, or in some other Country, where he has been already ordained) being Elected and Invited unto the Pastoral Charge in any of these Churches, a Day of Prayer is kept, and the Choice renewed, and the Charge accepted, in the Presence of

* Si præscripta tantum recitantur semper, quid eit quod attentionem excitet? Liberum est apud nos, quicquid ad excitatum Zelum faciat, juxta Occasionum Varietatem, e Sapientiæ Mystice Thesauris depromptum adhibere. Unde sit, ut sine novo Cordis Affectu, factis Mysterioris vix unquam intersint pii Auditores. H Delegates
Delegates from other Churches: And no further Imposition of Hands is used for his Instalment.

§. 11. Sometimes it has fallen out, that in some of the distant Provinces and Plantations, destitute of Ordainers, a godly People associating for the Worship of GOD our Saviour, have signified unto some of the Pastors in this Country, That they Desire such a Person (as they mention) to be ordained here, and sent from hence unto them. The Pastors thus applied unto, have here called a public Assembly, and have in their Presence given this Person an Opportunity publicly, and with all due Solemnity, to declare his Accepting the Pastoral Care of the Flock that have sent for him: And so they have Ordained him: and sent him away with proper Testimonials.

ARTICLE III.

The Usual Services which every Lord's Day calleth for.

§. 1. A Church is thus furnished with a Pastor; And sometimes with more than one; In which Case, One of them formerly was distinguished by the Name of a Teacher: Tho' in regard of their Work, and their Power, among these Church-
Churches, it has been so much Distinctio sine Differentia, that more lately the Distinction is less regarded. And their being mentioned together, as they are in the sacred Oracles (Eph. IV. 12.) is pleaded for little short of an Identity between them. Let us now see, how he endeavours to irradiate the House of GOD, when he is thus fixed in the Golden Candlestick.

Every LORD's DAY, the Congregation meets twice; and so hath both a Morning and an Evening Sacrifice. These are as Tertullian says of the like in his Time, Dominica Solennia, The Lord's Day Solemnities.

§ 2. As these Churches, have the Incontestible Judgment and Practice of the Primitive; (directed by the Spirit of GOD who calls the first Day of the Jewish Week, Rev. I to The LORD's Day,) harmonizing with them in their Sabbatizing on the Lord's Day; and may say that which Dionysius of Corinth wrote unto the Church of Rome, This Day being the Lord's Day, we keep it Holy. And as their Judgment and Practice is according to that in Clemens of Alexandria; A true Christian according to the Commands of the Gospel, observes the Lord's Day, by casting out all evil Tho'ts, and entertaining all good Ones, glorifying the Resurrection of the Lord on that Day. So they keep up the Term of, The LORD's Day: and look upon it as an abuse to call it, Sunday: Though the Day being the Christian Sabbath, it is as frequently called, The Sabbath, and, The Sabbath Day, among them. There is an unhappy Passage in the Rheumish and Romish Annotations upon the New Testament, concerning the Protestants; While they say,

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say, Ministers, let us say, Priests; when they call it a Communion Table, let us call it an Altar; Let us keep our Old Words, and we shall keep our Old Things. But then, these Rhemish Annotators themselves, condemn the Name of Sunday as Heathenish. The Churches are sensible, That the Pagans first called this Day by the Name of Sunday, and that it was a Stroke of their Idolatry to call it so; it was to express the Dedication of the Day unto the oldest and brightest Idol in the World. Though they let the Planetary Names for the other Days stand in their present Indifference, (however no better a Man than Polydore Virgil complains of that!) nevertheless, they incline to think, that the Third Commandment as well as the Fourth, obliges them to allow unto the Lord’s Day the Name which He has himself challenged for it. They are not ashamed of Confessing their LORD, or of Confessing that this Day belongs to him. 'Tis true, some of the Ancients, as both Justin Martyr and Tertullian, do sometimes in their Apologies, call the Lord’s Day, by the Name of Sunday: But there is this to be Apologized for them, That they directed their Apologies unto the Pagans, who would not have readily understood another Name. And then that the Churches may not be thought more nice than wise in this Matter, they can quote from the great Ambrose a Passage of that Import, The Day which is called The Lord’s Day, in the Church, is called Sunday by the Men of the World. And then the greater Austin hath shown them, That the Manichees, in those Days, rather than the Christians, called the Lord’s Day, by the Name of Sunday;
Sunday: But adds, for our Parts we call it the Lord’s Day, because on it, we Reverence not the Sun, but the Resurrection of the Lord. And they find him elsewhere very earnest for the Heathen Name to be laid aside; saying, ‘Tis a manner of speaking that becomes not a Christian Mouth. They remember also, that Philastrius would have the Use of that Name with Christians reckoned little short of Heretical.

§ 3. The Hours taken for the two Meetings on the Lord’s Day, are such as they Judge may most suit their Edification. Where any Number of the People have their living very remote from the Meeting House, the Time of Intermission between the two Meetings is usually shortned for their sake; and they stay in or near it. But how do they spend this Time? The more faithful and watchful Pastors, are put upon using their best Contrivances, that their Employments may be most agreeable, and most Serviceable to the Interests of Holiness. It has been proposed, That Repetitions of, or Conferences on, the Word of Christ may be some of the Employments.

§ 4. The Pastor (after the Bills which any of the Neighbours put up, desiring a Remembrance in the publick Prayers or Praises, on their Special Occasions, have been Read) begins with PRAYER.

The Holy Man whom Chrysostom counted it his Happiness to hear Praying before Sermon with pertinent Petitions and Thanksgivings, did say nothing (as he says) before these Prayers.
Basil tells, The President, going up to Teach in the Pulpit, first made sure of Prayers, That by the Grace of Christ, the Good Spirit might mercifully direct their Minds in the Way of Peace.

The Martyr Cyprian made Prayers for himself and his Auditors, as well as brought Words which he fetched from the Fountains of the Scripture.

The holy Austin advised all Doctors to pray, before they gave their Tongue the Liberty to preach, and he practiced accordingly.

Thus, 'tis Prayer that begins the publick Exercises in the Churches of New-England.

They have no Liturgy composed for them; and much less have they any imposed on them. The Pastors reckon, that the Representation of their Peoples Condition in Prayers, with fit Expressions of their ownibus, is a necessary Gift and Work of the Evangelical Ministry. They seek the Gift; They do the Work; and with a great Variety (ordinarily) every Lord's Day, they present before the Lord, the Condition of their Congregations in their Adapted Supplications. In these their Supplications, when they have acknowledged the Glorious Perfections of the Infinite GOD, and mentioned the Spiritual Blessings which the Covenant of Grace invites them to take notice of, and which perhaps the Subject they are anon to handle does lay before their more particular Notice, they pass on to Intercession and giving of Thanks for all Men; For Kings and for all in Authority, and for others, and every thing, as the Matter may require. It seems evident unto them, That the Praying in (or by) the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the sacred Oracles, was not merely a Gift Miracu-
Miraculous and Extraordinary, or a thing to cease in after Ages; Because the Apostle exhorts All Christians to exercise it; which how could they do, if they had it not? Or, if they all might have it, how was it Miraculous and Extraordinary? Our Pastors by blowing up the Flame of the Gift, attain to such Measures of it, that their Flocks apprehend a Liturgy would be a sensible Injury unto them. Nor are there known many Instances among them, like those which Austin mentions in his Time; Aliquos Antistites et Ministros Ecclesiae, cum Barbarismus et Solacismus Deum invocare. The notable and expressive Words dropt from the Pen of the Marquess of Halifax (which noble Person was little enough in Danger of being taken for a New English Puritan) have been read among them; There may be too great a Restraint put upon Men, whom GOD and Nature hath distinguished by blessing them with an Happy Talent, and giving them not only good Sense, but a powerful Utterance too, has enabled them to gush out upon the Attentive Auditory, with a mighty Stream of Devout and Unaffected Eloquence. When a Man so qualified, endued with Learning too, and above all adorned with a good Life, breaks put into a Warm and Well-delivered Prayer before his Sermon, it has the Appearance of a Divine Rapture; He raises and leads the Hearts of the Assembly, in another manner than the most Composed, or best Studied Form of set Words can ever do; and the Pray wee's who serve up all their Sermons with the same Garnishing, would look like so many Statues, or Men
Men of Straw, in the Pulpit, compared with those, who speak with such a powerful Zeal, that Men are tempted at the Moment to believe, Heaven itself has dictated their Words unto them. Certainly good Sense dictated these Words unto that English Nobleman!

The Churches count it good Sense and very Reasonable, That the Ministers of the Gospel who submit their Capacities and Abilities to a due Trial, should enjoy the Liberty, which was confessedly left us by our Saviour, and His Apostles; who never provided any Prayer Book but the Bible for us. They believe, that our Saviour and His Apostles knew the Necessities of His Churches; and they are afraid of any Inventions, that may carry in them the least Reproach upon His Infinite Wisdom. They believe, That our Enthroned JESUS, has promised unto ordinary Officers in His Churches, until the End of the World, a Continuance of sufficient Gifts, to discharge their Offices. They believe, That if there be found a Decay of Gifts in the Churches, the Remedy must be for Christians to return unto Him, who has chastised their Slothfulness, their Carnality, their Apostacy, with a withdraw of His Holy Spirit from them; and not by finding out an unhappy Expedient, that should rather confirm them in the lamentable Condition, into which they are fallen. Reader, This is the New English Puritanism! And as far as they can learn, they have the Practice of the Primitive Churches to countenance them in it. If a Service Book had not been a thing utterly unused in the Prims
primitive Churches, we may be sure Bellarmine would never have confessed*, That in old Times there was no Form of Prayer prescribed, but every one might make what Prayer he pleased, if it were but according to the Analogy of Faith. Chemnitius, and a whole Army of Protestants, have proved, That this Confession of Bellarmine is true, and, Apud veteres Ordinem celebrandi fuisset Arbitrarium. Indeed the Churches of New-England continue to this Day in such Ignorance (the Gentlemen of the Liturgy, will doubtless pity them!) that they know no footsteps of any Service Book, until the Liber Officialis (which also was rather a Directory than a Liturgy) mentioned in the fourth Toletane Council, more than Six Hundred Years after the first Coming of our Saviour. And the first Planters of these Churches hoped, That more than Six Hundred Years will pass, or, as we may rather say, that the Second Coming of our Saviour will arrive, before there will be universally received among them, any Liber Officialis, but the Sacred Scriptures: Nor will they speedily or easily reckon that as a Fault, which Baronius taxes for such an one in old Agobardus, Cum præter Scripturas admittere in sacris Officialis nihil velit; It seems he would have the Bible be the only Service Book. The Prayers offered up in the Churches of New-England, must then have that Account given of them, that Justin Martyr gave of those in the Primitive Churches; The President

* Non fuisset Antiquo tempore, prescriptum certum Canonem Orationum, qui omnes obligaret, sed permittit fuisset, ut quisque companionet Proces, modo ut Analoga essent Fidei.
(or Pastor) sends up to Heaven Prayers and Praises οὐ άνάμιε according to his Ability. And the Pastors herein follow the Directions of Basil, who having said, There are two sorts of Prayer, Thanksgiving and Petition, advises to begin with the former, and therein make Choice, άπό των άγιων θραμβών of Scripture Expressions, and so pass on to the latter οὐ άνάμιε as thou art able.

Indeed, We are not ignorant, That the Pagan of old prayed by a Form. In their publick Prayers, they had a Monitor, who did praise Preces de scripto. Apuleius informs us that among the Graecians, the Monitor, who was called Grammateus, did from a Pulpit, De Libro faustâ precari, pray out of a Book. Pausanias informs us, That the Monitor who was also called άνήπ Μαγός, being a Priest, first put on his sacred Habit, and then said a Prayer έκ βιβλίου out of a Book. Livy informs us, That among the Romans, their extraordinary Ritual was in the Books of the Sibyls, and at other times they had prescribed Prayers, and read their Prayers, e publicus Tabulis out of their Common Prayer Book; and that there was SoIene Precationis Carmen, a Common Prayer Book among them, to preserve their Conformity in Religion. But we have we been told that the Primitive Christians did not pray so. For this they will not insist on Tertullian's famous Passage of their praying sine Monitor, quia de Peclore; tho' even from thence, Bp. Bilson concludes, That free Prayer was then used; and Bp. Hall concludes, That the Mode of Praying was not then under any superiour Injunction: They can give up this Tertullianic Passage, and find άνάμιε.
ology enough to plead for them in others of the Ancients: Particularly, in Origen, who relates, That both in the Græcan and Latin Churches, which divided the whole Evangelized World between them, they prayed every one ΟΣ ΑΥΝΑΤΑΙ, as he was able. Arch-Bishop Usher has given us Assurance, That the Irish Churches for Eleven Hundred Years, and the British and Scotish, if not so long, yet long after Austin, the Monk, retained such a Liberty herein, as was of old enjoyed in all Quarters of the World. Nor did the old Hebrews know any such Thing as a stated Form of Prayer; In these Churches 'tis thought so, because of certain Words which those among them who have consulted R. Bechaj, do from him quote unto them, Thou mayest do well to know (faith the Rabbi) that from the Times of Moses our Master, to the Times of the Great Sanhedrim, there was no usual and equal form of Prayer in Israel; because every one made his Prayer for himself, according to his own Knowledge, and Wisdom, and Utterance. Indeed at this Day, they have a Liturgy: but they have a Tradition that the Christians have theirs from Armillus: that is to say, Every one knows, Who?

Conformable then to the Best Antiquity are the Churches of New-English Nonconformists: The most likely way to bring such a Novelty as a Liturgy into request among them, would be; for the Churches first of all to sink into so bad, a State, as Chrysostom complains they began to be in his Time, Like Houses burnt down, by having taken Fire, with all the Pillars that have supported them; Or, for their Pastors first of all to degene-
rate into the Barbarous Darkness of those Ages, when the Bishops assembled in Councils were so Illiterate, many of them, that they must get another to subscribe their Names for them, with this Confession annexed, Propterea quod Literas igno- rem, and when they ordained (as did Eusebius of Pelusium) ΑΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΙΑΣ ΘΡΕΜΜΑΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΔΑΙ, ΜΟΝΑΣ ΑΛΑΣΤΟΡΑΣ.

§ 5. The former and larger Prayer of the Pastor being finished, then (as Tertullian tells us how in his Time, Psalmi canuntur) a Psalm usually succedds. In some the Assembly being furnished with Psalm-Books, they sing without the stop of Reading between every Line.

But ordinarily the Psalm is read line after line, by him whom the Pastor desires to do that Service; and the People generally sing in such grave Times, as are most usual in the Churches of our Nation. Basil thus mentions the order in the Primitive Churches. First Praying, and then Singing.

It is manifest from Tertullian, that in the Primitive Churches, the Christians used not only Hymns collected out of the sacred Scripture, but such as were conceived and composed by themselves; Ut quisque de Scriptura, vel de proprio Inge- nio poëst, provocatur in medium Deo canere. Socrates mentions the Psalms written by Chrysostom; and Eusebius the Psalms written by Nepos. Nor was it otherwise in the Bohemian Churches, of the later Ages, where they were provided with a Cantional, of above Seven Hundred and Forty sacred
sacred Songs, besides the Davidical Psalms. But
the Churches of New-England admit not into
their Publick Services, any other than the Psalms,
Hymns and Spiritual Songs, of the Old and New Tes-
tament, faithfully translated into English Metre. No,
not so much as the, Te Deum; An Hymn which
indeed is not mentioned by any Author more
Ancient than the Rules which old Benet wrote
for his Monks, about the middle of the Sixth
Century. Nor, The Song of the Three Children, an
Hymn everywhere unmentioned until the Fourth
Council of Toledo, in the Seventh. In this thing
they agree to the Act of the Laodicean Synod,
That no private Psalms be used in the Church. And
they almost confine themselves unto the Limita-
tions enjoined by the first Synod of Bracara, Let
nothing be Sung in the Church, but the Psalms of the
Old Testament.

And if Austin cou'd blame the Donatists, for
leaving of the Psalms of David, and singing Hymns
of their own Invention, 'tis a Point wherein the
Churches of New-England have not been hither-
to blameable. The private Companies & Families
of the faithful among them, indeed have some-
times employed what Versified Portions of Scripture,
and other devout Hymns, they find for their Edifi-
cation.

But when they Bless GOD in their Congregations,
they keep to such Psalms, as a Theodoret mentions,
as preferable in the Judgment of several of the
Ancients, above any others: That is to say, Those

* Extra Psalmos Veteris Testamenti, nihil poeis compositis in
Ecclesiet Psalmatur.
in our sacred Psalter, and some other Poetical Par
graphs, of the sacred Scriptures Verstified.

The first Planters of New-England, were not long without a Version of the Davidical Psalms, and of several other Songs in both Testaments, made by the united Endeavours of several Persons. In this Version, the Poetry may indeed want refin
ing; yet the nearness & closeness of the Translation unto the Original, may make some amends for o
ther Defects. These holy Psalms by some Congregations are sung over in Order as they ly; (at least in the Psalmody for one part of the Day;) And in others, are sung, as the Minister singles them out, for to accommodate the Subjects and the Designs before him. How many may make Austin's Reflection; Quantum flevimus in Hymnis suavis-
nantis Ecclesia!

Their Way of Singing is not with such BOAI
ATAKTOI, disorderly Clamours, as were condemned
by the old Council of Trullo: But in such Grave Tunes, as are most used in our Nation; and it may be hoped, not without some Sense of that which Zonaras gives as the Reason of the Trullan
Condemnation, The Singing of Psalms is a Suppli-
cating of GOD himself, wherein by humble Prayer we beg the Pardon of our Sins. Their Psalmody is nei-
ther set off with the Delicacies, which Austin complained of, nor is it rendred unseemly by the Exorbitances we find rebuked by Chrysostom. It has been commended by Strangers as generally
not worse than what is in many other parts of the World; but rather as being usually according

to Origens Expression, EMMELAE KAI SYMPOONAE Melodiously and Agreeably. However, of later Times they have considerably Recovered it, and Reformed, and Refined it, from some Indecencies, that by length of Time had begun to grow upon it. And more than a Score of Tunes are heard Regularly Sung in their Assemblies.

§. 6. The SERMON follows. The Pastor proceeds to the Service which Athanasius tells Draconicus, the People expected from him, when they elected him to his Bishoprick; Even, To bring Meat out of the Doctrine of the Scriptures. The Churches of New-England, though they use not the Ceremony (which was frequently used of old) of putting the Bible on the Heads of their Ministers in their Ordinations, yet they expect the Heads, and Hearts, and Lips of their Ministers to be employed in opening the Bible unto them. They approve so far of the Ancient Canons, (whereof Herald of Tours made a Capitulary) That Ministers should preach to all the Faithful, the Doctrines of Faith; the Incarnation of JESUS CHRIST, His Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension; The Gift of the Holy Spirit, and the Remission of Sins. They reckon with Gregory (him who has been called, The Great) That for a Bishop to abstain from Preaching is a filthy Shame, and a wicked thing, and a Token of Death. And they are of Jercm's Mind, That no Testimony of his Virtues can profit him, if he be not able to teach the People committed to him.

Accordingly, bespeaking Attention, he reads a Text, longer or shorter, as he pleases, from the sacred Scriptures, and then makes a Sermon (which
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(which the Ancients called a Treatise) thereupon; or, to speak in the Style of Justin Martyr, After the Writings of the Prophets and Apostles, the Minister makes an Oration, wherein he instructs the People, and exhorts them to the Imitation of such excellent Things. Or, in the Style of Origen, 'What is read being Explained, he excites the People to Piety towards the Blessed GOD, and other Virtues, the inseparable Companions of Piety.

In doing this necessary part of his Office, being bound (as Hilary well says) to serve the Church in Preaching the Gospel, he gives himself a Liberty, either to Preach over the Body of Divinity in order, (a Practice of unknown Advantage to the Preacher, as well as to the Hearer) Or, To preach over certain paragraphs of the Bible; Or, To handle such Doctrines and Cases, as he may judge most necessary; Or, To accommodate himself unto Special Occasions, that should have such a Notice taken of them; and particularly the Sacramental. Nor are the Pastors of New-England altogether insensible of what is well observed by our Doctor Owen; 'That the Work of the Ministry is not by any means more evacuated, and rendered ineffectual, than when Ministers have not a certain Design to deal with their Hearers according to what they are persuaded, that their Spiritual State requires. A general Preaching at Random, without a special Scope, directed by such a Persuasion, turns the whole Work, for the most part, both in Preachers, and Hearers, into a useless Formality.
The Traitors (as the Preachers were called) in the Primitive Churches, did often use to sit in their Exercises. Chrysostom we find still doing so; Tho' Gregory Nazianzen rebukes the Heighth and Pride of the Thrones in which the more supercilious Bishops of those Times (and such as the Council of Antioch did rebuke Samosatenus for) did Seat themselves. But in the Churches of New-England, the Pastors do stand when they Preach; and (otherwise than in the Churches of the French Protestants) they stand uncovered.

The Length of a Sermon among them, is very much like the Length of a Traflate among the Ancients. Jerom admonished Austin, 'That he should not be too long, lest the Sermon being too long drawn out, should not be well comprehended.' Gregory Nazianzen remarked 'That Satiety in a Sermon was no less an Enemy to the Ear, than too much meat to the Body. Basil would therefore 'End his Morning Sermon the sooner, lest he should make his Hearers dull against the Evening Assembly. And Chrysostom compared the People to Infants, which were to have their Meat by little and little instilled into them; for which Cause, he says, 'Care was taken that the Teachers should neither weary themselves, nor the Hearers, with a Multitude of Words.' Accordingly they generally limited themselves unto about an Hour. Wherefore both Basil and Austin we find sometimes declining to speak, What they could not finish in the Space of an Hour. And Chrysostom reproved those who thought much to give unto the Lord, One or Two Hours, out of an Hundred.
and Sixty Eight, of which a Week is composed. Nevertheless they did not so limit themselves unto an Hour, but that if they saw Occasion, they would enlarge beyond it, and plead (as Austin did) the Exemple of Paul Preaching till Midnight, for their Preaching a good way into the second Hour. Much hereabouts the Sermons of New-England.

But then the Ancients often took a Liberty for one thing, which would be in these Churches (if ever allowed upon some extraordinary Emergencies unto Persons of extraordinary Abilities,) but rarely approved; They commonly Preached Ex tempore: Thus both Jerom and Ruffin agree concerning many Homilies of Origen, Has Ex tempore in Ecclesia peroravit; and, In auditorio Ecclesiae Ex tempore, non tam Explanations quam Edifications intentione perorata sunt. And all that we have now of Cyril of Jerusalem, are, as Vossius observes, Catecheses \(\Sigma\Xi\E\D\I\A\S\O\E\I\E\S\A\S\), extemporales. Thus we find some of them, like Nazianzen, Preaching from the Psalm which happened to be sung before the Sermon. And Flavianus advised Chrysostom, To use an extemporary faculty in preaching. In Compliance with which Advice, Georgius Alexandrinus, writing his Life, tells us, that the People saw him sometimes \(\A\Y\T\O\S\Xi\E\D\I\O\S\ O\M\I\A\N\O\N\A\), Ex Tempore preaching unto them. And tho’ Atticus had not the like Accomplishments of his Predecessor Chrysostom, yet Socrates tells us, that by Labour and Practice, he also attained unto the Faculty of delivering himself ex Tempore unto his Auditory. Jerom, ’tis true, was no constant Preacher, but several of his Discourses now in our
our Hands, were as himself tells us, *Ex tempore* Dictationes, taken in short Hand; And his Interpretation of the Three Books of Solomon, was Tridui Opus dispatched in three Days time. Augustin likewise, as Erasmus observes, used Extemporalis Dictione, in his Preaching; and he judges this Father more excellent in his Extemporal Discourses than in his Elaborate; as if he had been what the Historian says of Tiberius, *Ex tempore quin a Cura praebantior.* Firmus the Manichee was converted by one of those Discourses, and the World had not now enjoyed them, if they had not been taken, *Per notarios ex Ore Lequentis.* A Faculty of Preaching with little Study, has been by too many it may be endeavoured in the Churches of New-England; and there have been diverse Temptations leading to it. But well studied Sermons are those which among Judicious Christians in these Churches find the best Acceptance, and are the best esteemed: The Churches do not ordinarily reckon it a Commendation for their Ministers, *e Manibus Concipientem excutere.* If they hear of Ministers boasting that they have been in their Studies, only a few Hours on a Saturday, or so, they reckon that such Persons rather Glory in their shame. Sudden Sermons, they may sometimes admire from their accomplished Ministers, when the suddenness has not been a chosen Circumstance; But as one of old, when it was objected against his publick Speeches (in Matters of less Moment than the Salvation of Souls) That they were studied, replied, 'I should blush at the Incivility of treating so great and wise a People, with any thing but what shall

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be studied*. So the best Ministers of New-England ordinarily would blush to address their Flocks without Præmeditation.

However as the Ancients did not content themselves on the Lord's Days without preaching twice, which diverse Passages in the Homilies of others besides Basil, do demonstrate, no more do the Pastors of these Churches; who, as 'twas said of Basil, by their Sermons, 'Bring first Morning Food, and then Evening Joy to their Hearers; And as Chrysostom speaks, 'Being wearied with the Labours of the Forenoon-Service, reserve the Rest until the Afternoon. Indeed, they do not, as diverse of the Ancients, preach every Day. Austin sometimes did it; Cyprian sometimes did it; Alexander, as Nicephorus affirms, did it. And so did Calvin among the Moderns. Neither the Pastors nor the People, in the Churches of New-England can attend so frequent Opportunities of Publick Preaching. Nevertheless, the frequency of Opportunities to Preach, has been very Great unto some New-English Divines. There have been of them able to speak in Terms like those of Chrysostom; 'I have spoken to Day, and Yester-\or day, and the Day before yesterday, and shall speak To-morrow. They have preached no less than five Days together; yea, more than twice five Days together, and more than once on some of those Days, and unto Great Auditories. And it has been thought by some, that

*Erubesce rerum optimo Jure & tantæ Multitudini consulent diceserem ex tempore.
Preaching often has but the better disposèd them unto often Preaching; As an Oven lately heated, needs less Fuel to heat it over again.

