

*The mutual Care the Members of Christ's
Body owe to each other.*

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE OPENING

OF THE

Reverend PRESBYTERY of SALEM

At GROTON, JUNE 9, 1784.

By Nathaniel Whitaker, D. D.

TOGETHER WITH

Two MINUTES of the said PRESBYTERY
in his Case ;

A SHORT PLAN OF
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-GOVERNMENT;

WITH

An A P P E N D I X,

By the same AUTHOR ;

CONTAINING

A Display of the *Sophistry*, Misrepresentations, and glaring
Falshoods published in a late Pamphlet, entitled, " Dr.
Whitaker's Neighbour is come and seareth him out,—
or, a Defence of the late Council's Result."

A lying Tongue is but for a Moment.

SOLOMON.

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A S E R M O N.

I C O R. xii. 12, 25, 26, 27.

*F O R as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so is Christ,
That there should be no schism in the body, but that all the members should have the same care one of another.
And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.
Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

A PRINCIPAL design of the Holy Spirit in this chapter is to teach us,
1. That his gifts to his people are *diverse*, some having one, some another, (v. 8, 10) each of which are of use, and designed for the edification of the church.

2. That the relation, connection and duties of church-members, to one another, is fitly represented by the natural body, which consists of many members, united by the strongest bonds, and mutually caring for each other ; mourning or rejoicing together, and each pursuing one grand object, viz. the good, edification and happiness of the whole.

This, in a moving manner, not only teaches us our duty to one another ; but gives a check to the pride of those who glory in their gifts, (of which there were many in that church—v. 8, 9, 10) and serves to check the spirit of pride in those, less richly endowed, who, through envy at such as excelled, wished to assume influence and stations higher than Providence had allotted them. “ The contention and schism in that church, says Mr. Henry, was about *precedency* ; as most quarrels among Christians are, with whatever pretences they are gilded over : and it is no wonder that this should extinguish charity. When all would stand in the first rank, no wonder if they jostle and thrust back others.” Envy is a restless, and often an incurable passion. *Who*, says Solomon, *can stand before envy ?* And we read, that *for envy*, i. e. at Christ’s popularity, and because the world, as the Pharisees said, was gone after him, the great council or synod of the church first censured, and then delivered him to Pontius Pilate for a final sentence against his life. Gifts are to be

be valued for use ; but they are often an object of envy, and fuel for pride and contention. This the apostle endeavours to prevent, in this chapter, by shewing the union of all in one body ; and in the next, by *pointing out the more excellent way* of love and charity, which is to be preferred to all other spiritual, natural and acquired gifts.

The words I have read you, as the theme of this discourse, exhibit a beautiful picturesque of this *heavenly, benign, holy, godlike* temper, in which consists the sum of Christianity, the image of God, the fulfilling of the law, the peace and happiness of state, church, societies and families ; yea, the very glory, joy and blessedness of heaven. Without this, the most shining gifts are at best *as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals*, which entertain others with sweet melody, but have neither life nor sense themselves.

These words, which compare the church of Christ to our natural body, teach us,

Doct.] That all the disciples of Christ, in their respective stations, are under strong bonds to take care of the whole body, and of each member in particular.

To illustrate this, I will shew,

I. What that care is which every disciple of Christ should take of the whole body.

II. How they are to take care of every particular member.

III. Shew the obligations all are under, to take such care.

I. What that care is which every disciple of Christ should take of the whole body.

Christ is not divided ; he and his church are but one ; and therefore the church, in my text, is called *Christ*, and in Jer. xxxiii. 16. she is, for the same reason, called *the Lord our righteousness*, after the name of her husband Christ, both being but one : and this oneness lies very near the heart of Christ, John xvii. 21, 22, 23. where he prays with great earnestness, that they may be one in him and with him, repeating this request in various forms, to shew how much his heart was set on this *oneness* of his body.

Here I shall inquire,

I. What this body of Christ is ?

II. What care lies on us towards it ?

I. What does this body of Christ consist of ?

Of him, says the inspired Apostle, *the whole family in heaven and earth is named*, as all in a family are named after the head of it. This body of Christ therefore consists,

1. *Of glorified angels*. He is their head. They receive their being and all their blessedness from him, and through him ; and are all put into subjection to him. He created them, and gave them their stations in the kingdom above ; and he is the great medium of all the joy and blessedness they receive from the eternal Father. The Father communicates his fulness to all creatures, in no way, but through Jesus Christ, nor ever will to all eternity. He is the invisible God, whose essence no eye hath seen or can see, no, not angels, but as he manifests himself in and through
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his Son ; i. e. in and through the man Christ Jesus, or the *God-man-mediator* : this was he by whom God made the worlds, and all things visible and invisible : this is he who upholds all things by the word of his power : and it is from and through him that all the fulness of the eternal Father flows out in creating, preserving and happifying all. So that the angels, as well as men, depend on Christ for all they are or have. They therefore make up a part, and a very principal part, of that glorious family of which Christ is the head and father, or governour ; and by virtue of their union with him, they are to be considered as our brethren, and one with us.

2. All the pious who have left this world, and are gone to glory, are the body of Christ. They, as we, owe, not only their being, but salvation, to him. They are redeemed by his blood from among men, and, by him, made kings and priests to God, and reign with him.

3. All the real saints on earth belong to this body of Christ. These, as those in heaven, are redeemed by his blood, and sanctified by his spirit, which, dwelling in them, makes them one body with him, as truly as our hands or feet are one with our head ; and are as surely happy, as the members of our bodies when the head is happy and honoured.

4. The body of Christ consists of all the visible saints on earth. The visible church consists of all those who are saints by calling, and professors of the name and doctrines of Christ. Many of these are Christians only in name ; yet they are visibly the body of Christ, and belong to his household or family, and are training up for the paradise above ; i. e. this is the end of all the means and advantages allowed them in his family. These we are to consider as brethren and fellow-travellers to the celestial city. Among these there are many who will finally fall short, and be rejected by Christ, because unfruitful in his vineyard, though we know not now who they are : and others, whose infirmities, sins and weaknesses make them appear too like the enemies of Christ, shall finally arrive to glory. These are the family or school of Christ in this world, and are training up for their future and eternal state of recompence. These are more peculiarly the objects of our care, as being in the same mansion or house with us.

5. All the elect belong to the body of Christ. Many of these are yet in their sins : but they are Christ's by a special gift from the Father ; and in due time he will bring them into a vital union with himself, and they shall drink in of the same spirit. They are, as yet, the unborn, though destined heirs of glory, and our brethren by virtue of the scheme of salvation, and eternal purpose of God, choosing them and us alike in Christ before the world began.

6. The churches to which we respectively belong, are parts of this body of Christ. These consist of several particular members ; and these stand in a more special and near relation to each other, than to other parts of the body, as being more within the reach, and under the eye of each other. These churches may be considered more or less extended, as being either national,

national, provincial, classical, or congregational ; or, in other words, as united by a general assembly of a nation, by a synod, by a presbytery, by a congregational eldership, or some other mode of administration ; as the courts to which all the members of each particular church or congregation are subject in the Lord for order and government.

This is the body of Christ, for which we are to be careful. Which leads me to shew,

II. What that care is we are to take of this body.

As these several parts of Christ's body are in different states, they are the subjects of our attention and care in different respects.

1. As to the glorious angels, we need have no solicitous care about them ; yet they, being members of the same family, are worthily the objects of our attention : for,

(1.) We are to honour and reverence them as the servants or ministers of Christ, sent by him to minister to and for us. How solemn and pleasing the thought ! those