It is well known, how the Custom of Preaching with Notes came to be taken up in our Nation. It was very little Practiced or Approved in This Country, till of later Years: But it is now become extremely Fashionable: And no doubt some Sermons are the better Composed for it, tho' it will require good Management if they be not the less affecting. Indeed, it is no new Thing, for as eloquent Speakers as Augustus himself, (who began the Custom) to have Minutes of their Speeches before them: And Cicero himself did sometimes, De Scripto dicere. Yea, Pliny tells us, Orationes, et nosvi quidam, et Gracci Leésiaturum. There are Ministers in the Country, who still Preach without Notes before them; and their Performances are justly and greatly esteemed. But, — Apparent Rari — And many Ministers who have their Notes before them, yet speak with so much Vigour and Fervour, that their Hearers do not think themselves unspoken to. The Severity of some Foreign Churches utterly Forbidding all preaching with Notes, is not exercised in the Churches of New-England. And yet it seems to be generally wished, That the Preachers would keep to such a middle Way in it, as not thereby to lose or blunt, the Vivacity of their Delivery; but, as it has been sometimes express'd, Cast their Eye upon the Quiver, for the Arrow to be fetched from thence, and yet not keep it entirely fixed on the Quiver, all the while the Arrow is delivering.

§ 7: The
§ 7. The *Sermon* being finished, the *Pastor* makes a *shorter Prayer*, wherein he recommends the *Sermon*, and the principal *Documents* of it, unto the *Operations* of the *Holy Spirit* for the *effectual Applications* thereof unto the *Hearts* of the *People*.

Then, (at least in the *Afternoon*) there is another *Psalm sung*.

In some of the *Congregations*, they have also on the *Afternoon* of the *Lord's Day*, before the latter *Psalm*, a *COLLECTION*, according to the *Apostolical Direction*, 1 Cor. XVI. 2. *Upon the first Day of the Week*, let every one of you, *lay by him* in *Store*, as *GOD has prospered* him. The *Primitive Churches* also did it, in the *Days* of *Justin Martyr*, and of *Tertullian*, as the *Writings* of those, and others in that *Age*, assure us. And the *Ecclesiastical Expences* of the Churches, are *defrayed*, or at least, *assisted*, out of these *Contributions*.

§ 8. In the *Churches* of *New-England*, it would be thought a *Disorderly thing*, if in the *Time* of the *publick Service*, any *Gentleman* should get a *Minister*, to *carry on* a *private Service* in his *Family*, or with any of the *Neighbourhood*.

It may be added, That tho’ the *Communicants* in the Churches of *New-England* are not constantly tied unto their own *Pastors*, yet if they should not *Ordinarily* hear them, when they are able to do it, the *Omission* would be thought a *Disorder*.

Moreover, That *Custom* of Persons *falling to* their *Private Prayers* at their *first coming into*
the Assembly, in the time of publick Worship, is in these Churches, neither practiced, nor approved. So far as it openly proclaims a secret and singular Devotion, it is condemned as a Pharisaical Oftentation. So far as the Holiness of Places is the Ground therein gone upon, the Principle is disowned. So far as it interferes with other Ordinances then managing, it is accounted such a Diversion as puts a Disrespect upon them. It is reckoned a Vanity, that a Christian cannot have his Devout Ejaculations, without signalizing them unto the Notice of his Neighbours. And they Concur with what our Clarkson and other Divines have offered; That this is against the Apostles Rule for the Regulation of publick Assemblies, in 1 Cor. XIV. 40. Let all things be done decently and in order.

§. 9. These are the more stated Exercises of every Lord's Day, (and the Lectures on the Week Days imitate them) in the Churches of New-England. When these are dispatched, the Pastor dismisses the Congregation with pronouncing a Benediction; wishing, The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of GOD, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit to be with them all. 'Tis often prefixed with, Blessed are all they that hear the Word of GOD and keep it. Sometimes there is also specified the Obedience of Faith, unto the main Doctrine insisted on in the foregoing Sermon.

§. 10. It has been enquired by many excellent Persons; Whether the publick Reading of the whole Scripture in order, to our Congregations without preach-
ing thereon, be not an Ordinance, the Omission whereof is culpable among us? It must be confessed, That the Practice has not been so generally taken up, as many have wished for. And that the thing may be fairly represented, Those who have hitherto continued in the Omission have pleaded; That they could not at present see either Precept or Pattern for the Reading of the Scriptures in our Churches, without Exposition upon it; nor does it seem to belong unto the Work of a Pastor: That, in every Sermon duly composed, a considerable Portion of the Scripture is read, with the Advantage of its being referred unto its Place and Use in Divinity: That, for those who are Gifted that way to go over greater or lesser Paragraphs of Scripture, with Expository Lectures upon them, is a thing much to be desired: but the Gifts of some Persons may be more profitably employed in another Way handling the Word of GOD: That, there are some Chapters of the Scripture, which perhaps may not be so proper to be read publicly in our Congregations; And finally, That we should be wary, how we introduce into the Congregations an Exercise which may at all invite private Christians, to neglect any of their Duties in their private Families; whereof that of Reading the Scriptures is one.

On the other side, There is no Name held in greater Veneration, than that of the Memorable JOHN COTTON, in the Churches of New-England, which yet will not build on any Foundation but that of the APOSTLES. This eminent
neht Person, in a Book about Singing of Psalm, printed in the Year, 1647, over and over again, does insist upon it. That the very Reading of the Scriptures, tends to Edification, as being an Ordinance of GOD; and the Expounding and Applying of them by the Spiritual Gifts of Ministers, is another Ordinance. He does insist upon it, The very Reading of them is an Ordinance of GOD; and no Ordinance of GOD is empty, and beggarly and destitute of the Spirit: which is the Vanity of Men's Traditions, and may not be imputed to any of GOD's Ordinances. Deut. XXXI. 11, 12, 13. XXVII. 14. to 26.

Accordingly the Custom of Reading the Scripture without Explication and Exhortation upon it, is practised in many of our Churches. They look upon such an Exercise of Piety, to be an Ordinance of GOD, and a proper Expression of the Respect which we owe unto His Lively Oracles; In our Confession of Faith also, The Reading of the Scriptures is distinctly mentioned, with, Preaching and Hearing the Word of GOD, as parts of Religious Worship; And they think, they cannot without it, vindicate our Churches from the Imputation, which some who differ from them will cast upon them for the Omission of it.

It is also true, That in many of the Reformed Churches, the Work of Reading is not assigned unto the Pastors; They as well as the Primitive, have other, to be the Readers. But none of our Pastors think themselves too considerable, to be the Readers of the Letters which our Glorious LORD, has in His Bible sent unto His Creatures.

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The Churches which yet omit this Exercise, do speak of it still with a becoming Reverence; but many seem to wish, that it may have an Exposition or Application still attending of it. They have been informed by Justin Martyr, That in the Christian Assemblies of the Primitive Times, Interpretation usually followed upon Reading the Scriptures. In Origen's Time, we find the Sermons were Explanations of the ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑΤΑ, or, the Readings. Tho' in Cyprian's Time, There was a Reader distinct from the Presbyter, yet from the Name of Doctor Audientium then put upon him, some learned Men conclude, that even he did more than barely Read. Tho' in Austin's Time, they commonly had Three Lessons, yet we find the Minister still Preached upon them: for which Cause we find some Sermons of his beginning, Tres hab Lectiones quas audivistis. A valuable Presbyterian, Mr. Boyle has let fall this Passage; 'For laying aside the Exposition of what is Read, I would Recommend the excellent Words of Austin, (on 1 Johan.) where Speaking of the Scripture, he says, Quare legitur? si filebitur; aut quare auditur? si non exponitur? And those of Bernard, (Temp. 55.) 'Non tradit Mater parvulo Nucem integrum, sed frangit eam et Nucleum porrigit. The Scriptures of both Testaments do likewise furnish us with Intimations of something that looked that Way, in the Jewish Assemblies, (Neh: VIII. 8. Luk. IV. 16, 12. Acts XIII. 15. and XV. 21.) The Pentateuch was divided into fifty four Parashoth, or Sections, which they Read over in the Synagogue every Year; and when Antiochus forbad the Reading of the Law,
Law, they read the like sections of the Prophets; after which it became customary to read both together. But Philo tells us, when one of the Elders does read the Law, καθ’ ἐκάστον ἐσθισται, he expounds it severally. Yea, as long ago as the Babylonish Captivity, this was unquestionably one Exercise in the Holy Convocation every Sabbath Day, that the Levites were to teach the People the (Meaning of the) Law, as well as put Incense upon the Altar, and they were to instruct Israel in the Word of God. The Gemara has an Observation, that Reading was no Ministry. But indeed the Interpretation which after the Captivity, they insisted on, seems to be chiefly intended, for the rendering of the Scripture in the Language then vulgarly used among them; however not only so.

The Result of these Considerations is, that in many Churches, the reading of Chapters in Course, with a short Prayer for a Blessing on it, is one of the Publick Exercises; nor is any offence taken in others at them for doing so. 'Tis also by very many of the Pastors wished, that more of the Scriptures were publicly Read, with all due due Solemnity in their Assembly: Yea, the Practice obtains more and more; the most of the Pastors appear disposed for it. Be sure, to put the Term of dumb Reading, on the Reading of the Scriptures without an Expository Operation of the Reader upon it, is esteemed improper and indecent. If there be not a perfect Harmony in the Churches about the Manner of performing this Duty, however there is a perfect Charity; it breeds
breeds no Differences. Yea, That the Scriptures be publickly Read, in some sense, it may be said, They are all Agreed.

ARTICLE IV.
The Administration of the Sacred Baptism.

§ 1. IN the Churches of New-England, as well as in all other well ordered Churches, the Pastors or Teachers, (and they only) administer the Seals of the New Covenant, unto those who do upon the Preaching of the Gospel accept thereof; And the Lord's Day is the usual Time for their discharging this Part of their Stewardship. So in the Days of Cyprian, we read, Non nisi in Ecclesia praepositis licuit baptizare.

§ 2. The Principle which the Churches do generally go upon, has been thus declared. 'The Laws by which our SAVIOUR will have His Kingdom to be governed, are administered in the Corporations thereof. Particular Churches of Believers, associating to Worship our SAVIOUR in all His Ordinances, when furnished with Pastors, are such Corporations. But the Great KING has many Subjects in His Visible State, as well as the Kingdom of England.'
Kingdom, who are not yet constituent Members of the Corporations. They who openly profess the Christian Religion, and make Choice of the True GOD, for Their GOD, and submit unto the Laws of His Kingdom, and have nothing in their Conversation that may give a notorious Contradiction to this Profession; These are to be owned as, The People of GOD. We durst not say, There is no Difference between These and Pagans. We cannot but own These, for Subjects in the Visible Kingdom of our Glorious LORD. We cannot answer it unto GOD, or His People, to deny unto These, and unto the Offspring of these, the Baptism, with which the Subjects of our SAVIOUR, are to be Distinguished and Acknowledged.

There appears a Lively Emblem of this Matter in the Constitution of the English Government. But it has been said, — The Offspring of These. — The First Planters of New-England, having their Eye very much upon the Welfare of their Offspring, it can’t be wondred at, if the Churches are for having their Offspring brought with them into the Covenant of their GOD. They find the Covenant of Grace under the Old Testament, extended unto the Offspring of the Faithful: And they have not yet seen any Scripture in the New to cut them off, or shut them out. No; But the Infants of the Faithful are there called, Holy Ones; And they think, Holy Ones ought to be Baptised, and come under a Baptismal Consecration. They do not know, That our Gracious GOD ever took
took a People into His Covenant, but He took their Offspring with them.

Wherefore,

The BAPTISM of the Lord, is administered in the Churches, not only unto those who actually and publickly give their Consent unto the Covenant of Grace, but also to the Infants of such Visible Believers. They do not think, that in thus practising of Infant Baptism, they can be charged with departing from the Practice of the Primitive Churches. Origen expressly says, Parvuli baptizantur in Remissionem Peccatorum; Little Children are baptized; Even such as he supposes to be, under three or four Years old. The Testimonies of Irenæus and Cyprian, for Infant Baptism are well known. And it is well known that an African Council whereat Threescore and Six Bishops were present, A. C. 254: Considering the Case, Whether Infants might be baptized, before the second or third, or eighth Day, determined the Baptism of Infants to be performed as soon as it was possible to be expected: Baptism they would have observed, Magis circa Infantes ipsos et Recens Natos, rather for new born Infants than for any.

§. 3. But Baptism is here, after this Manner fought for.

The Adult Person, first applying himself to the Pastor, the Pastor examines the Knowledge and the Belief of the Person, and obtains also, a Testimony of his Good Conversation, and there-with perceives the Dispositions of a Saving Faith, at least hopefully begun in him.

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The Person is then publickly propounded by the Pastor in the Congregation; As having offered his Desires to be received into the Covenant, and under the Government of the Lord.

A Week or two after this, if no Scandal be objected, the Pastor publickly mentions it in the Congregation; That such a one is to draw near, and receive what he has desired and sought for.

Whereupon he tenders unto the Person, the Covenant of Grace, in Terms of This Importance. You, Professing a serious Belief of the Christian Religion, as it is contained in the sacred Scriptures, and usually embraced by the Faithful in this Place, (and explained in our well-known Catechism;) do give up your self to GOD, in our Lord JESUS CHRIST; Resolving, with His Help, to conform your Life to the Rules of that Holy Religion, as long as you Live, and Repenting of all things wherein you have transgressed those Rules of Holiness. You give up your self unto the LORD JEHOVAH, who is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and receive Him, as your GOD and Portion. You give up your self unto the Lord JESUS CHRIST, who is the Lord Jehovah, and Rely upon Him as the Head of His People in the Covenant of Grace; and as your Prophet, and Priest, and King for ever. You submit to the Laws of His Kingdom, as they are administered among this His People: And will herewith be at Pains to obtain that further Preparation of the Sanctuary, which may embolden your further Approaches to
to the Enjoyment of GOD in all His Ordinances. [This last Clause is left out, when the Person is presently on the same Day, after his Baptism, to enter further into the Covenant for Admission also to the Holy Table.]

I said,—[with Terms of this Importance] because if in the short Renunciation of the Flesh, and the World, and the Devil, used at Baptism in the Primitive Times, they used such a Variety of Terms, that we can Count more than Twenty several Variations of that short Sentence, which we have met withal in the Writings of the Ancients, there can be no mighty Damage or Danger in it, if the Expressions of this Matter be varied in these Churches; while the Variations are all still with Terms of this Importance.

And now, the Person expressing his Consent hereunto, is qualified for the Baptism of the Lord, both for himself, and for his House.

Thus Justin Martyr informs us, That in his Time, it was expected, That Persons should give good Proofs of their Resolutions to lead a Pious and Religious Life, and protest their Assent and Consent unto all the Christian Verities, e're their Claim to Baptism could be acknowledged.

§ 4. Private Baptism is not used in the Churches of New-England. They agree with the Divines of Leyden, who condemn it as a Disorder, because, Baptismus publici Ministerii, non private. Exhortationis est Appendix. They say with Calvin, 'Since our Baptism has with it our solemn Introduction into Church of GOD,
it should be administered still in an Assembly of the Faithful; to which indeed a Temple is not always necessary. They say with Beza, the taking in, and cutting off a Member of the Church, are to be alike Circumstances in This; that a Church Assembly should be called together for it. But none can say more unto their Mind than Didoeclavius; The Sum of whose Reasoning is this: That the Communion that we maintain with the Universal Church in the Sacrament of Baptism, cannot be regularly expressed, but in an Assembly of some visible particular Church; And since, as Chrysostom says, The Keys of the Sacraments are delivered unto the Church, a Pastor therefore, should make his Dispensation of Baptism in some Church; And since the Sacraments are not only Symbols of Grace exhibited unto us, but also as Aquinas expresses it, Professiones Fidei nostræ coram Mundo, Professions of our Faith before the World, therefore Baptism should have an Open and a Publick Celebration. The Ethiopian Treasurer and the Gaoler were indeed more privately baptised: But it was by extraordinary Officers.

* Imprimis observandum est, cum istud Sacramentum complectatur sacram et solennem Introductiunem in Ecclesiæ Dei, sitque Testimonium Celestis nostri Municipatús, in quem ascribuntur illi, quos Deus adoptat sibi, fas non esse administrare Baptismum, nisi in Cœtu Fidelium; Non quidem ut Templum requisatur, sed ut ubivis Numerus aliquid Fidelium conveniat, qui Ecclesiæ Corpus conficiat.

Par Ratio est Membrum Ecclesiae adjungendi et abscindendi, non nisi convocato Ecclesiæ Cœtu: Privatas Domos non moror, & Ecclesia, i.e. Communis Cœus, in su conveniet.
who were themselves equivalent unto whole Churches; and it was before Churches were yet gathered in the Neighbourhood. Nor can the sacred Ordinance of Baptism so well be preserved from Abuse and Contempt, if it be left unto private Administrations. Wherefore upon the whole, (says Calderwood, and so They generally) Baptism should not be administered any where, but in a publick Church-Assembly †. And the Churches of New-England add, That since, as Churches, they owe special Duties to the Baptiz'd, they think it Reason, that they should see the Baptism.

§. 5. At the Baptism the Pastor begins with a short Prayer, consisting of Passages properly introductory to the Action before him; and particularly supplicating for Assistance and Acceptance, in that solemn Dedication to GOD, which the Person to be baptiz'd is now passing under. It is a little surprizing to read the Liberty which many of the Ancients took, in celebrating this First Sacrament of the New Testament. Some used the Form, I baptize thee; Others, Be thou baptiz'd; Others, This Person, or, Servant of Christ, is baptiz'd. The Latin Churches would use the Term, Tingo, as well as Baptize. Some used the Form, EIE ONOMA, others, EIPI ONOMATOE With Tertullian it was, In Nomen; With Cyprian it was In Nomine; And with some, Th' Name, was quite left out, and it was, Into the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Yea, some

† Baptismus non est Celebrandus, nisi in publico toto Ecclesiae Coetu.
were so faulty, that they did, not expressly Name, every Person in the Trinity: but only the Name of Christ, or of the Lord Jesus, or of the Lord. Basil defended this, by the Plea which Irenæus had used before him, in the Defence of it; That the Name of One is an Acknowledgement of the whole. Agreeably whereunto Theophylact affirms, That he who is baptized into the Name of JESUS CHRIST, is baptized into the Trinity; for the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are not parted. And Ambrose affirms, Qui unum dixit, Trinitatem signavit. Others there were, who tho' they expressed the Three Persons of the Godhead in the Words of our Saviour, yet enlarged upon them. It seems by Justin Martyr, that such Words as these were sometimes used; In the Name of the Father of all things, and of our Lord God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, this washing with Water is performed. And sometimes the latter Clauses were thus varied; In the Name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the Name of the Holy Spirit who by the Prophets foretold all Things, concerning Jesus, be that is to be illuminated is baptized. Briefly, they tho' t a, TAYTON ΠΡΟΣ ΑΙΑΝΟΙΑΝ a Conformity in Sense, to be sufficient; without confining themselves to the Words mentioned (I say mentioned, because Mr. Gillespie will not let me say, prescribed,) by our Saviour.

But in the Churches of New-England such a Liberty is neither practised nor approved. In their Baptisms, the Pastors, pouring of Water with his Hand, on the Face of the Person before him, confines himself to the Words of the Institution.
Prefacing the Christian Name of the Person, [or saying, This Person (or Infant) whose Name is, [or so, ] I Baptize, or, [especially if it be an Adult Person, I baptize thee, ] in [or, into] the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Upon this the Pastor annexes another short Prayer, wherein he commends the Infants; (if they be such) with their Parents, or the Persons baptized, unto the Mercies of God, in the New Covenant, now sealed unto them. He prays for the Mercies of the Covenant; particularly, that Application of the Blood of Sprinkling, and that Effusion of the Spirit of Grace, and that Portion in the Resurrection of the Just, whereof Baptism is to the Faithful, a Token for Good: And such a part in the Heavenly City, as God has prepared for them to whom He will be their God. He subjoins Petitions, that they, (and all) may as they grow up, remember also the Duties of the Covenant. And the Petitions on this Occasion put up for the Young People of the Flock, that they may be mindful of their Baptismal Engagements, and become shining Examples of Early Piety, are sometimes very flaming and Pathetical.

Some few, instead of this latter Prayer, do give the Parents a brief Admonition to bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. Be sure, if an Adult Person be baptized, an Admonition, has been sometimes, thought very agreeably to accompany the latter Prayer.

§ 6. The Rite of Dipping or Plunging is not now used in the Baptisms of any Churches, except...
cept some of the *Antipædobaptist* Way: Though some have used the *Dipping* of the Face. They apprehend, that the Lord has required no more for the External Rite of *Baptism*, than a Sacred *Washing* in the Name of the *Father*, and the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*, and that the *Degree* of this Washing is left unto the Discretion and Conveniency of His People. In *Hot Countries* it might well enough be by *Dipping*; In *Cold ones* *Assuision*, or *Assersion* may be enough; *Dipping* they fear would hardly keep in good Terms with the *Sixth Commandment*, in hazarding the Life of some Disciples; or the *Third*, in expecting of Miracles to keep them alive. The Proof of a *Total Dipping* in the scriptural Examples of *Baptism*, does not appear so plain and full, that they should lay the whole Stress of the Sacrament upon it. What we read of our Saviour at His *Baptism*, is only, that He *went up from the Water*. There must be a *Descent* unto the side of a *River*; And like Solomon crowned by the side of a *River*, our Lord might there have the *Water* poured upon Him, without a compleat *Immersion*. All that can be proved of what passed between the *Evangelist* and the *Ethiopian*, for the *Baptism* of the latter, is that they came to the *Bank* of a *Brook*, which both *Jerom* and *Sandys* represent as a very unlikely one for an *Immersion* to be performed there. Indeed, the *Baptisms* of *John* did require much *Water*; For, while the *Rites of Purification* were continued among the *Jews*, it would have been thought a Scandal for one *Vessel of Water* to have served successively for the *baptizing* of diverse Persons. If it were so, there were occasion
tion of much Water to supply, tho' but a Basin for a Person. And indeed it looks not very probable, that John stood so many whole Days together in the Water, as he must have done, if he dipped all that he baptized in the few Months of his Ministry, which were doubtless many Thousands. Yea, there are some Examples of Baptism, where the probability seems rather on the other side; that there was not an Immersion in it. Especially when we read of whole Households baptized in the Depth of the Night, and at a private House, where 'tis not so easy to suppose a Depth of Water for the Action. It is well known, that the Benefits sealed by Baptism are set forth by Sprinkling. [1 Pet. I. 1. Isai. LII. 15. Ezek. XXXVI. 25.] Now, if the thing signified, be a Sprinkling, what need the Sign be any more than a Sprinkling? And whereas there is a Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we do not read of Men's being dipped into the Holy Spirit, but of the Holy Spirit being poured upon them. The Word Baptize may signify any Washing whatsoever. The Washing of no more than the Hands is called the Baptism of the Man. [Luk. XI. 38. Mar. VII. 4.] And why should not the Washing of the Face be so? Yea, we read, Heb. IX. 10. of Diverse Baptisms. And we are certain, a very great part of them were no more than Sprinklings. And indeed, none but Sprinklings are expressly mentioned in that Context. Such a Mistake it is, to say, that a Sprinkling is not called Baptism in the holy Language. The Holy Spirit expressly calls it so. It refers especially to Numb. VIII. 7. Thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; Sprinkle Water of Purification.
ing upon them. Indeed, we read of being, Buried with Christ in Baptism unto Death. But it is not so much our Baptism as our Mortification, that is to resemble the Burial of our Saviour. We are by Baptism obliged unto a Conformity unto the Death of our Buried JESUS, and unto His Rising again; unto His Death, by our Dying to Sin; unto His Rising again in our Living to GOD. Our Baptism is not so much that Burial, as the Seal of our Obligation to it. Baptism is also a Sacrament that seals the Resurrection of the Faithful from their Graves, wherein we are first buried, as Christ was, and then raised like Him. Here is nothing to Intimate that in Baptism our Bodies must be all under Water. When a Man is buried he does not walk into the Grave himself, nor is he in the least active to put a Leg or a Foot into the Earth. Yea, our Mode of Baptism seems more like to a Burial, than that of Plunging; For the throwing of Water on the Person is more like to the throwing of Earth upon the Dead. Some have apprehended a little Weight in this Consideration. Among the Antipædobaptist Brethren, the Person to be Baptised goes into the Water himself, to a considerable Depth, so that the Administrator does not baptize all that Part of the Body which the Person to be baptised carried into the Water himself. Now no Man does baptise himself; No Action of the Person to be baptised, is any Part of the Baptism. It follows, that the Washing of the Body, but in Part, may be sufficient for the sacred Baptism. And, if the Washing of the Body but in Part, may be sufficient for the sacred Baptism, then the Washing of the
Face, that Nobler and Proper Part, may be sufficient.

It is true; Baptism was often administered in the Primitive Churches by Dipping; Yet it was not seldom administered by Sprinkling; And Cyprian particularly argues very much for the Sufficiency and Validity of such a Baptism.

It may be added, There having been some Insinuations made unto the World, as if the Streets here were crowded with Unbaptized People, because the Churches have not such Terms of Initiation here, as are practised in other Protestant Churches, 'tis to be now declared, that this is a most unaccountable Calumny; for 'tis well known there is not one Person in all the Country free from a scandalous and notorious disqualifying Ignorance and Impiety, but what may repair to some Hundred Ministers in these Colonies and be Baptised.

ARTICLE V.

The Administration of the Holy Supper.

§. 1. THE SUPPER of the Lord is not usually administered in the Churches of New-England, but unto such as appear somewhat Confirmed in the Dispositions and Resolutions of Christi-
Christianity. They consider, That the Churches of our Lord in all Ages, and the greatest Lights in the Churches both Ancient and Modern (except such as have admitted Infants to the Eucharist) have concurred in this Principle, That Baptism is of larger Extent, than the Supper of the Lord, and that many within the Visible Church may have the former for their Children, while they Themselves yet want some Actual Fitness for the latter. It appears that the Baptised of old were Confirmed, before they might partake of the Holy Supper; and none was a ΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ, or Person in full Communion among some of the Primitive Churches, until he had given some Evidence of his being Sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Indeed it might not be altogether as it should be, but so it was, if we be not much mistaken in our Church History; it was no rare thing that not All, it may be not Half, it may be not one Third of them who made a Profession of the Truth, and attended upon the Preaching of the Gospel (many of whom also underwent Martyrdom itself) were admitted as compleat Members of the Church, into all Parts of its Communion; And there were sometimes but little Churches in Places that had many Christians in them.

The Churches of New-England will not be censured for a Novelty of their Discipline, in their Endeavour to have their Communion as it was in Justin Martyr's Time, when the Supper was administered unto no Man, but one that was baptised, and one who Believed the Doctrines of Christianity, &amp; ΒΙΟΥΝΤΙ ΩΣ Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΠΑΡΕΔΟΚΕΝ.
One who lived according to the Laws of our SAVIOUR.

Since the Reformation, 'tis well known, that the most eminent Reformers, not only in their Doctrine asserted, but also in their Practice attempted, a stricter Selection of those that should be admitted unto the 'Lord's Supper, when they have been larger in the point of Baptism; and they went upon this Principle, That not all the baptised Christians, but such as might be reputed able and careful to Examine themselves, and discern the Lord's Body, are to be received unto the Supper of the Lord.

It would fill many Pages, to recite the many Passages, in the Writings of the Reformers, which countenance the Churches of New-England in their Way of a stricter Selection. Two shall supe-
fede all the Rest; The One shall be of a Lutheran. 'Tis Gerhard, who says, ' That not all Christians are to be admitted to the Holy Supper, but according to Paul's Rule, they that Exa-
mine themselves, discern the Lord's Body and shew forth the Lord's Death: All those there-
fore are excluded, who either will not, or can-
ot Examine themselves. The other shall be of a Calvinist; Beza 'tis, who says, ' That no one is to be admitted unto the Lord's Supper, ex-
cept he has one way or other, so given an Acc-
count of his Faith, as that the Pastor may prob-
ably gather, not only that he was born in the Church, but that he is indeed a Christian.

And there are many Passages in the Confessions of the Protestant Churches abroad, which declare for a special Selection of those whom they adm
admit unto the Table of the Lord. The Churches of New-England, have hitherto been thus persuaded; And as the famous Ursinus and Paraeus have taught them to make this Distinction; Great is the Difference between Baptism and the Supper; For Baptism is a Sacrament of Entrance, and Reception into the Church; but the Supper is a Sacrament of continuance in the Church, or a Confirmation of the Reception made before; And Regeneration by the Holy Spirit and Faith, or an Inclination unto Faith and Repentance sufficeth unto Baptism; but in the Supper, it required that they shew forth the Lord's Death, and Examine themselves, whether they have Faith and Repentance; Thus a famous Divine of their own, Mr. Thomas Hooker, has thus expressed their Sense; 'Baptism is the Entrance into Christ's Family; There is much more to be looked at, to make a Person capable of the Supper of the Lord; A Man must be able to Examine himself; He must not only have Grace, but growth of Grace, —— so much — as to search his own Heart; and he must be able to Discern the Lord's Body. If it should be imagined, That I do the part of an Advocate, rather than of an Historian, in this Paragraph, Satisfaction may be had from Reading the Fourth of the Seven famous Propositions, concluded by a Synod of our Churches; 'Adult Persons are not therefore to be admitted into full Communion, meerly because they are and continue Members, [being Baptised in their Infancy] without such further Qualifications as the Word of GOD requireth thereunto. And from Reading the large Defence thereof composed by Mr. Richard Mather N 2
and Mr. Jonathan Mitchel, and approved by no small Assembly of the New English Ministers.

And yet, it must be acknowledged, that a great Part of our Pastors, even of those who can Baptise upon the Qualifications of the Synod, own, they can't see why any Adult Person should be received into the Covenant of GOD and of Grace, to obtain Baptism for themselves or theirs, of whom they cannot say, They shall immediately be welcome to the Table of the Lord, if they desire it; and that it must be owing unto their own declining an immediate Approach unto the Holy and Aweful Table, if it be denied unto them. All turns upon a Visible Conversion to serious PIETY.

§. 2. Accordingly, the Usages of these American Churches, may be truly reported in the Words used by Origen concerning the Primitive; After those that are converted, make such Proficiency that they appear to be sanctified by the Divine Word, and unto the utmost of their Power live in a better Manner, then at length we call them to our Mysteries. Or in those Words with which that Father Vindicates those Churches from the Reproaches of Celsus, about the Qualification of their Communicants; The Christians do ΠΡΟΒΑΣΑΝΙΖΕΙΝ ΤΑΣ ΨΥΧΑΣ exquisitely search the Souls of their Hearers, in order to their Admission to full Communion.

Indeed there is a Variety both of Judgment and Practice in the Churches of New-England upon this Matter; However it produces no troublesome Variance or Contention among them. Some
Some eminent Pastors (and some of their Churches) are of the Apprehension; That the Terms of Communion are an Ordinance of Christ, and must have a Word of Institution to Warrant them. And according to the Gospel, Orthodoxy in the Profession of the Truths of the Christian Religion, under which is comprized a Knowledge of these Truths, and this attended with a Conversation that becomes the Gospel of Christ, is that which is the Ground of reputeing them to be Believers, and Receiving them into our Fellowship; and whatsoever more is required as a Test, is Supra Statutum. Yet there are some things, which though not regularly Required, may without Sin be Complied withal.

Others apprehend, That nothing short of a Probable and Credible Profession of a Justifying Faith, qualifies for the Eucharist; where the Benefits of that Faith are sealed unto us: And, That in many a Man, of a Conversation free from Vice in the Opinion of the Neighbours, a good Examination may render it not probable and credible unto a Rational Charity, that he has yet attained unto a Justifying Faith. And, that therefore the Candidates of the Communion should be Examined, not only about their Knowledge, and their Belief, and a Conversation free from Scandal, but also about their Experimental Piety. Because it appears unto them the Law of Christ, That Communicants at the Table of the Lord, should be such as can and will Examine themselves; The Pastors thus persuaded, that they may do the part of Porters to the House of GOD, Examine those
those that seek Admission into the Particular Churches, and would so have the Holy Table always free to them, Whether they have Examined themselves; and what they find or hope upon their Self-Examination? Indeed the Discipline of the Churches hath (in their Platform) Charitably provided, That the weakest Measure of Faith is to be accepted, in those that Desire to be admitted into the Church; such Charity and Tenderness is to be used, as the weakest Christian if sincere, may not be excluded, or discouraged: Severity of Examination is to be avoided. According to this, that many of those who in their Adult Age, are admitted unto Baptism, do not presently also come unto the Lord's Supper, it seems owing rather to their own choosing to stay till they are more satisfied in their Qualifications, than from the Churches refusing to admit them, should they desire it.

But the Pastor now demands a serious and sensible Answer to some such Questions as these.

'What Education had you in your Younger Years? And (if Religious) what Effect had this Education?

'Have you been thoroughly awakened ever to see the Miserable Condition, which by your Departure from GOD, you are fallen into?

'And, What has been your Course, where your Flight, for Help under these Awakenings?

'What are the Blessings for which you repair to your Admirable SAVIOUR?

'Which Way do you hope to be Justified before the Glorious GOD?
What is the Sanctity, the Purity, the Piety, which will always be the Character, of the Justified Believer? And what is it You Desire and Resolve, concerning a Life of Piety?

Is every Sin Grievous and Odious to you? And is there no known Sin wherein you indulge your self?

Do you in a Course of Obedience unto GOD, endeavour to express a Respect unto all His Commandments?

Can you Remember any special Word of GOD, by which you have been sensibly quickened in Living to Him?

At the Table of the Lord, whereto you would now make your Approaches, what are the Outward Elements and Actions used there? And what is it that they signify?

What are the Preparations and the Dispositions, that you would come to the Table of the Lord withal.

What are the Considerations that now move you to ask an Admission to the Table of the Lord?

In the Renowned Churches of Bohemia, there was before every Celebration of the Communion, an Examen Conscientiarum, wherein the Pastor examined the People, How they profited by the Means of Grace? And it is credibly Affirmed, That Luther, when he saw the Discipline of those Churches declared,† He was very sorry that the other

† Conseatbatur dolorem suum, quod ab iphis resforescen-
tis Evangelii primordiis, quolvis absque Discrinime ad Coenam Dominicum admittet, quodque Disciplinam Fra-
trum Disciplinae similum apud suos non Constituisset.
Churches of the Reformation had been so Remiss in Admissions to the Communion. But in the Churches of New-England, the Pastors do, only once for all, Examine the Spirits of the People, with pertinent Questions, before they Grant them an Admission into the State of Communicants. And herein they have not been very far from the Opinion of Chrysostom, who explaining, Holy Things for Holy Men; (A Sentence often made Use of in the Primitive Churches) has these Words, 'If any one be not Holy, let him have no Access, And freedom from Wickedness does not make one Holy, but the Presence of the Spirit, and plenty of Good Works. I would have them not only free from Dirt, but also to be White, and Fair, and Beautiful.

In very many of the Churches, the Answers of the Examined Person to some such Questions as those, are taken in Writing by the Pastor from the Mouth of the Person; [or a Brief Relation of the Desires to live unto GOD which are now working in his Heart, and of the Means and Ways wherewith such Desires have been enkindled in him;] or else 'tis brought ready written, by the Candidate of the Communion; and unto it there is added, either a Confession of Faith, of the Persons own composing, or a briefer Intimation of what publickly received Confession or Catechism, he chuses to acknowledge as containing the Principles of Religion, he would adhere unto. This Instrument the Pastor communicates unto Church, on some Convenient Opportunities: But sometimes he reports to the Brethren the Minutes of
of the Satisfaction he has received from the Person, who is now offered unto the Communion, without the Formality of an Address in the Name of the Person unto them, only saying, On my Inquiry he informs me so and so. 'Tis thus especially, when some Godly Scotchmen, who have scrupled the Modes of the New English Relations, have asked an Admission to the Communion. The Circumstances of Time, and Place, and Publickness for these Matters, in the several Churches are very Various; and left unto their own Discretion. And there is now generally a great Relaxation of several Severities, in the Modes of these Matters, formerly required in some of the Churches. For indeed, on this Occasion one may use the Words of the Roman Historian, Nocuit antiquus Rigor, et Nimia Severitas, cui jam non pares sumus.

§. 3. The Apprehension that appears to govern the Churches of New-England, is, That be a Church-State never so specious, it will be but a Dead Carcase in the Eyes of the Everliving GOD; yea, the Holy One will say, Bury it out of my Sight, if there be not real and vital Piety animating of it. The Church is not the King's Daughter, nor is there any true Glory belonging to her, if she be not all Glorious within, by an heavenly Piety Disposing and Adorning of her; The Piety, which lies in living to GOD, and by the Faith of the Son of GOD, and paying the constant Homage of our Souls unto Him, and Loving our Neighbour, and expressing that Love to the Life, in a continual Endeavour to do as we would be done unto. As this is the truest and only Wisdom, so
This is the truest and only Basis for an Union in the Churches of GOD. Accordingly 'tis the Design of these Churches, to make the Terms of Communion run as Parallel as may be with the Terms of Salvation; and exclude none from their sacred Fellowship, who have truly their Fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; and receive all that our SAVIOUR will Receive unto the Glory of GOD. If any of the Churches insist on any little Modalities in their Admissions, they are all with an Eye the necessary Qualifications of the most Substantial PIETY; and—it is to be hoped, they will be softened and ordered, and on Occasions Varied accordingly.

A Charitable Consideration of nothing but PIETY in admitting to Evangelical Privileg'd, is a Glory that the Churches of New-England, would lay claim unto; Churches of which one of their Pastors once gave this Account unto his Correspondents in the Lower Saxony; Quod se nullis Communionibus Conditionibus, nisi quae sint et Unioni cum Christo, Aeternaeque Salutis Conditiones, asstringant. Cunctos ad Dei Gloriam a Christo admissos, ad Sacram cum ipsis Eucharistiæ, et ad omnia Ecclesiasticæ Privilegia patentur admittendos. Calvinista sunt qui Lutheranos; Presbyteriani qui Episcopales; Pædobaptistæ qui Antipædobaptistæs, modo sincera in illis Piætas resplendet, et si manifesto Deum timeant, Justi-tiamque operentur, benignissime amplexantur.

§. 4. Before the Persons who have thus privately addressed the Pastor for Admission into the Church, are publickly admitted, he propounds their Names unto the Congregation, with an
Intimation of what they have desired. He takes his Time to Read or Tell unto the Church, (and sometimes as many of the mixed Assembly as please, are allowed also to stay,) what he judges proper of the Examination, which has been taken of their Pious Dispositions or Experiences; Adding, that he has received an Encouraging Testimony of their Conversation.

The Candidates of the Communion, at the proper time for it, standing forth, now the Pastor calls upon the Brethren of the Church, to signify their Consent unto the Admission of these Persons unto their Communion, by lifting up their Hands; [ For in all these Points, their Church Government is not unlike the Government reported by Plato to have been sometimes in Athens, which Grotius also tells us was the Government of the Primitive Churches; ἈΠΙΣΤΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ ΜΕΤΑ ΕΥΔΟΚΙΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΘΟΥΣ. An Aristocracy ordering all things with the good liking of the People.

This being signified, the Pastor then applies himself unto the Candidates, after some such Manner of this.

In the Fear of GOD, you are now to attend unto His most Gracious COVENANT; and may you by the Help of His Grace, give a most hearty Consent unto it.

'You do now sincerely and very solemnly give up your selves unto the Glorious GOD, who is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and receive Him as your GOD and Portion; Desiring to live unto Him. You do give up your selves unto the Lord JESUS CHRIST.
CHRIST, who is GOD manifest in Flesh, as unto the Head of His Chosen People, and receive Him as made of GOD unto you, Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Holiness, and Redemption. You do likewise give your selves unto this Church of His; engaging with His Help, in the Communion thereof, to attend upon the Ordinances of the Gospel, while your Opportunities to be thereby Edified in your most Holy Faith shall here be continued unto you.

They by a proper Action shewing their Consent hereunto; he adds;

We then the Church of our SAVIOUR in this Place, do receive you into our sacred Fellowship, and promise that by His Assistance, we will treat you with such Affection and Watchfulness, as your sacred Relation unto us now calleth for. This we do, imploring of our Lord, that both we and you, may obtain Mercy to be faithful in His Covenant, and Glorify Him with the Holiness that becomes his House forever.

A brief Prayer, wherein Thanks are given for the Gospel and the Success of it, and a Blessing is implored on the Church, and on those who now ask to be added thereto, and on others that may ask to be added, has been thought proper on these Occasions: Either at the Time of their Admission; or at the Time when their Qualifications for it, are exhibited.

The Pastor having thus propounded the Covenant unto the Candidates, oftentimes makes a Short Monitory Speech unto them; and perhaps
recommends to them a Passage of the Divine Oracles, which he would have them all their Days to think upon.

The Persons are after this reputed Brethren of the Church, capable of Occasional Communion with any other also, wherever they may see Occasion to desire it.

And they who from the State of Disciples, thus pass into the State of Brethren, are the only Persons for whose formal Votes, the Pastors do call in managing any Part of the Ecclesiastical Discipline.

I know not whether it will do the Part of an Effectual Apology, for the strictness of these Doings in the Churches of New-England: But I will here observe, That it has been a Proposal made by some Conformable Divines, in the Church of England; 'Would it not very much conduce unto the Glory of GOD, and the Edification of the People in their most Holy Faith, if every Person Baptised into the Christian Faith should be obliged, when he comes unto Years Discretion, to appear in the Public Congregations, there to make a Confession of his Faith, and recognize his Primitive Engagement; and that the Minister should recommend the Person unto the Grace of GOD, that he may be established, and persevere, and continue for ever? Yea, there have lately been in the City of London, many Religious Societies, living in Conformity to the Rites of the Church of England, whereof the Relater says; 'It is required of such as join to them, that they give the Society a solemn Account of their Sense of Spiritual Things, with the real Motives, which lead them to
to this Undertaking, and what they seriously Purpose as to their future Life. This is many times done in Writing, --- penned with such an honest, affectionate, and undisguised Style, with such pious and sensible Expressions, and in so modest and humble a Manner, that they would mightily affect any pious Person to read them, and move him to break forth into Pa-thetic Praises to GOD, who has given such Grace to Young Men in so degenerate an Age. These Religious Societies have strict Orders among them, relating to a holy Life, and an Exemplary strictness of Conversation; To which every Member, after Mature Deliberation subscribes his Name, with his Resolutions to live up unto them. The Churches of New-England will not certainly be blamed After this!

§ 5. We are not Insensible, That in the Fourth and Fifth Ages of the Primitive Christianity, it was counted an heinous Crime, to publish the Prayers and Rites used in the Sacraments; Yea, they counted it a sort of Sacrilege, and worthy, Prōlixiori Anathemat. Nor did they think, as Basili intimates, That they could be called Mysteries, if they were Exposed unto common and vulgar Notice. None of the ἀμφιθυμοι might be present at these Devotions; They secluded the Catechu-mens from them; They declined all Recital of them in their Sermons to a Promiscuous Auditory, cutting off with such an Apostoiesis, as, νορματ Πι- deles. To write them, was reckoned unlawful, They were Mysteria Chartis non Committenda; They were ΑΡΙΤΗΑ, and ΑΠΡΑΦΑ, Never thele
theless, I would now pass on, boldly and freely to describe the Εὐοτερίκα, the most Sacred, and most Secret, of the Transactions in the Churches of New-England; Believing that the Christians of old in their great Reservations, too much accommodated themselves unto the Pagans; among whom (as Justin tells us) Mysteria enunciasset, was a grievous Crime; and some tell us of those who died for it.

The Churches, like the Primitive, have no Times universally stated for their Celebration of the Eucharist. Some have it once in Four Weeks, some in Six, some in Eight, and some, the first Lord’s Day in every Kalender Month; and some the last: Some in the close of the Afternoon: but most in the close of the Forenoon. And the Pastors likewise reserve to themselves a Liberty of Altering the Times as they judge fit upon Emergencies.

The Churches do generally see no Necessity of taking the Evening for the only Time of Celebrating the Lord’s Supper. For though it be called by the Name of Αἰδίνον, ’tis well known, that in the Ancient Greek Authors, as Ancient as Homer himself, the Word is used for a Dinner, for a Breakfast, for any Eating, as well as for a Supper. And Cæna, which is the Term that Answers it in Latin, signifies any Eating in Common. Yea, the English Word Supper does not necessarily imply Night-Eating; The last Meal in the Day is a Supper, though it be several Hours before Night; and the Word being derived from SOPPE (which is Bread that is dipped in some Liquid thing) the Diet rather than the Season of Eating, is therein
intimated. Wherefore the Churches do generally count themselves obliged no more to the Time of Night for the Lord's Supper, than to the Place of an Upper Chamber for it, or the Number Twelve of the Communicants.

Thus, though Tertullian mentions the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, as being Tempore Vic tus, or at Supper-time; From which time of their Assembling, the Heathen probably took Occasion to accuse them of putting out their Lights, and then doing unknown Deeds of Darkness; yet the same Tertullian mentions the Celebration of the Sacrament also Antelucanis Cætabus, or in the Morning before break of Day; and the Pagan Pliny confirms the Report. Cyprian likewise mentions the Administration of it, both in the Evening and the Morning. It seems every Church then did, in this Matter, what best suited their own particular Circumstances.

When the LORD's SUPPER is to be administered, the Pastor gives Notice of it a Week before hand. And when the Lord's Day for it arrives, he usually accommodates the Solemn Occasion before him, with a Sermon upon some agreeable Doctrine of the Gospel. In most Places there are held private Meetings of the Christians, on some Day of the Week, Preparatory to the Communion; and it is a frequent thing for the Pastor to be present at some or other of them; or else perhaps to hold a Publick Lecture. But now on the Lord's Day, the Ordinary Exercises being finished, the Rest of the Assembly are dismissed, except any devout Persons, who stay scattered here
here and there, at some Distance from the Communicants, to be Spectators of the Mysteries. The Communicants, now seating themselves together in the Body of the Meeting House, the Pastor descends from the Pulpit unto the Table, which now stands furnished with the Sacramental Elements, before the Seat, usually designed for the Deacons, in the Sight of all the Communicants, and the Deacons do stand waiting before it.

The Pastor having first mentioned the Names of the Persons (if there be any such) belonging to other Churches, who request a Part in the present Communion, he then addresses himself with all possible Solemnity, unto the Celebration.

In some Churches, there is first, as there was in some of the Primitive, a Solita Prædication, or a Speech only unto the Communicants, to prepare them for the Action: But this is not in all.

With a short Passage equivalent unto the Sursum Corda of the Ancients, [which, by the Way, confutes Transubstantiation] he bespeaks their Attention. But then, either he reads the whole Paragraph, Luk. XXII. 19, 20. Or, 1 Cor. XI. 23, 24, 25, 26. Or else, Makes the Recitation by Parcels. First, he says, Our Lord JESUS CHRIST in the Night wherein he was betrayed, took BREAD. Upon so saying he touches with his Hand the Loaves of Bread in the Dishes, (or takes the Dishes towards him) now before him, uncovered, where they were aforehand fitted, easily to be broken in Pieces.

He adds; And HE BLESSED it:—— whereupon the Communicants now standing up, he now poureth out a Prayer before the Lord, filled with the
the Acknowledgements of the Evangelical Truths, which this Institution invites us to think upon; and Supplications for the Divine Blessing, upon that Part of the Sacrament, now before them, and upon themselves in the Receiving of it. I may describe the Prayer in the Words of Justin Martyr: 'The Minister gives Praise and Glory to the Lord of all, thro' the Son and the Holy Spirit; and in a large Manner renders particular Thanks for the present Mercies; who when he has ended his Prayers and Praisesthe People say, Amen.

The Prayer being finished, the Communicants again sit down, and the Pastor says, Our Lord JESUS CHRIST having Blessed the Bread, He BROKE it. Whereupon he proceeds to the Breaking of the Bread, in the View of the Communicants, who for the most Part are silently left unto their own Meditations, during this Action; though some of the Pastors Excite and Assist the Meditations of the People, by now and then uttering a Sentence of the sacred Scriptures, or of their own Pathetic Thoughts, unto them.

When the Bread is all Broken into convenient Parcels, he says to this Effect: Our Lord JESUS CHRIST, having broken the Bread, He GAVE IT unto His Disciples, saying, This is my Body which is broken for you, take it, and eat of it, and do it in Remembrance of me. Wherefore in the Name of that Glorious Lord, I now invite you, to TAKE, and EAT thereof; and to do it in Remembrance of Him. So, He himself Takes and Eats of this Bread: But as he takes it himself, he gives the Dishes unto the
Deacons, by whose Help they are handed about among the Communicants, until they do all, sitting in a Devout Manner [In the Primitive Times, Reader, we are very certain, they did not use to do it, Kneeling!] Take and Eat thereof. In Tertullian's Time and Place the Communicants did not receive the Elements, De aliorum Manus quam Presidentium: But in the Churches of New-England they do as in Justin Martyr's; ΔΙΑΚΟΝΩΙ ΔΙΌΔΟΣΙΝ. 'The Deacons give the Consecrated Bread and Wine to those that are present.

The Deacons returning with the Remainders, the Pastor stands up, and Enquires, Whether any to whom that Bread of the Lord, and of Life, should have been given, have not received it? If a Sign of any such be given, 'tis carried unto them. And when all are served, the Deacons do then sit down and partake of their Portion also.

And here one Remark more may be inserted. In the Primitive Churches, the Deacons did mostly with their own Hands give the Bread unto each of the Communicants. Only in the Church of Alexandria, I find it instaurated by Clemens Alexandrinus, that each of the Communicants there took the Bread himself out of the Plate when it was consecrated. And the Churches of New-England are in This, like that of Alexandria.

The Pastor then rising, takes a Cup of the Wine that is now in the Flagons and the Tankards on the Holy Table; and says, Our Lord Jesus Christ after the same Manner TOOK THE CUP; adding — And He GAVE THANKS.
The Communicants thereupon again standing up; he pours out a Prayer, of the like Importance, the like Tendency, with the former. Indeed, in the Primitive Churches, there was usually but one long Prayer before the Distribution of the Elements; which also were both of 'em at once consecrated. But in the Churches of New-England, so far as I am informed, the Pastor makes Two Prayers, a first before the Distribution of the Bread, and then a second before the Distribution of the Wine in the Eucharist.

Then filling out the Wine from the Flagons into the Cups, [Though the Pouring out of the Wine is not properly one of the Sacramental Actions, and if there stand any Tankards on the Table ready filled, it is accordingly omitted there;] he proceeds to speak unto this Effect, Our Lord JESUS CHRIST hereupon GAVE the CUP to His Disciples, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you and for many for the Remission of Sins; TAKE it, and all you DRINK of it, and do it in Remembrance of me. Wherefore in the Name of that most Gracious Lord, I invite you to TAKE and DRINK hereof, and to do it in Remembrance of Him. So he himself Takes and Drinks of the Wine, and the Deacons do Dispense and Disperse the Cups among the Communicants; who still using the Table Posture of sitting, do in a devout Manner Take and Drink thereof. The Deacons return with their emptied Cups unto the Pastor, who again fills them, till there be no more Occasion. And when all seem to be served he inquires, Whether any to whom that Cup of the Lord, and of Blessing, then belonged, had been omitted in the Dispensa-
tion? — The Deacons then sit down and partake as before.

A Psalm chose (and in some Places read) by the Pastor, is hereupon Sung by the Communicants. This in the Primitive Churches was usually done before the last Prayer. Some of ours do it after.

The Pastor now (as Tertullian says, Oratio Convivium dirimit) passes on to a third Prayer; consisting of the most Raised Thanksgiving to God, and Assurance of the Blessings in the New Covenant, sealed by this Ordinance. And as Chrysostom tells us, one had need have the ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ, the Confidence, the Liberty, and the Enlargements of Moses or Elias, to Pray as they did use to do in the Primitive Times at the Eucharist. It may now be said, That some of the Pastors often pray with very much of the Spirit of a Moses, or an Elias, on these Eucharistical Occasions. Or, the same Account may be given of them, that Nazianzen gives of the Prayers made by his Venerable Father in the Celebrating of the Eucharist; They have been made, ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ, by the Holy Spirit of God.

Many of the Churches, every time the Eucharist is administered, but some once a Quarter, some once a Year, have what Justin Martyr calls in the Primitive Churches, ΤΑ ΣΥΝΑΞΕΓΟΜΕΝΑ, and what Tertullian calls Deposita Pietatis; their Contributions, wherein they gather Money to relieve the Poor, as well as to defray the Charges of Eucharist. What was gathered in the Primitive Churches was committed unto the Pastors, to relieve Widows, and Orphans, and Prisoners, and Strangers, and in a Word, All that were in Want.
In the New-English it is committed unto the Deacons:

This done, the Pastor pronouncing a Blessing dismisses the Assembly.

§. 6. It being a main Scope of the Lord's Supper to be a Sign and Seal of that Mystery, The Communion of Saints; wherein, as many Grains make but one Loaf of Bread, and many Drops make but one Cup of Wine, so many Saints make but one Church; The Churches of New-England judge it not so proper for one or two, by a Bed side, or the like, to celebrate this Ordinance: But chuse rather to say, with Cyprian, Sacramenti Veritatem Fraternitate omni presente celebramus; The whole Fraternity come together for it. And in laying aside the private Celebration of the Eucharist, they have not only the Writings of such Reformers, as Musculus, and Bullinger, and Beza, and Daneus, and Aretius, and other Great Names, but also the Custom of the French, the Dutch, the Scotch, and the purest Churches of the Reformation, to encourage them. Nor yet would they have reckoned this enough, if the Scriptures had not Intimated, that there must be a Synaxis, an Assembly, of a Church coming together for the Purpose; and enow to be called, Many. Wherefore the Churches of New-England agree to the Advice of the Excellent Alting; 'Let the Well often Approach unto the Supper of the Lord, and let the Sick recall to mind what they formerly enjoyed in such Approaches: Contenting themselves with a Spiritual Communion; according to that of Austin, CREDE ET MANDUCASTI.
ARTICLE VI.

The Pastoral Care Exercised in the more PRIVATE SERVICES of it.

§. 1. A Pastor being one that is to watch for the Souls of his Flock, as one that is to give an Account, there are Private as well as Publick Services expected from him; whereof the first and not the least, is that of CATECHISING.

The Work of a Catechist was often a Distinct Office, in the Primitive Churches: But it is reckoned incumbent for the most Part upon every Pastor in the New English: And there is much Variety used in the Discharge of it.

Formerly, There were several Divines in these Churches (it were easy to reckon more than a Decemvirate of them) who, like Cyril, and some others of the Fathers, composed and published Catechisms of their own, which were designed more peculiarly for the Edification of the particular People, with whom they were travelling.

There is not above one or two of those, used at this Day. That which is most so, is the Milk for
for Babes, which many of our Children have their Instruction begun withal. But the Catechism which now generally obtains is that of the Assembly of Divines, (prepared originally by a Triumvirate never to be forgotten, Dr. Arrowsmith, Dr. Tuckney, and Mr. Newcomen,) whereof the general Opinion is, That no Man's Reproach can lessen, and no Man's Applause can heighten, the Reputation that belongs unto it. Albeit there are those also, who even in this find some Deficiencies, and some Redundancies.

By some of the Pastors, the Work of Catechising, and the Task of a Pantænus, or an Origen, has been done, with a special Aim and Hope to attend the Great and Good Preservative of the Churches, which has of old been known by the Name of, CONFIRMATION; That is to say, when the Children Baptised in the Churches come to be of Age, the Pastors do send for them, and Examine them discreetly and faithfully, concerning their Improvement in Knowledge, and Conversion to GOD, and Resolutions for a Life of PIETY, and Inclinations to the Remem'ring and Renewing of their Baptismal Covenant. Those in whom there are found the Agreeable Symptoms of a Regenerate Mind, are advised immediately to apply themselves for a CONFIRMATION of their Church-Membership, in a full Communion with the Churches. Those who are found of a more discouraging and undesirable Character, have suitable Admonitions bestowed upon them; Until they have hearkened whereunto, they may not expect the Privileges of Adult Members in the Churches.
Churches of the Lord. But other Pastors have yet their own Methods.

Some of the Pastors do on the Lord's Day, in the Afternoons, before the Sermon, make the Young People publickly to Answer the Catechism.

Others of the Pastors do on some Week-Days, publickly hear their Young People answer to the Catechism. And then they make a short Sermon, upon one of the Questions. Or, perhaps upon some Text, for the Animation of Early Piety.

There are yet others who send for the Young People to their Houses, number and sort of them as they think fit; and then, when they have Answered the Catechism, there are Pastoral and Personal Admonitions given unto them, to Remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth.

Some of the Pastors chuse to do this Part of their Office after the Pauline way, To teach from House to House. And perhaps no way more significant! The Pastor may send aforehand unto such Families as he intends, an Intimation that he intends at such a Time to Visit them: And coming to the Families, he affays with as decent and as pungent Address as he is able, to treat each Person particularly about their Everlasting Interests. And unto the Young People, he puts Questions of the Catechism, from the Answers whereof he makes as lively Applications unto them as he can, for the Engaging of them in the Service of the Lord. No doubt, he seldom leaves
leaves a Family, without many Tears falling from Souls, desirous to Fear the Name of GOD.

Thus the Pastors do sometimes Imitate the Example of Chrysostom, of whom we find, 'That he would Inculcate Things on his People, with private Communications. And of Cyprian, who would Go to every one, that was committed to his Care, and Exhort them, according to the Ministry of the Lord, and of His Gospel: And of Austin, whose Private Labours to instruct his Flock are celebrated by Posidonius. They are sensible of what is Urged by Prosper, 'That Bishops are called Watchmen, because they should Watch the Actions of all Men, and with an Aim of Religious Curiosity spy out, how every one liveth, with his Household in his House: What good Men they approve, they are to Confirm, by Honouring them; whom they observe to be Vicious, they are to Amend, by Reproving them,

§ 2. The VISITATION OF THE SICK; (and so, of the Afflicted) is a Work for which there are particular Officers, Men of Piety, and Gravity, and Experience, appointed in some Churches of the Reformation. And others as well as the Great Voetius, make a fair Apology for it.

But in the Churches of New-England, that Work is incumbent on the Pastors, and accounted no little Part of the Pastoral Care.

In other Afflictions (as the Loss of Desirable Relatives, or Singular Temptations, and Exercises) the Pastors do Visit their People, and suit their Discourses
Discourses unto the Occasions; and perhaps put suitable Books of Piety into their Hands. And then they usually Pray with them, that they may carry it well under their Afflictions, and that the Holy Ends thereof, may be obtained upon them. Thus particularly they make the Heart of the Widow to sing with the Joys of Piety.

But the SICK are a special and frequent Object of the Pastoral Care. The Pastors, when the Sick Person sends for them (and often without their sending, and though they forget their Duty, to call for the Elders) have a very serious, and sometimes a very difficult Work to do. If the Sick be capable of Receiving Instruction, the Pastors now set before him, in lively Terms, the Miserable State which by Sin, both Original and Actual he is fallen into; and seeing him affected with a Sense of his Misery, they then as livelily propose to him the Remedy in a Great SAVIOUR provided for him. In the Directories prepared many Ages ago, for the Visitation of the Sick, it was directed that the Sick Person should say, O my GOD, I now place the Death of my Lord JESUS CHRIST between Thee and my Sins: Thus our Pastors do assist the Sick Person, all they can, to place his Faith in the Sacrifice, and the Righteousness of a Glorious CHRIST, for Deliverance from Eternal Death, as well as Temporal. They Tender the Covenant of Grace to him in the several Articles of it, and obtain his Explicit Consent unto them all. They repeat the Calls of the Gospel to him, and they obtain such Answers thereunto, as to make it hopeful that they are become effectual. They set before him the very great Q2
and precious Promises of GOD unto returning Sinners, and especially such Words of a Merciful Saviour as that [worth a Thousand Worlds!]

Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. They go through a Process of Repentance with him; Urging him to look upon the Sins of his Heart and Life with a due Contrition for them; to make the Flight of a Distressed Soul unto the Open Fountain for the Forgiveness of them; and there-withal to resign up his Mind unto the Holy Spirit, that he may be made a new Creature, and be brought into the Life of GOD. And that Repentance may have its perfect Work (if they apprehend Occasion for it) they exhort him, That if he have wronged any Neighbour either in his Estate or his Esteem, he would now make him all possible Reparation; Or, That if he has had any Companions in Impiety, he would now give his faithful Warnings and Rebukes unto them. If the Patient has been of Convincus Piety, they comfort him with the best Views they can give him of the Heavenly World, of which he is now upon the Borders, and of the Rest which remains for the People of GOD. Finally, A Profound Resignation to the Will of GOD, is recommended as what He is well pleased withal.

When these things are done, as far as there is Opportunity for them, the Pastors proceed unto their Prayers, wherein such Purposes as these are Considered and Prosecuted.

The Glorious GOD, who is the Father of Mercies, and our most Merciful Father in our Lord JESUS CHRIST, is acknowledged as com-
commanding us to Love one another, and with a Spirit of Love to Pray for one another.

The Providence of GOD our Maker, is acknowledged as ordering the Condition of the Sick Person, and as performing the Thing that is appointed for us, in all Occurrences.

GOD is adored as Wounding, and as Healing, as Killing, and as Quickening, and as the Sovereign GOD before whom we are as the Clay before the Potter.

— Adored as a Righteous GOD, unto whose Justice we have by our Sins forfeited our Lives, and all the Comforts of them.

— Adored as a Gracious GOD, and one ready to pardon; and having in the Mediation of the Great SAVIOUR provided an admirable Way for His Pardoning Mercy to reach unto us.

The Application of this Mercy, with the Blood in which it flows down, unto the Soul of the Sick Person, is then implored. And it is therefore asked, that he may with a Repenting Soul, bewail all the Errors of his Life; all his Forgetfulness of GOD, and of the Errand which GOD sent him into the World upon; all his Violations of the Divine Laws, and of his own Vows; all his Neglect of the Great Salvation; all his Misimprovements under Means of Good; all his Misbehaviours in all Conditions, and all Relations, and all Employments; and above all that he may lay to Heart the Fountain of Sin in his Heart, which he brought into the World with him.

It is hereupon asked, That with a lively Faith, he may be helped from above to make the Flight
Flight of a Distressed Soul, unto the Blood which Cleanses from all Sin, and plead the Sacrifice of our Great Saviour for His Atonement, and make the Righteousness of our Great Saviour his only Plea for his Acceptance with God. But that he may be made willing at the same Time to submit unto the Spirit of Grace, and all His Gracious Operations; and that he may accordingly have the Experience thereof, quickening him to Turn and Live unto God; and that the Sanctifying Work of the Holy Spirit upon his Mind, may prove a Real, Thorough, Saving Work, and an Hope that will not make ashamed; and that the present Circumstances of the Sick Person may contribute unto it.

It is then prayed, That his Health may be restored, and his Life prolonged; and that he may come out of his present Illness as Gold out of the Fire. But that if he must now be called out of this World, he may go away with all possible Resignation to the Will of God, and finish well, and go cheerfully through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and be presented Faultless before the presence of His Glory with Exceeding Joy.

Hereupon suitable Mercies are also asked for the Relatives.

And it is asked for the By standers, that all may be duly affected with a Sense of our Frailty, and speedily get into good Terms with Heaven, and leave nothing undone, that Men will wish to have done, when the Dying Hour comes upon them.

If they be Sick Children that are prayed withal, Pains are taken, in the first Place, to dispose the
the Minds of the Parents unto the Holy Resignation with which they are to offer the Sacrifices now called for. And then the Prayer takes Notice of certain peculiar and adapted Articles.

It owns the Providence of GOD, without which not a Bird of the Air falls to the Earth.

It bewails the sad Effects of Original Sin, appearing in the Miseries that attend us, even from our most Early Infancy.

It prays for the Recovery of the Child: But that if the Child be to Die, it may yet have a Soul sprinkled with the Blood of the Lamb of GOD, and bound up in the Bundle of Life.

It puts the Child into the Hands of the Great SAVIOUR, that good Shepherd, who hath said, Suffer little Children to come unto me.

It intreats for the Parents, the Graces proper for the Occasion, especially the Repentance of Sin thus brought unto Remembrance; and a sensible Improvement in all Piety; with a Part in a Glorious CHRIST, which will abundantly make up all their Losses.

§ 3. Though the Churches of New-England, have with other Churches of the Reformation, sufficiently renounced the Popish Notion of the seven Sacraments; nor have they any Spiritual Courts for the Trial of Matrimonial Causes; yet the Celebration of a MARRIAGE in them, is now generally performed by their Pastors. For many Years after the first Settlement of these Colonies, a Marriage was ever celebrated by the Civil Magistrate; who not only gave the Marriage Coven-
want unto the Parties, but also made the Prayers proper for the Occasion: However, if a Minister were present, he was desired, usually, to make at least one of the Prayers. And the Justices have, by Law, to this Day, the Power to do it. But now the general Practice and Custom is for the Pastors to do it, tho' their Power be limited by the Law unto the Towns in which they enjoy the constant Exercise of their Ministry. Because the Prayers of Benediction on the Marriage are most proper to be made by the Pastors, the People generally request and expect their Pastors also to give the Covenant of their Marriage unto them.

In former Times our People, in Conformity to the Usages in the Ancient Church of Israel, and what have been continued in some Churches of the Reformation, maintained a Solemnity, called a Contraction, a little before the Consummation of a Marriage was allowed of. A Pastor was usually implored, and a Sermon also preached on this Occasion. But these Ancient Sponsalia, are now wholly laid aside.

The Weddings of New-England are for the most part celebrated with less of public Appearance than they are in some other Countries; by which it is thought that many Inconveniencies are avoided.

It has been a Case handled by Divines, An Nuptiarum Celebratio conveniat Dies Dominicus? The Celebration of Weddings on the Lord's Days was represented unto the Renowned Synod of Dort, among the Grievances, which the lesser Synods of Holland complained of. And such Di-
vines as the famous Walam, and Zeppirex, and Vocius, and an Army more, have made just and strong Remonstrances against them. The Churches of New-England wholly decline them. [However the Appearing of the Bridegroom and Bride, in the Condition of Persons newly Married, in the publick Assembly on the next Lord's Day after their Marriage, is a Thing usually looked for. ] And a Wedding on a Day directed by the Government for a FAST would be (from the Second Chapter of Joel and the Sixteenth Verse) as much disallowed of.

When the Wedding Arrives, the Bridegroom with the Bride, having some Attendants, present themselves before the Pastor, and give him the Certificate of their Lawful Publication, with which the Town-Clerk must furnish them.

The Pastor begins with a Prayer which turns upon such Articles as these.

The Glorious GOD is acknowledged as the Giver of every Good Gift; The Extent of His Providence, and a Providence too under the Management of our Mediator JESUS, is considered;

In all the Good that is done for us the Sovereign Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of our GOD is confessed; And our SAVIOUR by His Blood purchasing for us the Blessings of Goodness, whereof our Sins have made a Forfeiture.

It is desired, That our Blessings may prove Blessings indeed unto us, and assist us in the Service of GOD.

The Goodness of GOD in appointing the Married State is adored; —— and His Providence in chusing
Choosing the Relatives which He therein gives to each other, is admired.

A Dependence on the Providence of GOD our SAVIOUR, for our Welfare in the Married (as well as in every other) State is expressed.

For the ensuring of such a Welfare, there is an Eye had unto the Covenant of Grace, wherein our Maker is our Husband, and our SAVIOUR is willing to espouse us unto Himself in Faithfulness for ever. The marvellous Condescension of the Glorious LORD in the Proposal of such an Espousal, is wondred at; The Enmity of our Carnal Minds against this Blessedness is deprecated; And proper Expressions of a Consent unto the Gracious Proposal, are then endeavoured.

That Promise of the Covenant, for all Things to Work together for Good, is now laid hold upon; and it is asked, That as our Sorrows may make us Wiser and Better, so our Comforts may quicken us to Glorify our GOD, in a Life of Obedience unto Him.

It is more particularly asked, on the behalf of the Persons who are now entering into the Covenant of the Married State, That they may now first give themselves unto the Lord, and have the Pardon of all their Sins through the Blood of the Great Sacrifice, and that the Blessing of GOD may be upon them in their now giving themselves to each other, according to His Institution.

The Prayer being finished, he now says to the Couple before him;

'You are now to attend unto a Covenant of GOD; the Covenant of your Marriage before Him.'

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Give
Give therefore your Hands, with your Hearts, unto one another.

This being done, he addresses the Man, to this effect: — The Person whom you now take by the Hand, you take to be your Wedded Wife; Depending on the Grace of Heaven, you promise to Love her, to Honour her, to Support her; and to treat her in that Relation, as it becomes a Professor of the Glorious Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, so long as you live both together in this World. This Promise you make as in the Presence of GOD, and before these Witnesses —

And then, the Woman: — The Person whom you now take by the Hand, you take to be your Wedded Husband: With Dependence on the Grace of Heaven, you promise to Love him, to Honour him, to Obey him, and to Treat him with a Behaviour, that may Answer and Adorn the Doctrine of GOD your SAVIOUR, so long as you both live together in this World. This Promise you make as in the Presence of the Great GOD, and before these Witnesses.

A Consent unto this Covenant, being some way signified, he adds, —

I then declare you to be Married, according to the Laws of GOD, and of this Province. And what GOD has joined, Man may not separate.

In former Ages there was, and still in other Places, there is, much Stress laid upon the Wedding Ring. In the Roman Ritual, there is a Form of Benediction used by the Priest upon it. The Religious
Religious Consecration of this *Annulus praecisum*, is described by *Pignorius*. But passing by what *Gorlaeus* in his *Dactylotheca*, and others have remarked upon the Matter, we shall only say, that in the *Weddings of New-England*, the Ring makes none of the Ceremonies.

The Pastor now proceeds unto another Prayer; wherein, — The Honour which GOD has put upon Marriage by His Instituting of it in Paradise, and the Presence and Favour of our Great SAVIOUR once Working a Miracle at it, is considered. — The Grace to carry it well in all Relations is asked for; and particularly for the Persons now Married, — That their Behaviour towards each other may be full of that Goodness, which may be a lively and lovely Emblem, of what passes between the Lord JESUS CHRIST and His Church; — That they may be such Blessings to each other, as that they may have Cause every Day to give Thanks unto GOD for giving them to one another; That all the Blessings of the Married State which are to be desired and expected, may be bestowed upon them; — Above all, That they may be blessed with Spiritual Blessings; & their Family may prove a Religious Family; and an House wherein the Religion of GOD our SAVIOUR shall be carried on with Continual Sacrifices; That our Lord would help them to pass the Time of their Sojourning, here in the Fear of GOD, and prepare them for their parting Time, and for all the Troubles of this present Evil World, and at length give them a Portion in that better World, where they Marry not, nor are given in Marriage, but are wholly for the Lord; — That the Relative
Relatives of each, may have Cause for much Satisfaction in what is now come to pass. And finally, That the Period may be hastened, when the Espousal of the King of Glory unto His Church may be brought unto a Blessed Consummation, and His Kingdom Come.

The Pastor after this returns to the Town-Clerk, a Record of the Marriage — et sic finitur.

§ 4. In many Towns of New-England the Ministers make agreeable Prayers with the People come together at the House, to attend the FUNERAL of the Dead. And in some, the Ministers make a short Speech at the Grave. But in other Places both of these Things are wholly omitted. However, they are not forbidden, as they are in the Discipline of the French Churches, where the Prohibition runs in these Terms; There shall be no Prayer nor Sermon at Funerals; to Shun Superstition.

§ 5. Behold the Work assigned unto the Pastors of the Churches. But many Observers have thought that their Discipline might have this Complaint still made of it, One Thing thou Lackest. Any well disposed Young Men of a Liberal Education have been brought into the Pulpits by any of the Pastors, as soon as they pleased, and if the People approved of them, they were at Liberty, without any more ado, to proceed unto an Election of them for the Work of the Ministry, and the Pastoral Charge in any Vacancy. But hearing this frequently complained of, as too rigorous and unsafe a Conduct, a Convention of Ministers at Boston,
Boston, did about the beginning of the present Century publish the Ensuing Instrument.

PROPOSALS; for the Preservation of Religion in the Churches, by a due TRIAL of them that stand CANDIDATES OF THE MINISTRY.

It is a thing of Great Consequence to the Safety and Welfare of our Churches, and the Interests of our Holy Religion are not a little concerned in it, That the Candidates of the Evangelical Ministry from time to time arising among us, should still be offered unto the Acceptance of the Churches, under the Advantage of their having undergone a due TRIAL of their Qualifications, for so solemn, and sacred a Service. And it hath long been the Wish of prudent Men, who wish well to the Interests Religion, That none of our Christian Congregations may countenance any, who shall set up for publick Preachers of the Gospel, until they can produce a Testimonial of their having been duly proved and approved, as Qualified for so Weighty an Undertaking.

Therefore,

I. It is proposed, that every Candidate of the Ministry, be furnished with a TESTIMONIAL, under the Hands of at least Four or Five settled Pastors in our Churches, of his having been Tried upon the EXPECTED ARTICLES, and of his being upon Trial found competently Qualified, for the Encouragements of a public Preach
Preacher among the Congregations of GOD in the Land. And that none presume to enter upon a Course of treating any of our Congregations, with their Sermons, until they have applied themselves unto such a Number of our Pastors, for such a Testimonial.

II. It is proposed, That the EXPECTED ARTICLES on which the Candidates of the Ministry shall be Tried, shall be these:

1. He shall be one of a Blameless Life; and therefore one that hath actually joined unto a particular Church, for Communion in all Special Ordinances.

2. He shall give the Triers an Account of the Principles, that act him, in his Desire to Preach the Gospel; which may satisfy their Judicious Charity, that he is act by the Evangelical Principles of Love to CHRIST and Souls, in his Intentions.

3. He shall be tried, how far he is acquaint ed with the Three learned Languages, and with the Sciences commonly taught in the Academical Education: And so much Acquaintance therewithal shall be required, as may be judged absolutely needful for the Services whereto he is designed.

4. Before Three of the Triers at least, he shall Preach a Probationary Sermon, on a Text, at a Time, and in a Place, which they shall appoint; and they shall upon Hearing pronounce his Abilities for Preaching and Praying to be such as give them Satisfaction.

5. He
5. He shall be examined, What Authors in Theology he has read; and he shall particularly make it evident, That he has considerately read, Ames his Medulla Theologiae: [Or, some other generally allowed Body of Divinity.]

6. His Abilities to Refute Errors are to be tried, by putting such Instances unto him, as the Triers may judge most convenient.

7. He shall declare to the Triers his Adherence unto, the Confession of Faith, agreed by the Churches of New-England, and the Assembly of Divines at Westminster.

III. It is proposed, That if the Pastors of our Churches, are so unadvised, as to employ in publick Preaching any Candidate of the Ministry who hath neglected or contemned the Trial propounded for such Persons, it shall be counted an Offence; and it shall be by the Pastors in the Neighbourhood, signified unto such an one, that if he do not acknowledge his Offence, he shall be dealt withal, as one that Walk disorderly.

IV. It is proposed, That if any Congregations be so unadvised, as to invite unto publick Preaching any Candidate of the Ministry, who has avoided the Trial aforesaid, the Pastors of the Churches in the Neighbourhood, shall not only refuse to concur in the Ordination of a Person who has so shunned the Light, but also write unto the said Congregations a suitable Admonition for the Disorder, by which they thus expose themselves to the Devices of Satan.
V. It is proposed, That when any Tried Candidate of the Ministry is to be ordained unto the Pastoral Charge, he shall, unto the Elders and Messengers of the Churches, who are invited unto his Ordination, make due answers unto such Questions as their Moderator shall propound, relating to his present Capacities and Inclinations, to serve the Kingdom of GOD, and unto the Flock unto which he should now become related.

Several Associations of Pastors in the Country have begun to execute these PROPOSALS. But they are not unto this Day fully Executed.

ARTICLE VII.

The other Ecclesiastical OFFICERS for the Assistance of the PASTORS.

§ 1. If the Pastors were to be considered, as originally entrusted, with the whole Care of the Churches, and their Interest, yet the Pity and Favour of our SAVIOUR has been expressed, in his joining of other Officers unto them, for their Assistance in it.

§
There has been much thought about the Office of those called, RULING-ELDERS, to assist the Pastors, in the Inspection and Government of the Churches.

We may not altogether give that Report about the New-English, which Deacon Hilary, a Writer of the IVth Century gives about the Primitive Churches. *Ecclesia, ut Synagoga, Seniores habuit, quorum fine Consilio nihil ageatur in Ecclesia, quod, quid Negligentia obsoleverit, nescio; nisi forte Doctorum Desidia, aut magis Superbia, dum soli volunt aliqua videre.* But this may be reported, That because the Office has not been well understood, (and these Elders have not been considered as given to the Pastors meerly for Helps, as the Levites were to the Priests of old) nor have those few Churches that have maintained it, conformed unto what is practised (of a Biennial, or Triennial Choice, and this in a good Number too,) in the other Churches of the Reformation; it is now generally laid aside. There are few Churches, but what are, as many of the Primitive, at their first planting were, in the Condition mentioned by Tertullian; *Ubi Ecclesiastici Ordinis non est Consensus, Sacerdos est ibi solus.*

Our Platform asserts, an Office of Ruling Elders, distinct from the Office of Pastor and Teacher; however, not so called, for to exclude the Pastor and Teacher from Ruling. But then it assigns a Work unto these, which it has happened sometimes, the Men whom the Churches have chosen, (and rarely have above One or Two at a Time, and these for Life, been chosen in a Church) have been incapable of managing, any otherwise than too
too clumsily, and so as hardly to preserve the Dignity of the Administrations they have pretended to.

An Assembly of our Pastors, once published this as their Judgment; 'That Ruling Elders are appointed for the Assistance of their Pastors, in the Government of their Churches, and the Inspection of the Flocks. And though these Officers may not be furnished with all those Attainments, which are necessary to a Pastor, yet if they are so accomplished, as that they may be Helps to their Pastor, in the Management of their Church Rule, they may be chosen thereunto with much Benefit and Advantage to the People of GOD. But, Whereas 'tis the Business of a Ruling Elder, to assist his Pastor, in Visiting the Distressed; Instructing the Ignorant; Reducing of the Erroneous; Comforting the Afflicted; Rebuking the Unruly; Discovering the State of the whole Flock; Exercising the Discipline of the Gospel upon Offenders; and promoting the Desireable Growth of the Church; 'tis necessary that he be a Person of a Wisdom, Courage, Leisure, & Exemplary Holiness & Gravity, agreeable to such Employments.

One is at a Loss about certain Passages in Antiquity. If the Five or Six Brethren, whom Clemens with his Church, sent with his Excellent Letter unto the Church of Corinth, were not such Ruling Elders, yet Firmillian, Bishop of Caesarea, in the Third Century, seems to join the Seniors (or, Elders) with the Pastors, and says, That at certain times, they met for to settle and ord...
Der Matters committed unto their Care. And about fifty Years after, Menstrum, Bishop of Carthage; having occasion to travel, committed some Treasures of the Church unto certain Elders, who afterward proving Wicked Men, began the Schism of the Donatists. And in the Acts of the Justification of Cæcilian, which are more Ancient than the Council of Nice, we read of Elders distinct from the Bishops and Priests. Austin also several times makes mention of Elders distinct from the Ministers of the Churches: Particularly he does it in the Inscription of his CXXXVII. Epistle, Yea, in his XIX. Sermon on the Words of our Lord, [The Third in the Appendix of Tom. x.] he declares the Duty of their Employments. The Council of Carthage, A. C. 407. diverse times mentions these Elders, as defending the Rights of the People against the Bishops. Yea, we find them not Extinct in France and Italy, at the End of the Sixth Century.

That which has almost extinguished them in this Country within the half of One Century, has been, the prevailing of such Sentiments as these, in very many of the Pastors.

The only Scripture that seems plainly to assert that Office, is 1 Tim. V. 17. Let the Elders that Rule well be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in Word and Doctrine. But perhaps upon mature Consideration, it will be found, that in the Primitive Churches, there were Pastors in two different Circumstances of Employment. First, there were Elders who in a more constant Way carried on the Duties of the Evangelical Ministry, with the gathered Churches of the
ful, and therein did preside well. But at the same
time it was necessary to Labour for the Conver-
sion of Infidels, of whom it could not be expected,
that many of them would come unto the Assem-
blies of the Faithful. Wherefore to convert these,
and spread the Nets of Salvation in the most like-
ly Places for them, which was then very much
the Work of the Day, there were those who did La-
bour with Travelling (which the Word here used
may import) for the Word and Doctrine, among
the Infidels: And every one sees why such La-
bouvers as these are judged to be Worthy of a pecu-
liar Honour. As the Bishops and Presbyters in the
Scriptures, are evidently the same, so it appears
not, that there were any Presbyters known in the
Scripture, who were not such as both Preached
the Gospel, and administered the Sacraments of it.
The Ruling Elders in the Churches of the Reform-
mation, seem to be akin to a sort of Elders among
the Jews, who were not Ordained (they say) by
laying on of Hands, but only were Venerable for
their Age, Discretion, and Gravity; and were
called Zikne Hasbuk, that is to say, Elders of the
Street, or Vulgar Elders. Great Men, who yet are
Zealous Maintainers of that Order, which goes
by the Name of RULING ELDERS [or, Seniors,]
in the Reformed Churches, are well aware
of this. And therefore still to preserve this Use-
ful Order, they take the Method, which One,
who may justly be called an Eagle Eyed as well as
an Excellent Writer in the Church of Scotland, has
at length pitched upon. The Cyprianus Isotimus
of that Marvelous Man, has these Passages.

Those
Those Elders are the Representatives of the Sacred Plebs or the Church; as she is opposed to, or distinguished from Church Officers properly so called; Bishops or Pastors and Deacons: And therefore they are not in a strict sense Church Officers. — The Church Privileges, and the necessary means to preserve them, must stand on the same Foundation. And accordingly Blondel judges, 'tis most probable that in the Time of the Apostles, not the whole Multitude, but their Seniors, did convene for their Affairs. He believes, that the Protestant Churches of France, and Scotland, and Holland, in their setting up of Ruling Elders, did introduce into the Church, a Practice truly Apostolic. — I can't indeed, during the III first Centuries, find express mention of these Seniors, or Ruling Elders. Yet I am persuaded, that there were Lay Seniors, that shared in the Management of Ecclesiastical Affairs, represented the People, and preserved their Liberties. The Writers of the 4th. and 5th. Ages, either expressly affirm it, or clearly suppose it. Ambrose or Hilary particularly, and Optatus. — My Hypothesis disjoins these Elders from the Clergy, and makes them the Representatives of the People, and Guardians of their Liberties. Accordingly in the Acts of Purgation of Cæcilian, which are Elder than the Council of Nice, — we diverse times read of the Clergy, and the Elders of the People. This is yielded by Bishop Whitgift, who says, I know, that in the Primitive Church, they had in every Church certain Seniors, to whom the Government of the Congregation was committed. And Saravia,
who affirms to Hilary's Saying, That the Church had Elders, or Seniors, without whose Council nothing was done; and adds, Adjunguntur Pastoribus Ecclesia tanquam Adseffores et Consiliari ut videant ne forte Potestat Ecclesiastica Pastores abutantur.

The English Church Wardens, in Voetius's Mind, are the Vestiges and Rubbish of those Ruling Seniors. This most necessary Ordinance, has in all well reformed Churches been carefully observed; and on the other hand most eagerly impugned by the Papists; as Schultingius and others cited by the most learned Voetius. Nor (they are the Words of the same excellent Person) is this a Wonder, since nothing is more opposite unto the Papal Monarchy, and Antichristian Tyranny, than is the Institution of RULING ELDERS. Voetius makes the Elders a kind of Ephori, that is, Preservers of the Churches Liberties, and Inspectors over the Pastors. I'll shut up all (says Mr. Jameson) with the Words of the Learned and Venerable Beza; 'Tis the Churches great Concern for the keeping out of Tyranny, that some chosen out of the People, know what is done in the Consistories, and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. As Anciently at Rome it was provided for the Restraining the Power of the Senate, that the Tribunes of the People should be present at it, and have Power of withstanding by a Negative Voice, the Senates Decrees.

Some of our Churches do yet continue to Elect, and (with Imposition of Hands) to Ordain One or Two, or Three Ruling Elders, and apprehend they find their Account in it, and good Services done
done to the Interests of Piety. And these we will present with the Exhortation, which Poly
carp gave to the Presbyters in the Church at Phi-
lippi. 'Let the Elders be Tender and Merciful;
Compassionate towards all; Reducing those
that are in Error; Visiting all that are Weak;
not Negligent of the Widow nor the Orphan,
and him that is poor; but ever providing what
is honest in the sight of GOD and Men; Ab-
staining from all Wrath, Respect of Persons,
and Unrighteous Judgment; being far from
Covetousness; not hastily believing a Report of
any Man; not rigid in Judgment; Knowing
that we are all Faulty and Obnoxious to Judg-
ment.

They will also think of what Origen, in the
third Century, declared then to be used in the
Churches; 'Persons established to take Notice
of the Life and Conversation of those, who
embrace the Christian Religion, and when
they committed any Evil Actions, to expel
them out of the Congregations; and receive
with great Affection, those that lived well, and
make them better from Day to Day.

§ 2. The Office of DEACONS, to assist and
relieve the Pastors, in all the Temporal Affairs of
the Church, is in the New English Churches re-
tained, as was in the Primitive; where we find
them Serving Tables; being as Ignatius (if it were
be') expresses it, ΠΡΟΜΑΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΤΩΝ ΔΙΑΚΟΝΟΙ:
The Deacons of Meats and Cups; that is to say,
Those who prepared the Bread and Wine for the
Eucharis:
Eucharist and the Dispensers, as Origēn expressed it, of the TATAΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΧΙΗΜΑΤΑ, Churches Money; (which ought to be) with the Advice of the Pastors.

These are they who in the New English Churches, as well as in the Primitive, do as they did in Justin Martyr's Time, deliver the Sacramental Bread and Wine unto the Communicants: (in which Action they sometimes call for Assistance from some other Brethren.) Herewithal they stand engaged, what they can, to free the Minister from all secular Disturbances and Avocations. For indeed, among the Churches in this Country Sacerdos in Foro, undergoes the Scourge of the Tongue, as being little better than Mercator in Templo. And yet it must be confessed that secular Digressions from their Sacred Employments, have been too often forced upon their Ministers, by the Ingratitude and Parsimony of the People, who have not always done their Duty to put their Ministers in the Condition mentioned by Cyprian, when he says, Qui in Ecclesia Domini Ordinatione Clerica promoventur, in nullo, ab Administratione Divina avocentur, nec Molestitiis et Negotiis Secularibus alligentur. But our People should hear the Father and Martyr speaking in plain English. Says he, Those who are promoted to Clerical Ordinations should not be hindered in their Divine Administrations or encumbered with secular Concerns and Affairs; but, as Levites, receiving Subscriptions from the Brethren, depart not from the Altar and Sacrifices, but Night and Day attend upon Spiritual and Heavenly Administrations.
We return to our Deacons. They are, as he that goes under the Name of Ignatius calls them; ἘΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΠΕΡΗΤΑΙ. The Servants of the Church of GOD; and they are constituted as Eusebius terms it, for the ὙΠΕΡΗΣΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΙΝΟΥ Service of the Publick. And if the βαθμος καλος which we render a good Degree, assigned unto faithful Deacons by the Apostle, mean, as 'tis by some Critics imagined, A Seat of some Emi-
nency in the Church Assemblies, the Churches of New England always have such a Seat, still a little below the Pulpit, facing the Congregation.

But it is after this Manner that they are introduced into it. The Pastor desires the Brethren, to choose a fit Number of Persons, from among themselves, for the Office of Deacons among them. And some little while after this Desire has been signified, the Brethren bring in their Votes, by Papers, which have written on them the Names of the Persons, which each Man would have to be chosen, according to the Number first agreed upon.

The Pastor hereupon calls upon some of the chief Brethren to count the Votes; and from the Report which they give him, he then declares whom they find the Major Votes fallen upon. If they be any of them (which rarely if ever happens) Persons against whom he hath an Objection that cannot easily be removed, he advises them to another Choice. But if he hath nothing to object, he applies himself unto the Persons chosen, with this Request, That they would so far accept the Call of the Church, as to do the Work.
expected from the Deacons, until such Time, as the Church may proceed, unto the full Observation of the Apostolical Direction, Let the Deacons first be proved; then let them use the Office of a Deacon.

It has been observed, That because in our Translation, it is enumerated among the Qualifications of a Deacon. [1 Tim. III. 2.] Even so must their Wives be grave, not Slanderers, sober, faithful in all things; And the French Churches therefore make it an Article of their Discipline, 'That as much as possible may be avoided, there should not be elected Elders and Deacons of the Church, those which had Wives contrary to the true Religion; When Deacons are chosen in the Churches, 'tis often enquired, Whether their Wives are qualified as has been directed? But this has been from a common Mistake about the Meaning of the Text; which does not say a Word about the Deacons Wife, any more than the Pastors, but only says, Let the Women [ὙΝΑΙΚΕΣ] be Grave. — Which Women are the Deaconesses; Officers not hitherto employed in the Churches of New-England.

The Deacons Elect, when they have in a Laudable Behaviour, for some time given Demonstration of their Ability, and Fidelity, do in some of the Churches become Deacons Ordained with Imposition of Hands. Though in many of these Churches, This Rite of their Confirmation, is fallen into such a Desuetude, as it is in other Churches of the Reformation. One Reason for this Omission, has been because in many of our Churches, the Deacons do little other Work, than
provide the Elements for the Eucharist; and a solemn Ordination to nothing but this, appears hardly a Congruity. But when an Ordination is intended, some Lord's Day (or Fast Day) being before signified by the Pastor for the Purpose, when the Day arrives the Pastor makes the Consummation of this Affair, to be among the other Exercises of the Day. He declares, that by the Churches Designation, such and such Persons are now to be confirmed in the Office of Deacons, if there now appear nothing to obstruct it. He therefore proposes unto the Brethren of the Church, [suppose Two to be now concerned:] That if they do still maintain and will now renew, their Choice of the Two Beloved Brethren, A. B. and C. D. to the Office of Deacons in the Church, their uplifted Hands may signify it. This being done, he addresses himself unto the Persons chosen; desiring them to intimate their Acceptance of the Churches Choice; which they successively do, with modest Expressions of their Willingness and Readiness, to do the Church all possible Service, and their Sense of their own being unable as well as unworthy to serve the Flock of our Glorious LORD, but requesting therefore the Prayers of all the Faithful for them, that they may faithfully discharge every Trust that shall be reposed in them.

So the Pastor, taking the most convenient Place that he can find in the Assembly for it, calls them to him, and laying his Two Hands on the Heads of the Two Persons (if there be so many, and when there is but one Pastor, there can be no more Ordained in One Action,) he first make a
Short Prayer; Acknowledging the Glorie of a Great SAVIOUR, and His Government and Interest in His Churches, and His Favours to that particular Church; and petitioning for His Countenance to the Present Action. He then with his Hands yet imposed, applies himself to them with a Charge to this Purpose.

Whereas You, upon whom these Hands are now imposed, have been chosen to the Office of Deacons in this Church of the Lord, I do now in the Name of that Glorious Lord, and on the behalf of this People, solemnly set you apart unto the Discharge of that Office; And before the Great GOD our SAVIOUR, and before His Elect Angels, I do solemnly charge you, to do all the Work of your Office, with all good Integrity: In the Doing whereof, you are to be Grave, not Double-tongue’d, not given to much Wine, not greedy of filthy Lucre: You are to hold the Mystery of Faith in a Pure Conscience, and to be blameless in well using the Office of a Deacon: You are to rule your own Houses well, and so to behave your selves that you may have great Boldness in the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; Unto whose Grace you are now to be recommended.

Whereupon in another short Prayer, with his Hands yet imposed, he recommends them to the Grace of GOD, and Petitions, and Pronounces the Blessing of Heaven upon them.

Thus it is that the Churches in New-England are Organized.

ARTICLE
ARTICLE VIII.

The DISCIPLINE with which the Churches are kept in their Faith and Order.

§ 1. THE Question has been considered in the Churches of New England, Whether the Pastor of a Church may not occasionally dispense the Seals of the Covenant in another Church, upon the Peoples Desiring of it?

And it has been very publickly and practically answered, That they may.

As a Minister of the Gospel, or one solemnly set apart for Evangelical Administrations, does retain his Character, when preaching in other Congregations, besides that which is his immediate Charge: The Words of Dr. Owen are certainly to be allowed of; 'Altho' we have no Concern in the Figment of an Indelible Character accompanying Sacred Orders, yet we do not think, that the Pastoral Office is such a Thing as a Man must leave behind him every time he goeth from Home: For my own part, if I did not think my self bound to preach as a Minister Authorized in all Places, and on all Occasions,
when I am called thereunto, I think, I should never Preach any more in this World: 
So, 'tis no where scrupled, that a Pastor of a Church, may administer the Special and Sealing Ordinances, to the Members of another Church, coming to occasional Communion with him in his own; and if they should All of them (even their whole Church) so com to him, he will not refuse them. Certainly then, he may as well go to that other Church, and administer the Sacred Ordinances to them in the Place where they assemble, if it be desired from him: It appears not, why the Presence of his own Flock should be necessary to Legitimate such an Administration? Why, any more than the Presence of the whole Flock to which any particular Member belongs, to whom he occasionally administers the Seals, when he comes to him in a Transient Way for it? The Consent and Request of the Persons concerned, Pro hac Vice, sufficiently enables him. The Churches of New-England herein differ from the Rigid Separatists, your Canne and Company; and it is expressly provided in their Platform, That Churches may lend a Minister to supply the Place of an Absent or a Sick Minister of another Church for a needful Season.

Some of the more famous Divines, at the first Settlement of these Churches, publicly declared, themselves, for the Affirmative of the Question. And long after them, Dr. Goodwin gave it under his Hand, with an, Ita sentio, ita sensi; 'That every true Minister, actually such to his own Church, is Medium Applicable, an Instrument
that may apply to any Ministerial Act out of his own Church, in any other Church, if he be there unto called by them. Yea, when Polycarp, a Scholar of the Apostle John, and one Ordained (as Jerome, and Eusebius and others testify) by the Apostles themselves, came from Smyrna to Rome, for the Composing of some Differences, Anicetus, the Pastor of the Church there, to express his Love and Honour for him, requested him to administer the Eucharist unto the Church, where he now appeared but as a Traveller; and, he did it. Now, Irenæus assures us, Polycarp always taught the Churches to Observe those things which he learned from the Apostles themselves, and nothing else.

Accordingly, In these Churches, not only does a Pastor coming occasionally to an Assembly, administer the Baptism of the Lord, unto any Infant of the Flock that may be brought for it, if their own Pastor be out of the Way; But also, upon the Desire of a Desitute Flock for it, it is allowed that a Neighbouring Pastor may go and administer the Supper of the Lord unto them. Only, the Prætice is the less frequent, because the Churches would not encourage a Desitute Flock, in any thing that may abate their Sense of the Necessity lying upon them, to make as much haste as they can, out of their Inorganic, and Uncomfortable, Circumstances.

§ 2. When the Communicants in these Churches have Occasion for to Travel, the Pastors give them LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.
TION (perhaps not unlike the Pacific Letter without which the Primitive Churches would not receive travelling Strangers,) Or, Testimonials of this Importance? That —— the Bearer hereof having been admitted into the Fellowship of the Church [in the Place mentioned] and behaved himself insensitively therein, is upon that Account recommended unto Communion in Special Ordinances, with any Churches of our LORD, walking in the Faith and Order of the Gospel, wheresoever he may have Opportunity in the Travels now before him, to desire it.

Indeed we find, it was a Decree of a Carthaginian Council, 'That no one should communicate in another Church, without a Letter from the Bishop of his own Church.' The Churches of New-England require it not, from such as are otherwise known sufficiently, but where Persons cannot be well known without it.

They also admit unto Occasional Communion, those who have any living Testimonies of their having been Communicants in Scotland, or Holland; or any Reformating Churches in England, or Ireland, or elsewhere, tho' they should happen to be not furnish'd with written Credentials.

But when a Brother in a Church alters and removes his Habitation, and intends an Abode with the Church, where to he would be Recommended; or, for weighty Reasons finds it necessary to consult his own Edification, in changing a Society; he applies himself unto his own Pastor for LETTERS OF DISMISSION, or for some Authentic Signification of the Church, where to he has hitherto belonged, allowing a Translation of
his more immediate Relation, unto the Church he would more constantly sit down withal. The Letterae Dimissoriea mentioned by some old Councils, as peculiar to the Clergy, are directed for the Brethren. Too many removing without some such Instrument, consigning the Church Watch upon the Remover, from one Church to another; This Omission has been an Occasion of some Disorders, and caused some Difficulty in the Execution of their Discipline.

And hence it comes to pass that sometimes a Person does for many Years enjoy a constant Communion with a Church at the Table of the Lord, and yet remains uncapable of Acting and Voting with the Church as a Member of it.

The Church Covenant being but the Covenant of Grace applied unto the special Purposes of a Church State, and it being a Duty of that Covenant, for a Man to join himself with some Christian Society, in observing the Laws of our Saviour, where he does in his own private Judgment of Discretion think that he can best pursue and attain the Ends of that Covenant; a Man joining to any one particular Church, does in effect confess thus much, with a Choice thereupon of that Christian Society, whereto he now becomes related, as answering that Character.

Accordingly, when a Person judges that he can with more Edification, enjoy the Blessings of the New Covenant in another Society, than that with which he has hitherto walked, except the Society have any just Exception against his Judging so, he does well to ask a Dismission, and they of whom he does ask it, ought then to give it. If
they Refuse it, a Council of Neighbour Churches applied unto, may order it.

But now, the Pastor having first asked and gained the Consent of the Church unto it, he writes to the other Church, something of this Importance; 'That [such an One] having for allowable Reasons requested a Dismission from this Church to that, it is hereby Testified on his behalf, that he has been for some time, a Communicant with them in all special Ordi- nances, and by a good Conversation in CHRIST, approved himself worthy of it. But now in answer to his Just Request, they Dis- miss him to the more immediate Fellowship of them with whom he is now to Reside; Ent- treating him to receive him into their Fel- lowship, and extend that Love and Care unto him which is directed in the Rules of the Gos- pel. So with Wishes and Prayers for their Prosperity, the Pastor Subscribes, with the Consent of the Brethren.

The Churches of New-England, are encourag- ed in such Usages, by the Discipline of the French Protestants, whereof it was an Article, 'That when any one for his necessary Affairs was forced to Travel, Recommendatory Letters to the next Church, were to be Asked and Granted. And the Synod of Sardis, A. C. 347 Established the the Use of such Letters in the Churches of those Early Days. In the Primitive Churches they were called, Literae Communicatoriae. Tertullian calls them, Literas Pacis: And the Greek Churches called them, Synaptic Epistles. That famous Dutchman, Hornbeck, does commend the
Churches of New-England, for the Use of such Letters. And unto that Question, Whether such Letters are not requisite in the Translation of Members from one Church unto another? the Incomparable Voetius answers, *Ia habet ordo Ecclesiasticus, et laudabili more obtinet in Ecclesiis Belgicis.* Church Order does require them; and the Dutch Churches do observe them.

Inasmuch as many Church-Members, when they have Removed unto other Churches, without a Prospect of a Return, have been too Negligent in seeking for an Explicit and Orderly Translation, it is a Practice taken up, That the Churches Desire and Entrust their Pastors to send unto such Persons the Dismission which they should have asked for, and oblige them therewith to join themselves in the most regular Manner to the Churches, with which they have now a fixed Abode; and let them know, it will be an Offence, if they do, without a very valid Reason, delay to do it.

He that has these Letters of Dismission, is yet Actually a Member of the Church that gives them, until he be actually joined unto another; capable of a Voting with it, and liable to the Censures of it. But being thus furnished with Letters, like those written of old, on the behalf of Apollos to the Disciples of Achaia, Exhorting them to receive him; or like those written for Marcus to the Colossians; or, like those for Phæbe to the Romans; he carries them to the Pastor of the Church where he now resides; and the Pastor propounds to the Church the Desire of this Person: Whereupon, if no Objection occur, he reads unto the Church
the Letters of Dismission, and puts them upon signifying their Willingness to receive the Person thus dismissed unto their Communion, by lifting up their Hands. This being done, he repeats unto the Person, the Substance of the Church Covenant, and upon his Consent thereunto, he declares the Promise of the Church to acknowledge him with all Christian Regards in their Sacred Fellowship.

They that have gone yet no further than the Covenant of Baptism, for themselves and theirs, upon a Removal are to carry some Certificate from their Pastor unto him under whose Ministry they are now to reside; which qualifies them to demand Baptism for their Children, which may be there born unto them: and also entitles the Church there, to proceed with Rebutkes upon them in Case of their falling into any Scandalous Offences.

§ 3. In the Primitive Church there was a Godly Discipline, that such Persons as were notorious Sinners, were put to open Penance in this World, that their Souls may be saved in the Day of the Lord, and that others admonished by their Exemple, might be more afraid to offend. Now as the Churches of New-England, were at first planted, partly on the Design of Obtaining and Maintaining the Exercise of such a Discipline; A Design for which they apprehended, they had a sufficient Warrant of our SAVIOUR; So this Discipline has been hitherto more or less exercised.

If one under the Covenant and Government of the Church, fall into a Scandalous Transgression against
gainst the Laws of our Holy Redeemer, and the Transgression be at once, and at first a Matter of publick Fame, the Pastor upon the Cry, reckons it his Duty to Enquire into it, and bring it immediately under an Ecclesiastical Cognition.

In the Primitive Churches, we find not only Schism, Idolatry, Heresy, Covetousness, Gluttony, Drunkenness, Fornication, and Adultery, expressly among Censurable Evils, [Quære, How did they convict any Man of Covetousness; a Fault which ordinarily no Man ever thinks himself guilty of!], but also as Origen writes, All other Sins whatsoever. Cyprian therefore tells us, That not only, Gravissima et extrema Delicta, Grooser Offences, but also, Minora Delicta, lesser ones, were Censured among them. The Churches of New-England have no express and agreed Catalogue of the Crimes, that shall expose to Censures, except what is in the Bible itself: But the Rule which they profess is, That an Ecclesiastical Animadversion belongs to such plain Transgressions against the Rules of a Godly, and a Sober, and a Righteous Life, as we may justly Judge, that a Person under our Measures of Illumination cannot obstinately persist in, without forfeiting an Interest in the Kingdom of GOD. Such Opinions, and such Practices, as it may be our Duty to believe Consistent with true PIETY, the Censures of the Churches do not animadvert upon. The Evangelical Church-State, being in some sort the Kingdom of Heaven, the Churches of New-England endeavour to make theirs a Visible Sermon to the World, upon the Requisites of Mens being received into Heaven at the last. As in their Admissions they study Practically to de-
declare, Who shall abide in the Tabernacle of the Lord, and who shall dwell in his holy Hill; So in their Exclusions, 'tis their study Practically to declare, What crooked Ways they are, which will procure Men to be led forth with the Workers of Iniquity; to declare, Who are those Workers of Deceit, which our Lord will not have to dwell in His House. They have been willing to make Origen's Declaration, 'We use our utmost Endeavour, that our Assemblies may be composed of Wise and Good Men.

Indeed, while no body questions, Whether profane Swearing and Cursing, evident Sabbath-breaking, Drunkenness, Fighting, Fornication and all Scandalous Unchastities, Cheating, Stealing, an Abandonment unto Idleness, Lying, unrighteous Defamation, and such Heresies as manifestly overturn the Foundations of the Christian Religion and of all PIETY, are Censurable Evils; the Churches have sometimess had some Difficulties, about Precocious Nativities. But if a Child evidently come to the Growth which Nine Months, are ordinarily allowed for, be born within about Seven Months after Marriage, it is ordinarily expected, that the Fault of an Unlawful Congress be publickly and penitently acknowledged; except the suspected Persons offer a Purgation by an Oath, or a Declaration that shall be equivalent, for their Innocency. But the Birth may be so Premature, that no such Purgation may be admitted of.

But a scandalous Offence against Wisdom and Goodness arising, 'tis thus proceeded with.
The Pastor sends for the Delinquent, and usually he desires a few of the chief Brethren to be with him in the Action; and enquiring into the Merit of the Cause, he finds one of these to be necessary. Either the Delinquent manifesteth himself so sensible of his Miscarriage, that only a Publick Acknowledgement before the whole Church is to be expected from him; or else there is yet manifest that hardness of Heart, that bespeaks for him a publick Admonition.

When 'tis judged that a public ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, may make the Plaister for the Wounds which the Transgressor has given to Religion as broad as the Sore, he is put either upon Writing of his Acknowledgement, (which is most usual) or upon speaking on it, as 'tis foreseen will be most for Edification. And then in some Congregation of the Faithful, either the Church alone (which is thought most Adviseable where the Neighbourhood is very Populous, and full of Strangers) or the Rest of the Neighbourhood staying with the Church, (which is the Custom in most Places;) the Pastor gives the Church a true Report of the Scandal, and adds his Hope of the Man's having Repented of it; who now appears before them, to testify it with a Confession proper to the Occasion, which is then exhibited. Thus, there was an Exomologesis enjoined on the Penitents in the Primitive Churches; and there was that whereof Tertullian so expresseth himself, Satisfactio Confessione disponitur, Confessione Paenitentiae nascitur. This being done, the Pastor puts it unto the Vote of their uplifted Hands, Whether they accept
accept the Satisfaction which has been thus offered by the Repenting Brother before them, and are willing to restore him to their Favour and Fellowship? Which being signified, the Pastor then makes a loving and faithful Speech unto the Restored Person; magnifying the Mercy of GOD unto the Penitent, and therewith directing and exciting of him to improve what has now occurred, for his more circumspect Walk all the Remainder of his Pilgrimage; And then unto the rest of the Assembly, to take notice what those Evils are which they now see must be repented of, and Watch and Pray that they may not fall into them.

Where 'tis judged that a publick ADMONITION is needful, the Pastor warns the Offender to give his Attendance upon the Church at the Time that he prefixes unto him; and in some Congregation of the Faithful, as before, he lays before the Church, a short, plain, full Narrative of the Offence, which the Brother now before him has fallen into; with the Testimonies of it, and of the Unsuccessfulness which hath hitherto been upon the Means, to bring him unto a due Remorse for it; Wherefore he also now calls upon the Person, to offer any further Tokens of Repentance, if there be with him any to be offered.

Thus, among these Churches, as well as among the Churches in Origen's Time, the Delinquent must appear, Before the whole Church.

If the Person do out of Contempt refuse to make his Appearance, the Pastor moves the Church to concur (after some further Exercise of Patience, if
if in their Lenity they think it necessary) unto his Excommunication.

If he do now appear, and give such Expressions of Repentance, that the Pastor with the Brethren conclude his Heart come to the Frame it should be in, and the Honour of the Gospel sufficiently vindicated, they do then by a Vote signify their Acceptance of him; Whereupon the Pastor makes a Speech unto him, and unto the rest of the Assembly, proper for the Occasion.

But if his Repentance, upon its being weighed in the Ballance, be found Wanting, the Pastor proposunds it unto the Brethren, that they may proceed unto a more solemn Admonition.

In the sad Cases of Censures, it has been thought an Indecency, to ask for the Vote of Uplified Hands: But the Pastor chuses to tell the Brethren, that if no Objection be made against the Proceeding, he shall take their Silence for a loud Expression of their Concurrence.

Hereupon, either at this Time or at some other appointed by the Pastor, the Offender stands forth in the Christian Assembly; and the Pastor distinctly sets before him his Faults, with the several Rules in the Gospel, which have in his Faults been violated, concluding with Terms of this Importance.

Wherefore in the Name of the most Glorious GOD our Saviour, (which Name you have Dishonoured by Sinning against him;) and with the Concurrence of this His People (a People that long to see you recovered out of the Sinful Distemper now upon you;) I AD-

MONISH you, to Repent of the Scandals which
which we have seen proved against you, as well as of the more secret Faults, by which you may have provoked the Holy One to leave you to what is more openly Scandalous. I ADMONISH you, to repair unto the Blood of the Redeemer, that you may be cleansed from all your Sins, in that Fountain set open for Sin and for Uncleanness. I ADMONISH you, to cry mightily unto the Spirit of the Lord, for that new and soft Heart, that shall incline you, not only to confess your Sin with unfeigned Sorrow, but also to forswake it with Eternal Detestation. I signify unto you, that as there is Grace enough in our Great SAVIOUR for you, if you return to him, so upon such a Return, this Flock of his will make you some Representation of His Grace, by renewing the Marks of their Favour to you. But I signify unto you, that until we see good Symptoms of a Penitent Heart upon you, We SUSPEND you from the Priviledges of our Sacred Fellowship; and if you continue Impenitent, we must proceed unto a further Declaration of that Censure, which will be a Terrible Representation of your Banishment from the Kingdom of GOD. GOD forbid that it should come to this! That it may not come to this, we will now pour out our most affectionate Supplications for you.

So the Pastor makes a pathetical Prayer for the recovering of the fallen Sinner, and a Blessing upon the Censure now applied unto him, and upon the Warning which the whole Assembly has therein Received.
Perhaps he thinks it also proper to make a short Speech unto the Assembly, directing a Right Improvement of the whole Transaction.

If the Person by some late Removal reside at so considerable a Distance from the Church, that he cannot well attend, then, upon a full Proof of the Scandal against him, the Church agrees to send unto him an Admonition in a Letter, which the Pastor forms and signs accordingly.

When a Person has thus received an Admonition for a Scandal, the Private Christians who dwell near him, reckon it their Duty, by Visiting of him, and by Discoursing with him, to prosecute the good Effects thereof upon him.

Where a Scandalous Transgression is known only to One or Two, the Proceedings of the Persons that know it, are the same, that they are in the Case of a Personal Injury: The Steps directed in the XVIII. Ch. of Mathew. He that knows the Offence, first of all himself goes to the Offender, and seriously endeavours to bring him to Repentance. If the Offender be Obstinate, he then (having Proof to convict him) takes one or two Brethren with him, and renews his Endeavours that the Man may come to Repentance. If this be ineffectual, They carry the Complaint unto the Pastor, who pursues the Designs of Humiliation on the Soul of the Offender. If the Man does now Relent, and the Offence be still in a sure Way to be kept private, the Satisfaction thus privately given, is taken up withal. But if either the Man continue Impenitent, or the Matter have so taken Air, as to be a Matter of common Fame, and the
Talk of the People, then it falls into the Course, that such a Matter is to be treated withal.

When the Repentance of a Person duly admonished has been a competent Measure of Time waited for, and no Fruits of Repentance are found upon him, the Church passes on to that HIGHEST CENSURE, which is by Dionysius of Alexandria called, A Driving away from the Church; By Tertullian, An Abjuration and a Depulsion from the Church; By Cyprian, A Separation from the Church, and an Ejection out of it.

Yea, in some Atrocious Crimes, wherein the most severe Testimonies against the things, whereof the Holy Son of GOD has declared, I hate them, appear necessary to rescue the Church from His Wrath, and from an evil Report in the World, and to break the Heart of Stone in the Criminal, the Churches do sometimes proceed, ipso Fato, to an Excommunication.

But in these Churches, the Difference between the Lesser Excommunication and the Greater Excommunication, has appeared so very little, that the Suspension laid upon an Offender, at his Admonition is often stopped at, without going any further. The Order, Put away the wicked Person, is therein complied withal.

But there are Degrees of Solemnity in putting away such an one; and the Sentence called, An EXCOMMUNICATION, is to be more formally pronounced upon the just Occasions.

The Pastor never proceeds unto it, without the Concurrence of the Brethren; And we know that in Cyprian's Age, the Offenders pleaded their Cause, Apud universam Plebem; and an Excommuni-
vocation was ordered, Secundum Plebis divina Suffragia.

In parallelling this Way of New-England, we will for Brevity, only take Advantage of a Quotation from an Eminent Scotch Presbyterian, even the Pious and the Learned Rutherford, whose Words are these. *Grave Beza, Calvin, Bucer, Bullinger, Melandhbon, Bucan, Paræus, Rivetius, Sibrandus, Junius, Trelecatus; The Fathers, Cyprian, Jerom, Augustin, Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Theodoret, Theophylaæt, require all things to be done Consentient Plebe, with the Peoples Consent.*

The Pastor ordering the Offender to attend at the Time appointed, he then gives him an Opportunity to express his Repentance: Which if the Pastor perceives not now done unto Satisfaction, he does with a proper Zeal propose unto the Brethren, Whether any one of them can Object against their proceeding unto the Censure of an Excommunication upon the Incorrigible Offender; — But if they Concur thereunto, he shall take their Silence for a full Intimation of their Consent unto so sad an Action. Hereupon the Pastor (either now goes on unto the Action, or) signifieth unto the Offender, that he must on such a Day give his Attendance, and hear then what the Church has to say unto him. If he refuse to attend on the Day specified, the Censure is pronounced upon him, for his adding of such a Contumacy unto his former Iniquity. But if he do attend, the Pastor having recited a Summary Account of the Case, in the hearing of the Congregation, once more gives the Offender a Liberty to speak what
what he can, for the Prevention of that Sentences, which is else waiting for him. If what he says be not a sufficient Arrest of the Judgment, then, as Tertullian elegantly describes this awful Action, Judicatour magno cum pondere, ut apud certos de Dei Conspicu, summumque futuri iudicium Præjudicium est. The Pastor once again, takes the Concurrence of the Brethren, as he did before; and then proceeds with all possible Seriousness, Gravity, Majesty, Compassion, and Solemnity, unto the Censure.

In the Primitive Times, we find that he who passed the formal Sentence on the Criminal, first begun with Exhortations; that is to say, He exhorted the Faithful with all Diligent Fear and Care, to avoid the Sins which had brought the Offender before them, into such a deplorable Condition. Then followed sharp Reprehensions to the Offender himself, rebuking him for his soul Enormities; as being provoking to GOD, provoking to good Men, and pernicious to his own Soul; And in the close of all, the Divine Censure was pronounced. Much such is the Method of Excommunication in the Churches of New-England.

In the Churches formerly, There was little scruple made, of using in Excommunications, the Form of, Delivering up the Offender to Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus: By which they meant, That the Offender, now being declared and censured, as one visibly belonging to the Kingdom of Satan, 'twas hoped such a Conviction of his miserable State would hence arise unto his Mind,
Mind, That his Corruption would be thereby mortified, and Salvation furthered.

But the Pastors in some of the Churches, have now espoused another Notion of the Tradition of Satanæ mentioned by the Apostle to the Corinthians, as being a Prerogative Apostolical and Extraordinary. The Sovereign GOD sometimes gave to His Prophets the Power of inflicting Diseases, or Distresses, on the Bodies of ungodly Men, and of pronouncing upon them those Bodily Mischiefs, whereof he has made Satan or the Angel of Death, to be the Executioner; Of such a Power, Moses and Elijah in the Old Testament, and Peter and Paul in the New, have given us Tremendous Examples. And this Power may seem to have been that Virga Apostolica whereof the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. IV. 21. Shall I come unto you with a Rod? On which the Author of the Ancient Commentary falsely ascribed unto Jerom has this true Gloss, Quali Virga? Quali Petrus venit ad Anarim et Sapphiram, et Paulus ad Magum; such a Rod as Peter used on Ananias and Sapphira, and such as Paul used on Elymas the Sorcerer. And what Paul did on Hymenæus and Philetus may be a further Instance of it. When the Apostle decreed the Destruction of the Flesh, unto the Offender whom he delivered unto Satan, the Opposition of the Spirit in the next Clause makes it evident that the Body is intended; He decreed then, that the Rod of Offender should be left unto Satanic Impressions and Afflictions, by the Terrors whereof his poor Soul might be awakened unto a Saving Repentance. Chrysostom accordingly, who understood Greek, expounds the ΟΛΕΘΡΩΝ ΣΑΡΚΟΣ as
exemplified in the Vexations of Job; and adds, That he may Scourge him with an evil Ulcer, or some other Disease. Ambrose in like sort expounds it thus; Nempe scit Dominus in Animam Sancti Job Pote]atem non dedit, sed in Carnem ejus permisit Licentiam, ita bic traditur Satanae. Ferom thus expounds it, Præcepit eum tradi Pœnitentiam in Interi- tum. et Vexationem Carnis, per Jejunia. et Egrotationes. ut Spiritus Salvus fiat. Thus Pacianus also, in one of his Epistles to Sempronianus, by this Destruction of the Flesh, understands, Carnis Angustias, et Deter- menta Membrorum. There seems a plain Distin- cion to be made, [1 Cor. V. 5. 13.] The Censure upon the Incestuous Corinthian is directed by the Apostle in these Words, Put away from your selves that wicked Person; The ordinary Ministry of the Church was to do this, with the Consent of the Brethren. But now the Apostle without Staying, for their Consent, by his own Authority says, I have decreed in the Name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, to deliver such an one to Satan. In which Decree of his, he demands of them to rest Satisfied, when they should be gathered together. Hence the Primi- tive Churches did abstain from this Form of Excommunication, when they darted the Thunder- bolt with never so many other terrible Circum- stances. Nothing perhaps would be more terri- ble, than the Excommunication, wherewith Andro- nicus, the Prefect of Ptolemais, was Anathematized by Synesius, for his Cruelties and Blasphemies. The Terms were; Let no Temple of GOD be open unto Andronicus, and his Accomplices: Let every Holy Place be shut upon them. We admonish every Per- son, whether publick or private, that they neither Lodge
with them, nor Eat with them. And especially, let the Ministers of GOD, neither speak to them while they Live, nor be at their Funerall when they Dye. Of any Delivering to Satan, there was OYAE IPR. And for this Caufe, the renowned National Synod of the French Protestant Churches met at Alex, forbade this Form of Excommunication, to be used among them.

Wherefore the Pastor, when he comes to pass the Sentence of Excommunication, does make as convincing a Speech as he can to the Offendor, setting before him the heinous Nature of his Offence, and of his Impeffivity under it. And at the same time, he calls upon all the People to take notice of the Holiness which the Church must and will manifest, in their not bearing with those that are Evil, and of the transcendent Holiness in the Glorious Head of the Church, whereof he will have every Church to be sensible. He then concludes with something of this Importance.

And now, In the Name of the Glorious Lord JESUS CHRIST, and with the Concurrence of his faithful People now assembled, I do declare you to be CUT OFF, (your Sin hath procured such an Excision for you!) from the Privilidges and Expectations of such as are in Covenant with the Churches of GOD. I declare you to belong visibly to the sinful and woful Kingdom of Satan, the Ruler of the Darkness of this World. I declare you to be a Person, from whom the Followers of our Holy Lord are to withdraw, as from one that walks Disorderly. And this just Sentence is now passed upon you, as a Representation of a Sentence much more dreadful, to be passed upon you, in the Day when the Lord JESUS CHRIST shall come to judge the
the World: — Except it be prevented by a seasonable Repentance, which may our Gracious GOD of his Infinite Mercy bestow upon you! —

Brethren, Let us pour out our Prayers on this Mournful Occasion! — which the Pastor proceeds to do accordingly.

If the Offender have refused his Attendance, the Excommunication yet goes on, in Terms proper for one that is out of hearing, and will not hear.

Sometimes the Circumstances of the Offender are so difficult, that before the Church proceeds to this Extremity, they send unto some of the Neighbouring Churches, that from their Delegates meeting in a Council for this Purpose, they may receive that Advice, which may put their Proceedings beyond all Contestation. And in this the Practice of New-England, is not very far different from that of the primitive Times, when it was a Custome, for the Decision of more difficult Points, to desire the Bishops of the neighbouring Churches, to come over and assist with their Presence, to free the Censures from the Imputation of Unrighteousness or Partiality. Thus when a nice Affair was to be determined at Rome, on Cornelius's Desire, * five Bishops assisted, that so what they did might be Indisputable.

§ 3. When a Person has been Excommunicated, the Faithful do continue unto him, the general Offices of Humanity; nor does he suffer for it any civil Penalties: Only this, that such an one is

[* Adsumunt Episcopi Quinque, ut firmato Consilio, quid circa Personam eorum observari debuerit, consensu omnium Statueretur;] rarely
rarely chosen by the People to any publick Employments. But yet they withhold from him, their Familiarity; and act according to the Apostolical Rule of, Avoiding them; which in Cyprian's time, was thus understood, Contumaces et Deum non timentes, et ab Ecclesia in totum recedentes, nemo comitetur.

The Way to get a Censure taken off, is by an Exemplary REPENTANCE, and such as may be Satisfactory to the Sentiments of Reasonable Piety.

In this Repentance, the Churches of New-England require not all the Ceremonies mentioned by Tertullian, A lying in Sackcloth and Ashes, having a squalid Body and a dejected Soul; Fasting, Praying, Weeping, Groaning, and Roaring Night and Day, and throwing themselves at the Feet of the Elders, and kneeling before the Faithful, begging their Prayers and their Pardon; But yet they require the Essence and Substance of what is mentioned in the Letters of the Ministers to Cyprian; * In Sum, Humility, Modesty, Patience, Petition, Tears, with Reformation, are expected in the Penitent; and none of those Vanities or Levities which are mentioned by Cyprian, in his Book, De Lapsu, as Confutations of a professed Repentance, are to be indulged with them. There's no such Compleat and Legal Time of Satisfaction limited in the Churches of New-Eng-
land, as the rigider among the Ancients called, The Time of Penance, which with an arbitrary Severity they sometimes imposed. But wherever there are seen Rational Demonstrations of Repentance in an Excommunicate, the Pastor soon brings him to the Church, [For the Repenting and the Absolving of the Fallen, is, in these Churches, as it was required in Austin's Time, * Let him not refuse to express his Repentance, even before all the People: Or as that of Natalius, mentioned by Eusebius, when he melted the whole Church into the Tears of Compassion for him,] who upon the View thereof do Vote the Restoration of the Penitent, (with an uplifted Hand;) and the Pastor pronounces him restored; with solemn Charges unto him, to walk worthy of the Divine Goodness;—whereeto he adds Prayers, and Praises, and Speeches that may suit the Grateful Occasion. And thus the Person is as Jerome speaks, † Restored in the Presence of the whole Church, with Pastor and People together weeping over him.

Some in Danger (and Absence) by Sickness, have been released from their Censure, upon the Report of the Pastor, and certain Brethren, made unto the Church, of a Repentance well expressed in them,

[*In Notitia Multorum, vel etiam totius Plebis agere Penitentiam non recuset;]  
[†Episcopo et omni Populo collacrymantibus, Receptus, sub oculis omnis Ecclesiae, ad Communionem.]
ARTICLE IX.

Of COUNCILS upon Emergencies.

§. 1. THE Case may be so that a Person may be oppressed by unjust Passion and Prejudice, and have a Censure unjustly passed upon him. In this Case, the Churches of New-England, have a Remedy for Oppression, that is to say, A COUNCIL; the Methods whereof are now to be declared.

Tho' the Churches of New-England have been called Independents, they have not yet arrived unto the Degree of Independence, which was challenged in the Days of Austin; Habet omnis Episcopus pro licentia Potestatis et Libertatis suæ Arbitrium proprium; Judicari ab ali o non potest, quomodo nec ipse Judicare; sed expectemus universi Judicium Christi, qui solus habet de actu nostro Judicandi potestatem.

The Person aggrieved applies himself to the Pastor, and by him to the Church, with humble Remonstrances of the Hardships which he apprehends used upon him; desiring them to Review his Case: And if this don't obtain, then to accommodate him in calling a Council of Neighbour Churches, (chosen with mutual Satisfaction,) to judge of the Proceedings.

If they refuse to do it, he may do it without them; Only still informing them what he does.
He writes Letters, to what Churches in the Neighbourhood he pleases; briefly declaring, That he apprehends himself to suffer by an Administration that needs to be more thoroughly enquired into; and entreats the Pastors, with the Delegates of the Churches to whom he now makes his Address, to come to the Place, and at the Time, that are specified in the Letters, and consider the Case, whereof a full Representation shall then and there be laid before them; and give their Advice, which he hopes will be with all Sincerity and Humility hearkened to.

If the Church think it advisable for them to have their Share in chusing and calling the Council, the Letters then go in their Name, (signed by the Pastor) and are of the like Importance.

The Pastors of the Churches (to whom an aggrieved Person has (under the neglect of the Church to do any thing for the Relief of his Distress) made his Complaints, do not rashly at once read his Letters to their Churches: But having informed themselves as throughly as they can of the Case, they signify unto the Pastor of the Church complained of, what they have received, and ask him to let them know whether the Difficulty cannot be removed, without their coming to them as a Council; or whether they have any just Objection to make against their coming to them. For the management of these Preliminaries, the Pastors either have an Interview, or else by Messengers hold such a Communication with one another, as is needful to their Concurrence in the Action.
If after all, the Pastors are apprehensive that their further Proceeding may be necessary, they proceed then to read their Letters to the Churches; who thereupon choose their Delegates for a Council.

In choosing of the Delegates, the Pastor usually Nominates the Persons whom he would commend unto the Choice of the Church, and then says unto the Church, If there are any others, whom you will please to nominate on this Occasion, you have and know your Liberty.

When 'tis only an Aggrieved Party, that has addressed for a Council, the Pastors do by the Letters to the Pastor of the Church complained of, signify Where and When their coming is to be looked for.

The Council coming on the Spot, first choose their Moderator, and use all other necessary Preliminaries; Whereupon they proceed unto an publick Hearing as they they can have, [namely in the Meeting-House, ] of the things that are to come under their Examination; The Moderator ever beginning with Solemn Supplications.

Retiring then to the Place of their more private Entertainment, they there consider over again, all that has been laid before them. Every Member of the Council may with leave of the Moderator declare their Sentiments.

The Result is drawn up in a proper Instrument; wherein they first Report what they find, and then Advise what they would have to be done; usually fortifying their Advice with pertinent Passages of the Sacred Scriptures, annexed unto each of the Articles.
If they find, that the Person hath not suffered such Injury as he pretends unto, he comes off as unhappily as Pāliciissimus did; who after he was Excommunicated in his own Congregation, made as an Injured Person, his Appeal to a Synod; but the Synod Ratified and Confirmed the Sentence of Excommunication against him.

If they find the Person to have suffered Palpable Injury, they endeavour to convince the Church of it, and advise them to restore the Injured Person unto his former Station.

They Order that if the Church do refuse this (or; do refuse to give the Council an Account of the Matter; A thing that perhaps never happened!) the Person be admitted into some other Church of the Neighbourhood, and so unto Communion with them all.

The Church persisting in their Irregularity, they run the hazard of a Proceeding which never was (above once!) come into; That is, that the Council communicating the true State of the Case unto the Churches that sent them, and obtaining from them a Ratification of their Judgment, they do by a Solemn Act, Withdraw Communion from that Church, or from as many in it, as will go on to abett and maintain the Unjust Censure which has been passed in it. But, Blessed be the Glorious Head of the Church! The Interposition of His Holy SPIRIT, working on the Minds of His People, while they are in His Way thus waiting on Him, still obtains the Ends which they aim at, and prevents any such dreadful Extremities.
'Tis no rare thing for a Temper to be found on these Occasions.

Oftentimes an aggrieved Party applying to One or Two, wisfer Ministers in the Neighbourhood, they do by their private and prudent Methods, bring Matters to such an Issue, as to supersede the necessity of a Council.

It has been thought, an aggrieved Party is allowed by the New-English Platform, to apply unto one single Church in the Vicinity; who by their Delegates may, after due Preliminaries, come to the Church complained of, and ask for some Account of their Proceedings. And if they cannot put into Joint, what was out of it, this Church which had been applied unto, may then pray a competent Number of other Churches, to unite their Delegates with them, in a larger Council, to use further Endeavours for the Rectifying of what is out of Order. And then! — Something of this Way has been sometimes practised.

§ 2. But what shall be done when the Pastor himself becomes an Offender? A Deplorable Case this! And yet what sometimes has happened.

In the Days of Cyprian, there were Martialis and Baslides, two Spanish Bishops, deposed by their Churches, for Apostacy and Idolatry; and Fa-lix and Sabinus were chosen by their Churches in their stead. After this Deposition, the two Bishops claimed the Exercise of their Authority; But the People denied it unto them; And when the Bishops of Africa hereupon A. C. 258, convened in a Synod, whereof Cyprian was the Presi-
Ident, the Action of the Churches was approved and commended, and this Doctrine asserted, That they had not acted irregularly since the People had the chief Power of chusing worthy Bishops, and of refusing those that are Unworthy.

If the Reader will go somewhat higher into Antiquity, he may from the Archives thereof take down that famous Epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Brethren of the Church in Corinth, which in Eusebius is deservedly called, ΜΕΓΑΛΗ ΚΑΙ ΘΑΥΜΑΣΙΑ, and, ΙΚΑΝΟΤΑΤΗ ΓΡΑΦΗ, A great, a wonderful, a powerful Writing, and one which, he says, was publickly read in some of the Churches: And which Irenæus also most justly calls, Potentissimas Literas. In all Antiquity, after the Writings of their Apostles (which indeed make an Honourable Mention of this our Clemens, Phil. IV. 3.) there is not so exact a Representation of the Order observed in the first Christian Churches, as there is in this Epistle. Now this Epistle being written to the Brethren of the Church at Corinth, from that at Rome, on the Occasion of a Sinful Excess which they had committed in the Deposition of their Elders, there is not one Word said, as if the Brethren had assumed a Liberty to themselves, which they had no claim unto; but they are severely reproved, because they had Abused their Liberty, in hearkening unto the Suggestions of Two or Three discontented Persons, against Elders who had presided Laudably among them, and who had never deserved thus to be dealt withal.

Notwithstanding this, the Churches of New-England consider, that as their Pastors are not Ordained without a Council, so neither are they with...
without a Council to be deposed. Nor do they think, that ordinarily a Church-Meeting may be regularly held, without the Consent of their Pastors. They are not altogether ignorant, that in the Primitive Times, where Churches were associated, and their Circumstances would allow of it, they did not by themselves alone, exert those Powers, which in Cases of Necessity, they might assert as belonging to them. The Churches to prevent the Mischiefs of Giddiness and Faction, and render all their Actions unquestionable, would have their Complaints against Scandalous Pastors heard by a Synod, without the Concurrence whereof ordinarily such Pastors come not under a Deposition. Thus we find Paulus Samosatenus, the Bishop of Antioch, was deposed by a Synod, held in that Place. And we find Privatus the Bishop of Lambese, was Nonaginta Episcoporum Sententia condemnatus.

Therefore when a Pastor has fallen into Scandal, the Brethren that are acquainted with it, proceed, as they would with another Brother in such Cases; only with such special Terms of Respect (and Repetition of Address) as the Relation of a Father may call for.

If the Scandal be gone so far that a publick Satisfaction is become necessary, the Dissatisfied Brethren apply themselves to him, and request him to appoint a Church-Meeting, for the hearing and the healing of the Matter.

If he comply, and have his Heart at the Church-Meeting, touched with a due Remorse; he offers them his Acknowledgement; which if they judge it necessary, they demand that he Repeat it, yet more, publickly on a Lord's Day, in the Congregation.
gation. And he then modestly puts it unto the Vote, Whether they have received Satisfaction.

But if he be so self-willed, that he will not appoint a Church-Meeting, the Dissatisfied Brethren, do set apart some time together to call upon the Glorious GOD for His Direction and Compassion; in the Grievous Case now come upon them, and privately advise with some of the Pastors in the Neighbourhood; Whereupon they write Letters unto some of the Neighbouring Churches, wherein they signify, that some unhappy Offences have arisen among them, for the managing and composing whereof, the help of a Council appears to be necessary; for which Cause they humbly pray, that the Churches would express their Love and Care for them and send their Pastors and other Delegates (at the Time and Place intimated) effectually to advise them what may be their Duty on so sad an Occasion.

Or, if at the Church-Meeting, he and they cannot agree; nay, tho' he should hook in the Major part unto a Palliation of the Matters, and there be no more than two or Three that remain still aggrieved; the Dissatisfied Brethren make a Tender to join with him in calling of a Council; which if he refuse, then these do it without him: Only they still give Notice unto him (and his Party if he have any,) what they do.

When the Council arrives, they first more privately form themselves into Order, by chusing a Moderator; and speaking with all Persons concerned so far as they count it needful, by way of Preparation for their Business. Then they pass
to the Meeting-House; where being first conveniently seated, all Persons that will may see and hear all that is done. Prayers are made; the Offender is called for; the Dissatisfied Brethren produce their Grievances, with their Evidences; and all that can be said on both sides is considered.

The Council then retire to their more private Consultation; where they draw up their final Judgment; Returning anon to the publick Assembly, for the Publication of it.

If the Offender do now come unto them with sufficient Expressions of Repentance, they direct a Satisfactory Repetition thereof Now in the public Assembly, (and if need be, on some following Lord's Day also;) and they advise the Dissatisfied Brethren to restore their just Regards unto him.

If the Offender be obstinate, they then sharply rebuke him; and in a Written Instrument, signed by the Moderator, and all the Council, (or by him, In the Name of the Council—) they pronounce him Unworthy of the Sacred Ministry, and advise the Church (after due Waiting) to supply his Place with a more worthy Person; and also to proceed unto an Excommunication, if he continue in his Impenitency.

The Council returning to the public Assembly, there, after Seasonable Speeches made by the Moderator, (and others of the Council, if they please) the Result of the Council is read, and then delivered unto one of the Brethren, at whose Invitation they are here together. And pertinent Prayers are added for the Close of all.

If after all, the Church must come unto that Extremity of an Excommunication upon this Of-
fendor, they chuse a Grave Pastor of Another Church, (unless they have one of their own) to come on some Lord's Day among them, and go through with it, according to the General Methods of such a Censure.

On the Mention of this, it may be added, That Churches remaining Vacant after the Death of their Pastors, upon Difficulties and Emergencies arising among themselves, and Affairs which need a greater Wisdom than their own to manage them, they apply themselves unto some considerable Minister in their Vicinity: Entreating him to afford his Presence at their Church-Meeting, and manage their Votes, and regulate all their Proceedings.

§. 3. The Translation of a PASTOR, is a Thing more seldom Occurring, and more hardly Obtained, in the Churches of New-England, than in many other of the Reformed Churches. The Relation between a Pastor, and his People, is what the Christians throughout the Country, appear generally to think not very easy to be dissolved; and the Removal of a Minister is accomplished here, with more Difficulty than it is in many other Places. More than Once or Twice there have been published some Determinations, which express the General Apprehension in the Churches upon the Matter, to this Purpose; 'A Pastor settled in the Service of a People, is to be so sensible of his Designation by the Spirit and Providence of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, for that Service, and of the Account that he must give unto GOD, about his Behaviour in it, that his Removal must not be rashly
attempted, but with much Consideration, Consultation, Supplication, and sincere Desire to follow the Conduct of Heaven in it.

And, That the Will of our LORD about the Removal of any Pastor from his People may be understood, it is requisite, that the Minister do not entirely Assume to himself the Judgment of his own Call to Remove; but a great Regard must be had unto the Direction of the Churches in the Neighbourhood. And; If much of Scandal, will certainly ensue upon the Removal of a Pastor from his People, That should weigh down against many Circumstances that would rather invite it. Upon such Views, it has been judg'd requisite; First, That the Reasons of the Removal be laid before Authentic Judges, and by these be pronounced such, that the Removal thereupon may be justly and wisely proceeded in. And, Where it can be obtained, a Council of Churches ought therefore to be convened; As there was for the Ordaining. And, Then; That the Reasons be found such as are consistent with the Solemn Vow, which the Person who takes the Charge of a Church, makes unto our Glorious LORD, for the faithful Discharge of his Ministry; and the Labour, and Patience, of one sensible that his Works are known unto the Lord; and the fervent Love that such an one should bear to his Flock; having them in his Heart for to Live and to Die with them.

Sometimes, but Rarely, a Pastor and a People have with Mutual Agreement more privately parted with one another; — and no further Words have been made about it!

It
It is very edifying to see, that whereas many congregations in the world, would count it a deliverance (and, it would be so!) to have their ministers taken from them, the ministers of this country have been, and still are, generally so esteemed and beloved by their people, that if there were any motion towards the calling one of them away, there would be a grievous commotion among the people upon it; — even as if robbers of churches were assaulting them.

Indeed, if there be but one pastor in a church, be he never so great, and it never so small, no body durst scarce whisper a word of his removal to another, tho' it might carry with it never such an enlargement of his opportunities to be serviceable. And some have thought the public benefit, and common interest of the churches in general has not been so well consulted in this perpetual confinement of grown and bright abilities.

When a church has been enriched with two worthy pastors, another church that has been as a city set upon an hill, and a seat of great importance, has applied unto them, to obtain one of their pastors from them. And their desire has, tho' not without difficulty, and councils called and acting on the occasion, been accomplished.

In this case, the church whereto the released pastor is invited, sends unto the neighbouring churches, to visit them with their pastors and other delegates, for his instalment, as they do for an ordinary ordination. The instalment is carried on, with all the circumstances and solemnities of an ordination; only that rite, the imposition of hands.
Hand, is now omitted: But a Charge is given by
the Moderator, for the faithful Discharge of his
Ministry in This Place; and suitable Prayers ac-
company it; Unto which is added, The Right
Hand of Fellowship, from the Churches.

When the Government of the Colleges hath
been Vacant, Pastors of Churches have been chosen
to it. But upon the Churches refusing to dis-
misse them, all Parties have been tender of the
Claim which the Churches have to the Gifts
which their SAVIOUR has bestowed upon
them, that the Prosecution of the Matter has
been desisted from.

And yet, When the Necessity has been Great,
and all due Preliminaries of Councils have been
observed, and all due Reparations unto the Flock
have been offered, and the Pastor has been Wil-
ing to answer the Call, but the People have
still denied his Dismission; it has been in such
a Case declared, 'If a Church addressed for the
Grant of their Pastor for such a General Good,
after all due Means, do out of a Principle which
does not honour the Gospel, refuse to do their
plain Duty, the Pastor who knows His, may do it;
and with much Peace of Mind, Obey the Call
of GOD which he has received; and the Chur-
ches throughout the Land will Own him, and
Thank him, and Pray for the Blessing of GOD
upon him.

§. 4. The Councils in the Churches of New-
England, rarely meet with Contradictions from the
Churches, whose Cases have been laid before
them. One Method of Prudence used for the
Prevention of such Things has been this; That the Councils having exhibited their Decisions, do not presently Dissolve, but Adjourn themselves for some Time [certain or uncertain] to see, Whether their Advice be attended or no. The New English Councils have been generally so regularly composed, and in so good a Temper, that there has been in them very little Occasion for the old Complaint, Omne Concilium parit Bellum; or for such a Story as that of Curcella, Experientiam docere nullas unquam Controversias de Religione inter Christianos exortas, Auteritate Synodali saliciter terminatas suisse.

Nevertheless, there have been formerly some Cases wherein it has been found necessary to call New Councils, for further Deliberations upon Things, which the First had not sufficiently and successfully determined.

There are many Circumstantials in Church Order, wherein the Churches do leave one another so Free, that the Councils never find it worth the while to infringe that Freedom; and they see no Inconvenience in that Indulgence, which the old African Synod in their Letter to the more imposing Stephen pleaded for; † That Pastors may without Offence to their Neighbours, or any!

† Scimus quoddam, quod semel imimiberint, nolle depone nere, nec Propositus suum facile mutant. Sed salvo inter Collegas Pacis et Concordiae Vinculo, quodam propria, quae apud se semel sunt usurpata, retinere; Qua in re, nec nos Vm cuiquam facimus, aut Legem damus; cum habeat in Ecclesiae Administratione Voluntatis sua. Arbitrium Liberum, unusquisque Præpositus, Rationem Actus sui Domino redditurus.
Breach upon Concord, have some things proper to
themselves; in which they shall owe no Account
of their Administration, but unto the Lord.

Nevertheless, it is Believed, and sometimes has
been practised, That when any one Particular
Church, commits a notorious Error in its Proceed-
ings, the Churches in the Neighbourhood, upon
the Noise and Proof of it, may write Letters of Admoni-
tion unto the Erring Church; not unlike those of
old written from the Church of Rome unto the
Church of Corinth.

And tho' it has never yet been among the
Practises, yet it is one of the Principles in these
Churches, That the Neighbouring Churches, upon
the Motion of their Pastors, may without any
Call from the Church, (or from any in the Church)
where gross Mischief do notoriously happen, upon
the justly believed Report of those Mischiefs,
meet in a Council to take a Course about them.

They never had yet any General SYNODS of
all the Churches in a Colony, but such as were
convened upon a Motion from the Civil Ma-
gistrate, upon Matters wherein all the Churches
were concerned; and this has been four Times
done in the Massachusett-Colony. Nevertheless,
they suppose a Liberty to meet in Synods, with-
out the Direction of the Civil Magistrate. Why
not, they say, as well as the Primitive Churches be-
fore the Days of Constantine?

The Synods of New-England know no Weapons,
but what are purely Spiritual. They pretend un-
to no Juridical Power; nor any Significancy, but
what is meerly Instructive and Suasive. They are
nothing but some Wise and Good Men meeting
to advise the Churches how to observe the Rules of the most Inoffensive Piety. When they have done all, the Churches are at Liberty, to judge how far their Advice is to be followed. They have no Secular Arm to enforce any Canons; they ask none; they want none. And they cannot believe, that any Protestant Secular Arm would upon a due Information any more Forbid their Meeting, than they would any of the Religious Assemblies upheld in the Country. No body forbids the General Synods [or, Conventions] of the Dissenters, in England and Ireland, [or the other American Provinces.] Nay, The Quakers themselves hold their General Meetings without any Commands of Governours for the Dispersing of them. The Churches of New-England cannot easily have their Sense better expres'd, than in the Terms, of the famous Festus Homminus, who tho' he pleads for the Political Binding Power of Synodical Decrees, as far as a Protestant can do so, yet after all shows himself a MAN, in these Reasonable Words. The Decrees of Councils ought not

to be propounded unto or obtruded upon, the Churches, as Prætorian Sayings or Persian Decrees, but the Acts of the Council ought to be sent unto all the Churches, that they may examine them by the Rule of the Word of GOD; and that if they be found to agree with it, they may be approved, and so at length may be willingly and unanimously, not unwillingly and by Compulsion, received by the Churches approving them. For the Churches have not bound their Consciences to the Judgment of those whom they sent to the Synod; nor have they given them an Absolute Power of Decreeing what they Lift in their Names: But their Consciences are always tied only to the Word of GOD; whereto if they find the Acts and Decrees of their Messengers conformed, then at length the Churches ought to esestablish and approve them.

To forbid the Synods of Churches, which never pretended unto any more than This!—Or, to declare, that the Meeting of such Synods, for nothing but the Reviving and Preserving of Real PIETY, won't be for the Safety, of GOD knows what! — Unaccountable! However, Since the Provisions which the General Synods of the Churches have already made for them are what they are, it is thought by some, that the Publication of this RATIO DISCIPLINÆ, may somewhat Supercede all Occasion for any more General Synods: They may do well enough without them.

When a Council meets, their first Work is, to choose a Moderator; who, like Cyprian, the Moder-
for of the Council at Carthage; like Palmas the Prolocutor of the Synod in France; counts it his Duty from his Chair, to see all things calmly debated, and fairly concluded, and sum up all things, that have been deliberated, and call for the Votes of the Assembly, and begin and finish all with Supplications to Heaven. And sometimes like Theophilus and Narcissus, in a Synod of Palestine, there have been Two Moderators.

Tho' it has been strongly pleaded, that no Officers of the Churches have a Right upon that Score, to appear as their Delegates, but that the Churches may chuse whom they please, for their Delegates, and the Delegates have all of them an equal Power in the Synod for which they are chosen: Yet the Churches do in Fact proceed no otherwise, than as if their Pastors were Ex Officio the Members of the Councils for which their Churches were sent unto. And in the Choice of Delegates for Councils, (as well as in the Call for them) still the Terms run, For Elders and Messengers.

But then on the other hand, the Pastors of the Churches ordinarily go to no proper Councils, without some other Delegates, chosen from among the Brethren, to accompany them. And once, when in a General Synod of the Churches, there were some Churches who thought it enough that they sent only their Pastors unto it, the Synod asserted, that it was the Duty of the Churches, to have sent other Messengers with them; and Letters were for that Purpose immediately issued unto those Churches. They knew that in the Primitive Times, in Synods, there were present besides,
besides the Church-Officers, ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΙ ΘΕΟΥ (as Eusebius expresses it) the Churches of GOD, represented by Brethren belonging to them; And Synods were then held, Consultis et ipsis Laiciis (according to Cyprian) and, The People were admitted unto a part in the Consultations. And in allowing of Suffrages to such Members of their Synods, they judged that the Primitive Pattern in the Acts of the Apostles countenanced them: For which Cause also, the Interest of the People (or Laicks) in such Conventions, is maintained by our Juel, and Whitaker, and Parker, and others, against the Romanists.

§. 5. How often Provincial Synods were held in Firmilian’s Time, is evident from that Report of his, Per singulos Annos in unum convenient. The Churches of New-England can have no such thing reported of them. They have no Provincial Synods; and their Occasional Synods, on special Emergencies, and of smaller Dimensions, are but as the Occasions happen for them. The Thing among them that is the nearest thereunto, is a General Convention of Ministers, (which perhaps are not above half) belonging to the Province, at the Time of the Anniversary Solemnity, when the General Assembly of the Province meets, on the last Wednesday in the Month of May, to elect their Counsellors for the Year ensuing. Then the Ministers, chusing a Moderator, do propose Matters of public Importance, referring to the Interest of Religion in the Churches; and tho’ they assume no Decisive Power, yet the Advice which they give
give to the People of GOD, has proved of
great Use unto the Country.

There is now taken up the Custom, for ( Con-
cicio ad Clerum, ) a Sermon to be Preached unto
the Convention of Ministers, on the Day after
the Election, by one of their Number, chosen to
it by their Votes, at their Meeting in the preced-
ing Year.

At this Convention, Every Pastor that meets
with singular Difficulties, has Opportunity to
bring them under Consideration. But the Que-
tion most usually now considered, is of this Im-
portance, What may be further proposed, for the pre-
serving and promoting of true PIETY in the Land?

Excellent Things have been here Concerted
and Concluded, for, The Propagation of Religi-
on; and Collections produced for that Purpose in
all the Churches.

And Motions have been hence made unto the
General Assembly for such Acts and Laws as the
Morals of the People have called for.

[ The Governor of the Province, and such
Counsellors as dwell in the City of Boston, together
with the Representatives of the Town; & the Speaker
of their House; are invited also to dine with the
Ministers, at the Table, which the Deacons of the
united Churches in Boston provide for them; the
Day after the Election: Some small Resemblance of
what is called, The Feast of Moses and Aaron, in
the Netherlands. ]

To Exemplify one Result of this Convention,
may not only Explain the Custom then used, but
also Suggest some things worthy of a Perpetual
and an Extensive Consideration.

B b

Boston,
To Serve the Great Intentions of Religion, which is lamentably decaying in the Country:

It is proposed,

I. That the Pastors of the Churches do personally Discourse with the Young People in their Flocks, and with all possible Prudence and Goodness endeavour to win their Consent unto the Covenant of Grace, in all the Glorious Articles of it.

II. That unto this Purpose, the Pastors do take up that Laborious, but engaging Practice, of making their Personal Visits unto all the Families that belong unto their Congregations.

III. That the Pastors in this Way of Proceeding, bring on their People as far as they can, publickly, and solemnly to Recognize the Covenant of GOD, and come into such a Degree of the Church-State, as they shall be willing to take their Station in: But not to leave off, till they shall be qualified for, and perswaded to, Communion with the Church in all special Ordinances.

IV. That for such as have submitted unto the Government of CHRIST in any of His Churches, no Pastors of any other Churches, any way go to shelter them under their Wing, from the Discipline of those, from whom they have not been fairly recommended.

V. That they who have not actually Recognized their Subjection to the Discipline of CHRIST in His Church, yet should, either
upon their obstinate Refusal of such a Subjection, or their falling into other Scandals, be faithfully treated with proper Admonitions: About the Method and Manner of managing which Admonitions, the Pastors with their several Churches, will be left unto the Exercise of their own Discretion.

VI. It is desired and intended, if the Lord please, That at the General Convention of the Ministers, there may be given in by each of the Pastors present, An Account of their Progress and Success in that holy Undertaking, which has been proposed: That so, the Lord may have the Glory of His Grace, and the Condition of Religion may be the better known and served among us.

VII. As a Subserviency to those Good and Great Intentions, it is proposed, That the Associations of the Ministers in the several Parts of Country may be strengthened; And the several Associations may by Letters hold more free Communications with one another.

§ 6. It has been proposed, That the Ministers of the Country should form themselves into ASSOCIATIONS that may meet at proper Times to consider such things as may properly before them; relating to their own Faithfulness towards each other, and the common Interests of the Churches; And that each of the ASSOCIATIONS have a Moderator for a certain time, who shall continue till another be chosen; and who may call them together upon Emergencies.
In these ASSOCIATIONS, it has been proposed, That, with due Supplications to Heaven, Questions and Cases of Importance, either provided by themselves, or by others presented unto them, should be upon due Deliberation answered.

That Advice be taken by the Associated Pastors from time to time, ere they proceed unto any Actions in their Particular Churches which may be likely to produce any Embroilments.

That the Associated Pastors do carefully and lovingly treat each other with that Watchfulness, which may be of universal Advantage; And if any Minister be accused unto the Association whereto he belongs, of any thing Scandalous, the Matter shall be there examined; And if the Associated Pastors find just Occasion for it, they shall direct the calling of a Council, who are to proceed against the Offender.

That these Associated Pastors be together addressed unto and advised withal, when bereaved Churches in their Vicinity need their Direction, for a present Supply of a Vacancy, and to have Recommended unto them such Candidates as the Churches may in due time come to make their Election from.

That the several Associations maintain a due Correspondence with one another, that so the State of Religion may be the better known and served in the Churches; Yea, if it can be accomplished, that they may by their Delegates meet all together once in a Year, to concert Matters of a Common Concern to all the Churches.

And
And finally, That the Ministers disposed thus to *associate*, endeavour in the most *Efficacious Manner* they can, to prevail with such Ministers as unreasonably neglect such Meetings with their Brethren in proper *Associations*; that they would not expose themselves to the Inconveniences that such Neglects cannot but be attended withal.

These Proposals have not yet been in all regards universally complied withal. Nevertheless, the Country is full of Associations, formed by the Pastors in their several Vicinities, for the Prosecution of Evangelical Purposes.

Various are the Methods used in the several Associations (according to their own Discretion,) for the modelling of their Exercises, and the pursuing of their Intentions.

They sometimes keep *Days of Prayer* together, and procure such Days to be kept by the Flocks under their Charge.

They consider CASES that are laid before them; and sometimes their Answers to Important CASES have been published unto the World.

At the Time of their Meeting when it is not very frequent, (which it cannot well be when Towns are far distant from one another,) sometimes the People of the Town where they meet, are entertained with a Lecture from them.

It is to be hoped, *Ita fabulam ut qui sciant Dominum audire.* And the Good Things done by them cannot be numbered.

ment of the famous Mr. John Cotton, pressing, 
That the Elders and Brethren of the Churches, 
would meet together in convenient Numbers, 
at Set Times, (which may be left unto the 
Wisdom of each Society of Churches,) and thus 
to enjoy and practice Church-Communion. And 
there are added many Directions elaborated by 
him for the most edifying Management of such 
stated Councils.

Dr. John Owen also in his Treatise of a Gospel 
Church, commends a constant Actual Communion of 
the Churches within the Limits of the same Su-
premum Civil Government, in Councils. And he 
adds, 'I cannot see how it can be any Abridg-
ment of the Liberty of particular Churches, or in-
terfere with any other of their Rights, which 
they hold by Divine Institution, if through 
more constant Lesser Synods for Advice, there be 
a Communication of their mutual Concerns, 
unto those that are Greater, until if Occasion 
require, and it be expedient, there be a General 
Assembly of them all, to advise about any thing 
wherein they are, all concerned.

Under the Influence of such Thoughts, it be-
gan to be proposed, That the Associated Pastors of 
every Vicinity, with a proper Number of other 
Delegates (chosen once a Year at least) from 
their several Churches, might be formed into 
stated Councils; to consult and advise upon such 
Affairs as might be proper Matter for the Con-
sideration of an Ecclesiastical Council.

The Opinion of Mr. John Norton being much 
received, That SYNODS are so necessary, ut Ec-
clesia salutari hoc Remedio non posset carere, sine insig-
It was esteemed a Dictate of common Sense, that it would be for the Interest of Truth, and Peace, and Piety, to have the Remedy always in Readiness; and put the Churches into such Order that they may go most regularly and reasonably to work, in the Application thereof.

It was also considered, That when Councils are called by Litigant Parties in Churches, upon Emergencies, it had been hitherto in the Liberty of each Party, to Chuse and Call their own Council, where they pleased; which left Room for much Partiality to operate, and One Council to succeed and oppose another, with an Endless Confusion, more proper for a Babel, than a City of GOD. Thro' the Gracious and Watchful Providence of GOD their SAVIOUR, the Churches had not in Fact seen much of this Confusion; and it may be the Prudent Servants of GOD had it more in Fear than there was a Real need of. Nevertheless, 'twas thought that Prudence called for a more effectual Provision.

Accordingly, Stated Councils being proposed, the Meeting whereof once in a Year was judged little enough; it was now also further proposed, That the Association whereon the Pastors of such a Council belonged, may direct when there should be judged an Occasion for this Council, (or what Part of it they should think enough) to convene upon an Emergency. And, that the Determinations of the Councils thus provided for the Necessities of the Churches, were to be looked upon as Decisive; except aggrieved Churches or Persons have Weighty Reasons to the contrary. But that
that in such Cases there should be a further Hearing; And that the Council for that further Hearing should consist of Pastors and Churches more for Number than the former; and such as might be directed and convened by the Ministers of any Association, that should be near to that, where to those of the former Council belonged; unto which the Aggrieved were accordingly to apply themselves, and in this Way to expect a final Issue.

Such Proposals as these found in one of the New-English Colonies a more general Reception (and even a Countenance from the Civil Government) than in the Rest. In the other, there were some very considerable Persons among the Ministers, as well as of the Brethren, who thought the Liberties of particular Churches to be in danger of being too much limited and infringed in them. And in a Deference to these Good Men, the Proposals were never prosecuted, beyond the Bounds of mere Proposals. Accordingly the Churches go on in the Methods of which an Account was given, before the Introducing of these Proposals. And Humane Prudence being obliged thus to keep the Stops where it is, the SPIRIT of our SAVIOUR, so descends with His Operations, that Councils rarely miss of their desired Efficacy.

There was indeed a Satyr, Printed against these written Proposals, and against the Servants of GOD that made them. Nevertheless, those Followers of the Lamb, remembering the Maxim of, Not Answering, used the Conduct which the University of Helmstade lately prescribed un-
§ 7. An Account of the more General Customs used in the Churches of New-England, has been thus Exhibited. But it must be said, they have also such Varieties of lesser Circumstances, that one may with Pleasure say, what Socrates reports about the Various Rites in the Primitive Churches; To reckon them all up, would be Difficult, yea, Impossible.

It is possible, that in some Churches, the Transactions may be managed less Beautifully than we have described; and in others when the Beauty of the Proceeding may be more equal, yet they may a little vary from our Description. However we have kept very near the Matter, and with all possible Veracity.

And indeed notable is the Demonstration, which their happy Experience gives them, of the Folly and Madness, in those Ecclesiastical Politicians, who will with a Phaetontic Fury set the World on Fire, to impose and enforce their admired Uniformity, in little Ceremonies which the Wrost People can conform to, as well as the Best in the World. Their Experience proves what Gregory long since confessed, In una Fide nihil officit Sancta Ecclesiae diversa Consuetudo; and what Irenæus long before him observed; A Diversity [Diaëtonia] in lesser Matters, commends a Church preserving [Omo-Noian] the Unity of the Faith.
ARTICLE X.
Special CUSTOMS.

§. 1. Besides the more General CUSTOMS of the Churches, there are a few more Special CUSTOMS in the Churches, whereof a Brief Recitation may be expected. We will begin with the DAYS observed among them.

He that shall read the judicious Discourse of Soiraces (written above Twelve Hundred Years ago) in the Twenty First Chapter of his Fifth Book, about HOLY DAYS, will see very much of what is believed in the Churches of New-England; Namely (and briefly,) That the Apostles have set the Churches free from the Yoke of Bondage thereunto. They are far from reviling that excellent Person as an Heretic (which Bellarmine did) for Complaining there, That they who contended for Holy Days, despised the Commandments of GOD. But they are content themselves to be Hereticated, by the popishly affected, for holding, as the Waldenses did, more than Five Hundred Years ago, That Constrained and Prefixed Fasts, bound to Days, and all the Rabblement of Rites and Ceremonies, brought in by Man, ought to be abolished. It was Luther's Desire near Two Hundred Years ago, That
That there were no other Festival Days amongst Christians, but only the LORD's DAY. And it was Calvin's Desire at the same Time, That inasmuch as Christ our Judge, has released us from staled Festival Days, we may not obey any Mortal, that shall go to oblige us thereunto. According to this Desire is the Practice of these American Churches. And if King James once could boast of the Purity in the Church of Scotland, That not so much as Easter or Christmas was observed in it; Even such a Boast may be humbly made about the Churches of New-England. Nor do these Churches hitherto discover any Tendencies towards a Compliance with that which was one of the earliest Apostasies and Superstitions in the Primitive Times, (and as Dr. Ames calls it, The first Weapon wherewith the Bishop of Rome, play'd his Prizes against other Churches) that is, an imposed HOLY-DAY. But they rather Censure it as a very unadvised Speech in Dr. Hammond; That when the Festivals are turned out of the Church, it will not be in the Power of Weekly Sermons, on the Heads of Religion, to keep up the Knowledge of CHRIST in Men's Hearts.

The Churches make a Difference between Taking a Time to Do a Sacred Work; and the Doing a Work to keep a Sacred Time. To esteem any Good Work the better for its being done on such or such a Return of a Time, which GOD has not in His Word set apart for it, is to make the Time itself a part of the Worship; and they judge it an unwarrantable thing, for Men so to impose upon Heaven, with their own Inventions.
The Churches look upon Solemn HUMILIATIONS and THANKSGIVINGS, as Moral Duties, to be observed Pro Causis et Temporibus: And therefore they regard the Directions of Divine Providence, in laying before them the fresh Occasions thereof; which could not so well be done, if they were made perpetual.

In the Beginning of the Year the GOVERNOUR with the Advice of the Council, (sometimes also at the Motion of the Representatives) publishes a Proclamation directing such a Day, as he with them thinks fit, for Solemn Humiliations, with Prayer and Fasting, to obtain a Blessing on the Affairs of the Year ensuing.

In the Conclusion, the GOVERNOUR, upon the Advice and Motion aforesaid, publishes a Proclamation, specifying a Day for Solemn Thanksgivings, on the Account of Mercies received in the foregoing Year.

The Ministers read these Proclamations in their Congregations, on some LORD's DAY before the Days thus called for; and often with agreeable Speeches prepare their People for the Duties of them.

In these Proclamations there is inserted a Clause, Inhibiting all Servile Labour on the Days appointed; and the Days are accordingly observed, with a strict Application to the Proper Duties of them; yea, observed as Extraordinary Sabbaths. Not only the Days of Humiliation are so, but the Days of Thanksgiving also: It may be, there are no Days of Thanksgiving anywhere on the Face of the Earth, kept in so Religious, and Sabbatizing
a Manner; as they are in the Churches of New
England. There are no such Ringing of Bells,
and making of Bonfires, and other Frlicks, as
there are on such Occasions in some of our Euro-
pean Churches. And may they be forever pre-
served from such Profanations!

As other extraordinary Occasions do occur, at
any other time of the Year, the Civil Authority
takes a like Notice of them.

And it is a very frequent thing, for particular
Pastors with their Churches, to keep Solemn Days
in their own Congregations, as they see Occasi-
ons for them; without any Direction from the
Civil Authority. So Cyprian in a Time of Calami-
ty; Ad placandum atque exorandum Dominum, saith
he, Non Voce sola, sed et Jejunius et Lacrymus, et om-
ni genere Deprecationis ingemiscamus.

Yea, Sometimes the Pastors in a Vicinity agree
to keep the Wheel of their Devotions in a contin-
nual Motion, by such Days kept successively in their
several Congregations; wherein they enjoy
much Communion with and Assistance from one an-
other. Thus Tertullian tells, That in the Pri-
mitive Times, the Bishops did ordain Fastes for the
Churches, ex aliqua Solicituidinis Ecclesiasticæ
Causa, according as the Troublesome Circumstances of
the Church called for it.

Sometimes one particular Church, and some-
times a Number of Consecrated Churches in a
Neighbourhood successively, have set apart whole
Days of Prayer, on this peculiar Intention; To
pray for a Successful Ministry; and more particu-
larly, to obtain it, that the Spirit of Grace would
infuse a Principle of Piety, into the Hearts of the
Risen
Rising Generation, and by a mighty Effect of His Gospel upon them, render their Children a Pious Generation. A marvellous Efficacy of the Gospel in a Conversion of Young People unto serious Religion, and an Addition unto the Churches of them that shall be saved, have been observed among the Consequences of such an Action.

When Beloved Pastors have been taken Sick, their Churches, Visited and Affixed by the Neighbouring Pastors, have kept their Days of Prayer for them: And it has been rarely known, that such Pastors have not been remarkably Recovered. Solemn and public Thanksgivings have sometimes followed.

Some Churches blessed with excellent Pastors, have kept their Days of Thanksgiving for their Evangelical Enjoyments; [Assisted with Neighbouring Pastors, on these Occasions.] It has been very agreeable, to see with what Ingenuity the Humble and Modest Pastors have behaved themselves, when such Roses have been cast upon them. One by whom Cambridge was once illuminated, on such a Day, Preached on, 2 Cor. XII. 11. I am Nothing.

When Days of Humiliation or of Thanksgiving have been observed, it has been a frequent thing, for Collections of Money for Pious Uses to be made in the Assemblies; That so it might be said, Thy Prayers and thy Alms are come up for a Memorial before GOD.

A Zeal of GOD, and the Spirit of the Gospel, operating in the Churches, has disposed them to make several noble Efforts, for the Propagation of (not Party, but Pure and Undefiled) Religion,
and the Gospellizing of Plantations which have been the Unwatered Places of the Wicked One. Generous Collections have been made in the Churches to support the Expenses of sending Missionaries to such Places, and building Meeting-Houses in them. And the Gentlemen who Devise Liberal Things, have also more privately advanced Sums of Money on such Occasions and Intentions. Associated Pastors have been at the Head of these Actions; And the Success has not been Contemptible: tho' the Invisible Rulers of the Darkness of this World, have sensibly enough done their Part for the Clogging of such Undertakings.

There has been offered unto the Churches, A Proposal, for an EVANGELICAL TREASURY, to be Raised by Collections on the Days of Supplication, and of Thanksgiving (which are kept every Year) in the Congregations of the Country; and lodged in the Hands of Trustees, who are to lay it out still with the Knowledge and Consent of the Churches to which it belongs. The Principal Intention of it, The Propagation of Religion; especially when Good is to be done in Ungospellized Places; But also, For any Pious Uses, which any particular Church may see Cause to pursue, within their own Vicinity. The Proposal, is in the United Churches of Boston begun to be Prosecuted and Executed.

§ 2. 'Tis usual among us, for Christians to uphold PRIVATE MEETINGS, wherein they do with various Exercises Edify one another; and it is not easy to reckon up the Varieties used in them. 'Tis observed, That the Power of Godliness or-
ordinarily prevails in a Place, as the PRIVATE MEETINGS are duly kept up and carried on.

Sometimes a Dozen Families more or less, agree to meet in a Course, at one another’s Houses, on a Day, and at an Hour, agreed on, once a Fortnight or once a Month, as they shall please. And the Families unto whose Turn it falls to entertain the Rest, sometimes takes that Opportunity, to invite others of their Neighbours unto the Religious Entertainments of their Houses.

They sometimes have the Company of a Minister, who spends an Hour or Two in a Prayer and a Sermon with them. And the Candidates of the Ministry sometimes do at these Meetings perform some of their first Probationary Exercises.

Otherwise, One of the Brethren makes a Prayer; and one reads a Sermon, either Printed in a Book, or taken by the Pen of a ready Writer in the public Assemblies: And they close the Exercise with Singing of Psalms.

Bucer indeed affirms, that Lay Men were admitted sometimes to Interpret the Holy Scriptures, in the Primitive Churches; tho’ they performed it mostly when the Rectors of the Churches were Present. There was a Custom of this Nature in the Jewish Synagogues; And Grotius tells us, The Custom continued for a while in the Christian Church, that unordained Persons were admitted sometimes to Expound the Scriptures in public among them. Eusebius proves by the Example of Origen & others, That it was not Unusual for Lay Men to Preach. And in the Constitutions, that go under the Name of Clemens, ’tis conceded, A Laick may be a Teacher. At the Private Meetings in some former
former Years, the private Brethren would sometimes Preach themselves. But that Practice is now generally laid aside, throughout all New-England.

At some of these Meetings the Method has been for a Question of Practical Divinity to be proposed unto the Company, for some certain Persons, prepared for that Purpose, to give what Answer they please unto it.

The Ministers have often found a great Advantage unto their Labours, and unto their Churches, by giving Encouragements unto RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE; which meet especially on the Lord's Day Evenings. It has been in many Places, the Practice of Pious Young Men, to spend an Evening, Two Hours together; when they repeat a Sermon, and they take their Turns to pray, one before, another after, the Repetition. Psalms are sung. They promise to walk orderly; and subscribe their Names to the Promise. If any of the Listed Company do any Scandalous Thing, they first Admonish him, and upon Impenitency they Blot him out of the List. All that join unto their Number, they carry unto their Pastor, for him to Instruct, and Caution, and Approve the Person, before they admit him. These Nurseries of Early Pity, have been attended with Marvellous and Precious Consequences. The Ministers have sometimes encouraged them with their Visits, & Prayers, and Sermons.

Holy Women by themselves, both Elder & Younger, in Smaller Numbers, with all possible Privacy and Modesty, have here and there their Meetings for Social Devotions.

Dd Yea,
Yea, the very Neger's in a Town, have their Constant Meetings, for Exercises of Piety; where in they pray by their Turns, & read a Sermon, and sing a Psalm, and hear one another say the Catechism; & upon Miscarriages in any of their Company, Employ severe & proper Censures. The Ministers do not think much to Visit them once a Quarter, & Pray with them, & Preach to them.

The Private Meetings of the Faithful do upon Emergencies often spend whole Days together, in Prayer with Fasting before the Lord; and sometimes in Thanksgivings. And it is no little Service or Comfort unto their Faithful Pastors to have such Flocks as will in this Way repair unto Heaven for them in all their Difficulties.

§. 3. Such Customs have these Churches of God. But still there are those agreeable Varieties among the Churches in all such Modalities, that they find not the least Inconvenience in following Austin's Counsel, who in diverse of his Epistles permits, Any Church to differ from others in Ceremonies, and in Manner of Government, provided they agree with them, in the Unity of the Faith. And it is with them as that great Lawyer Codex reports of the Primitive Churches; It was not one Discipline, but one Faith, which United them.

The People of God, whose Customs have this Relation given of them, have not the Vanity to think, that their Works are perfect before God, or, that in their Discipline they perfectly Answer the Rules for the Evangelical Church State, left unto us by our Ascended Saviour. And yet the Essentials & Substantials of the Discipline in these Churches, doubtless are so Defensible by the Sacred
Scripture, and so conformable to the Primitive Pattern, and so evidently subservient unto the Grand Intention of the Church State, even the PIETY wherein all Good Men are United, that they do well to think, that it would be a most foolish & sottish Thing to desert them. If the Churches have their Deficiencies, in any Points, that want either to be Corrected, or to be Improved, it is no more than what is to be Expected, until the Antichristian Apostacy be expired. Nor must it be concealed, that the Churches of New England are not without sad Instances of Some, and Some Tendencies to more, Apostacy. 'Tis possible that Some Good Men abroad, would upon the Sight of the Account that has been given of the Discipline observed in these Churches, be ready to say as Vergerius did when he read the Discipline observed in the Churches of Bohemia; I would to God, we're among you! But he must not be called, A Calumniator, who informs them, That they will not find New England a New Jerusalem. Tho' the Body of the People are a Sober, Honest, Industrious, & well disposed sort of Men; Unexceptionably Loyal to the British Sceptre; & Hospitable to Strangers (who yet often treat them with a strange Indignity and Ingratitude, and such as would never be endured without the greatest Resentments in any other Country;) and the common People are better acquainted with Religion than in any other Country upon the Face of the Earth; Yea, some whole Towns have not so much as One Family in them, which does not maintain a Religious Worship of GOD our SAVIOUR, or so much as One Person that is known to walk disorderly; Nevertheless
there is found among them, too much Cause to complain of a Gradual and a Growing Apostacy from the Religious Disposition that signalized the first Planters of the New-English Colonies. The Spirit of this World has too far brought a Death upon the Spirit & Power of Godliness; and a Christian full of lively Piety, & Charity, & Self-Denial, and universal Holiness & Fruitfulness, is not so frequent a Sight, or at least not in so much Proportion to them that have only a Name to live, as once it was among them. 'Tis feared by some wise Men, that the Natural Consequence of this Degeneracy will be this, That many of the Rising Generation will grow weary of their Church-State, (as they say 'tis in Scotland;) yea, some of their Seers have not been without melancholy Apprehensions, lest New England have now done the most that it was intended for; and least our Glorious Lord Come quickly, in various Ways, to remove His Golden Candlesticks from a Place which has been in a more than ordinary Measure illuminated with them. AΠΙH ΠΕΙΠH ΤΟΙ AΠΟΓΟΡ! Let us hope for better things! What the famous Rabbi in the Pirke Avoth said, A Church set up for GOD, shall be Established; it may be hoped, will be fulfilled in these Churches, which were most certainly formed for GOD, and His CHRIST. It may be hoped that this American Wilderness will not speedily be a Desert forsaken of Good Men, which Dionysius of Alexandria tells us, was the Condition of his unhappy Neighbourhood.

§ 4. But if the New English Churches may have any Deficiencies, they will not be Easily or Presently convinced, that one of them is their want of
of a Diocesan Episcopacy. The Domination of One Clergyman, as one in a Superior Order, above those who should be the Pastors of particular Congregations, (but now become his Curates,) Exercising an Authority over a Number of such Curates, & their Congregations, who are thereby deprived of the Power to manage within themselves the Discipline with which the House of GOD is to be regulated; This is an Invention which the Churches of New-England will probably continue Strangers to. Since they find a Stillingfleet ventures to say, 'I believe on the strictest Enquiry, Medina's Judgment will be found True; That Jerom, Austin, Ambrose, Sedulius, Primasius, Chrysostom, Theodore, were all of Aelius's Judgment, as to the Identity of both Name & Order, of Bishops & Presbyters, in the Primitive Churches: They think, they have Company which they need not be ashamed of. And they hope, that the Validity of their Ministry will not be contested, for the want of what they call, Episcopal Ordination. And that much less the Profane & Senseless Whimsey of an Uninterrupted Line of Succession will be urged on their Ministry. And that this will be least of all urged by them who pretend a Succession from Austin the Monk, of whom it has been proved that what Ordination he had, was null & void by the Canons of all the First General Councils. But, We cannot more agreeably express their Sentiments, than in the Words of One who was well acquainted with them.

' There are as Learned Men as any that ever appeared in Defence of the Diocesan Episcopacy, who finding Bishops with Deacons in the Primitive Church
Church at Philippi, which they have heard was but a little Flock, they therefore think that the Apostles knew of no Bishops, but only those Pastors, whereof there may be several in a Parity, feeding one small Congregation. When they find the first Epistle to Timothy passing from the Directions for the Good Conduct of Bishops, immediately to those, for that of Deacons, without any mention of Presbyters, distinct from them, they think it as plain as the Noon day Sun could make anything in the World, that there are only those two Ordinary Officers, instituted by the Lord, for the Service of His Churches, and that there is no Institution for any other Bishops, but the Pastors of particular Congregations. And so when in the Church of Thessalonica, we read, that there was a Plurality of Presidents, the Presidency was not in one alone. This Identity between Bishops of the Divine Appointment and such Pastors, appears in the same Evidence unto them, from the Apostles Words unto Titus, where mentioning the Qualifications of those whom he would have ordained for Presbyters, he does it so; A Bishop must be blameless. That which renders it yet more evident unto them, is, That the Apostle Paul calling together the Presbyters of the Church of Ephesus, charges them, To take heed unto the Flock, unto which the Holy Spirit had made them Bishops; where our Translation substituting the Word Overseers, is guilty of a shameful Prevarication, which every one may see the Reason for: And the Apostle Peter exhorts the Presbyters to exercise the Office of a Bishop, over the Flock, which we translate, The taking the Oversight there.
When Men that have looked into a Book, find Arian brought into the List of Heretics by Epiphanius, for bringing some of these very Scriptures to establish his Nonconformist Sentiments, the Arguments with which that Passionate Old Man attempted to confute Arian, do but confirm them in the Arian Heresy. The Truth is, the Remarkable Confusion among the Prelatic Writers, who are not at all agreed among themselves, but perpetually opposing one another, upon the Bottom whereon they would build the Darling Usurpation, is a further Invitation unto impartial Inquirers to suspect, that they are building of a Babel. Gentlemen who consult Antiquity, wonder how any Man alive can read the Letters of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians, and remain Unconvinced, That there were no such Bishops in those Days as Lord it over the Heritage of GOD in ours. They are sensible that Polycarp, in his most famous Letters to the Philippian, mentions no other than Presbyters & Deacons, as Officers in the Churches, when it was his Concern, if there had been any other, not to have left them Unmentioned; And, That if the Epistles of Ignatius, about which there have been so many Learned Impertinencies, among the Modern Criticks upon them, had been genuine, yet they countenance no other than a Congregational Episcopacy, which would soon End our Controversies? For Three Centuries they can see no Footsteps of any more than a Moderator in Church Assemblies, whose Powers were very far short of those, which the Prelates of later Ages have hence taken Occasion, according to the
usual Strain of Ecclesiastical Encroachments, to pretend unto. We know when the Episcopal Superiority was confessed, A. Novel Constitution. It shocks the Usurpations of the Modern Prelacy; with Millions of considerate Christians, to find Jerom confessing, That, apud veteres idem Episcopi et Presbyteri fuerunt; Bishops & Presbyters were of old the very same; and that the Superiority of Bishops to Presbyters, was, Consuetudine magis quam Dominica Diffusio: Veritate; rather by Custom than by any Appointment from the Lord. And they find an Authority as good as Ambrose, if it were not his, affirming that in the Primitive Times, The Ordination of a Bishop and of a Presbyter was one and the same; and relating how Men of aspiring Spirits brought on a Gradual Alteration. When our Whitaker has Occasion to produce the Confession of Jerom, That the Difference between Bishops & Presbyters, was brought in by Men long after the Apostles as a Remedy against Schism, he can't forbear making this Remonstrance upon it, That the Remedy has been worse than the Malady. And yet this Doctor was a Champion of a Church, which now to a strange Degree values itself upon its Diocesan Episcopacy. Dr. Bebelius, a Professor in the University of Strasburgh, but a few Years ago, publishing a Book of Ecclesiastical Antiquities, where-in he undertakes to prove, That there is no Distinction by a Divine Right between a Bishop & a Presbyter, he quotes Jerom as countenancing his Opinion. But then he adds, Torquent se' Pontificiis et Hierarchici, in Anglia ut hunc vitrum nobis eripiant, the Papists, & English Prelates, torture them-
selves in vain to take off this Man from us. Yea, our fuel delivers not only his own private opinion, but also the Sense of The Church of England in the Apology for it, when he recites the opinion of Jerom, and adds, This is the Thing that we Defend. At the same time he quotes Eras- mus, who speaking of Jerom's Time, says, Id temporis idem erat Episcopus, Sacerdos et Presbyter. And unto this Testimony of Jerom, our fuel adds that of Austin; That the Office of a Bishop is above the Office of a Presbyter, not by Authority of the Scripture, but after the Names of Honour, which the Custom of the Church has now obtained. It gives a notable Strength to the Doubts raised in the Minds of Millions in our Nation, concerning the Diocesan Episcopacy, when they find the Church of England it self denying a Divine Right unto it; & they are certain that the Divine Right thereof was never publickly owned, till King James came to be King of England, who upon the Enchantments of a well known Prelate, first yielded unto That, which his Predecessors would never have endured. And yet that very Gentleman, with his Brethren, would not Re- ordain the Scottish Presbyters, when they were to be made Prelates: His Conscience compelling him to give that Reason for it; For to doubt of the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination, was to doubt whether there was any Lawful Vocation in most of the Reformed Churches. Without going back as far as the more early Days, of King Elfrick, when the Church of England plainly denied Bishops & Presbyters to be distinct Orders, they find, that in the Dawn of the Reformation, by such
Witnesses of our Lord as Tindal, & Lambert, and Barnes, and, how many more of our glorious Martyrs?—this Position was vigorously advanced. That the Apostles following the Rule of CHRIST ordained in His Congregation, only those Two Officers, A Bishop, which is the same with a Presbyter, & a Deacon. And it prevailed so far, that Cranmer himself, the Primate of all England, Embraced it. Yea, it was not long before it was owned by public Authority; and in, The necessary Erudition of a Christian Man, a Book then published by Authority, as the Doctrine of the Church of England, it is in Express Terms affirmed, That of these Two Orders only [Presbyters & Deacons] the Scripture makes Express mention. The Declaration about the Institution of Bishops & Priests, then also subscribed by the Lord Cromwel, & the Archbishops of Canterbury, & York, & other Bishops and Civilians, denied any Superiority of a Bishop above a Presbyter to be found in the New Testament, and allowed unto a Presbyter the Power of Ordination & Excommunication. In the very first Year of K. Edward the VIth's Reign, there was an Act of Parliament, which as Heylin complains, forced the Episcopal Order from their strong hold of Divine Institution, & made them no other than the Kings Ministers only. Poinet then writing against Gardiner, shews, that the Reformers in those Days were willing, even to lay aside the Name of Bishop, & say Elder instead of it. And Cranmer in his Resolutions to the King's Questions, approved by other Bishops, has these Words, The Bishops & Priests were not two distinct Things, but both one Office in the Beginning of Christ's Religion;
And he further makes it manifest, that the Great Reformers owned not Episcopacy as a distinct Order from Presbytery, to be of Divine Right, but only as a prudent Constitution of the Magistrate, for the better Governing of the Church. Beaton also, a famous Refugee in Q. Mary's Time, in his Catechism, dedicated unto both Archbishops, puts the Question, What difference is there between a Bishop & a Presbyter? And answers, None at all; Their Office is the same, their Authority and Power is one. It is most certain, That upon the Revival of the Reformation, at Q. Elizabeth's coming to the Crown, the most acknowledged and celebrated Writers of the Church of England, still made the very same Concession. Yea, Archbishop Whitgift, himself speaking of the Government of the Church of England by Bishops, in his Time, says, It is well known, that the Minster & Form of Government, used in the Apostles' Time, & expressed in the Scripture, is not now observed. There are those to be found, even among the Prelates themselves, who have told but a sad Story, and yet given a just & fair Account, How and Why the Jas Divinum of Prelacy came to be first asserted, which is almost unaccountably become the Topping Doctrine of our Days. Be it how it will, certainly Men that are not far gone with the Spirit of a Party, will not go beyond the Temper of Dr. Ward, who in his Determinations, when he speaks of the Difference between the few Churches that have Prelates, and the many more Churches that have None, says, It ought to be tolerated. Absque Fraternelis Unitatis Lessione, Most certainly, they who consider, that even in
the Popish Times, the English Parliaments took
upon them to create new Bishopricks; and that
Giraldus Cambrensis assures us, there were no less
than Threescore Bishopricks in England, when the
Island was not yet wholly Christianized; would
not think that an Act of Parliament would Un-
Christianize the Island by making above Nine
Thousand Bishopricks, where there are now no
more than Six & Twenty. — All the World
knows that all the Churches of the Reformation, on
the Continent of Europe, subsist upon a Presby-
terian Ordination. And the Superintendents in the
Lutheran Churches, make not the Pretensions of
our Prelates. But when the Papists of late Years
as well as formerly, have been trying to make
Disturbances among them, with Clamours like
what have been made elsewhere, That they
have no True Ministers, & so not Sacraments, be-
cause they want Episcopal Ordination, [ As Ofian-
der, the Chancellor of the University of Tubin-
gen, particularly complains, in his Treatises of
Casuistical Divinity, published A. D. 1689. The
Popish Doctors suppose that Presbyters cannot be Or-
dained but by a Bishop, & for this very Reason, they
deny the Truth of the Lutheran Ministry: ] their
most Learned Historians & Advocates, in their
Answers, confess that their Lutheran Ministers
have none but a Presbyterian Ordination: But
then prove the Cavils of the Papists on that Score
to be Unreasonable. — No longer ago than the be-
ginning of the present Century, Joachim Hilde-
brand, in his Treatise, concerning the Hierarchy
of the Church, has this Passage; « The Great Que-
sion between us & the Papists is, Whether in the
Days
Days of the Apostles, there was one Order of Bishops, & another of Presbyters? The Protestant Churches hold the Negative, & the Papists the Affirmative. The Consequence upon the whole is, That notwithstanding the Charge of Schism, so ignorantly & injuriously laid elsewhere, there can be nothing more Schismatical, than to make a Diocesan Episcopacy a Term of Communion in the Churches of GOD.

Having reported the Practices used in the Churches of New England, it might be thought not amiss to add this Report of their Sentiments, upon an Article with which the Interests of Religion in the World have been very much affected. They do not ask to be under any Episcopal Jurisdiction, but that of Him who is the Great Shepherd & Bishop of Souls. This they know, That there are many Parishes in England, which by Law are Exempted from Episcopal Jurisdiction; And as this is a very plain Demonstration, that the Parliament of England looks on Diocesan Episcopacy as a meer Humane Constitution, so, the Churches of New England, may certainly with as much Reason, as any in the Realm of England, expect such an Exemption to be allowed & preserved unto them. 'Twill be thought enough to them, if the Great Shepherd of the Sheep keep the Flocks in the Wilderness under His gracious Inspection, & lead them in the Paths of Righteousness.

No more is now called for.

In Exhibiting unto the Churches in the other Hemisphere, the Relation of what is practised in these Regions of America, that Article of our Creed,
The Communion of Saints, has been considered. But how far this Relation may Recommend the Churches of New-England unto the Affection & Fellowship of those on the Eastern side of the Atlantic, is what waits for the Experiment. Certainly, the worst they can look for, is to be Charitably Pityed, and Instructed in their Weaknesses.

It will doubtless Heurten them, when they are told, That an Illustrious Minister of State, than whom, for Uncommon Erudition, as well as the other Accomplishments that may brighten a Man of Honour, our Nation has not [and perhaps never had], a Greater; having had the State of this Country truly laid before him, he condescended so far as to write in these obliging Terms unto One of the New-English Divines upon it: "The Account of the State of your Country was very Acceptable to me, and wherein I can serve either It, or You, I shall be always Ready. It is a great Matter of Joy, that the Christian Religion and Learning, do make such Considerable Advances in those Parts of the World; and indeed, whatsoever the Christian Religion was proposed in its Native Plainness, and Simplicity, it is most likely to succeed, as do all things, that are good." After so Important a Smile upon them, they cannot but persuade themselves, that none but the Unreasonable Men that have no Faith, will go to disturb them, in the Peaceable Enjoyment of that Evangelical Church-State, for the sake of which they made a Peaceable Secession "into what was then, a Great and a Terrible Wilderness." Yea, They Comfort themselves in some Expectation, that if their Methods and Customs be not anywhere else presently Conform'd unto, yet so far as Reason comes to prevail
and Govern, the Principles which they profess to act upon, will be every were more & more espoused in the World. They are Principles that will bear the Test, and the more they are Tried, the more they will come forth as Gold.

And if none else be edifyed by it, yet this Publication of their Principles & Practices will certainly prove their own Confirmation, in the Ways of Scriptural Purity, wherein they have hitherto proceeded & prospered. The more they Scan what they Do, the more they will Hold fast what they have, and let no Man take away their Crown. When GOD has blessed the Ministry in these Churches for several Generations, with a Success of the Gospel, that was hardly ever exceeded on the Face of the Earth, it will be an intolerable thing unto them, to hear Foolish & Romish Bigots tell them, They have no True Ministers & Sacraments among them. And however a Few, on certain Temptations may now & then Desert the Holy Ways wherein the Religion of the Second Commandment has been maintained among them, it will be strange, if the Character of the Deserters, & the Lights which lead them, should not prove a powerful Antidote, against any great Accession to the Apostacy.

The Motto of the Churches will be, STANT RELIGIONE PARENTUM; And with a perpetual & inviolate Adherence to their Glorious LORD, and the Directions of His WORD, they will forever say, He is my GOD, and I will prepare Him an Habitation, my Fathers GOD, and I will Exalt Him.
POSTSCRIPT

There may be little Need of Signifying that this Treatise has had a few Lines added unto it; since the Writing of the Attestation at the Beginning of it; tho' such as do not in the least affect or weaken the Attestation. But, because it is Needful, that when an Historical Relation is published, the Name of the Relator who must Support the Truth of it, should be Exposed; and when there may be those disaffected Persons that may be willing to know whom they may more particularly make the Object of their Anymadversions, it is proper that some One should appear with a — Me, Me, Adsum qui scripsi, in me Convertite; — One that could have been content otherwise to have lain buried in perpetual Obscurity and Oblivion, does here, upon good Advice, own himself the Author of the Book, and annex and subscribe his Name unto it; As willingly as Augustin did his to his Book, De Moribus Ecclesiae.

Cotton Mather.

Erratulella Typographica.

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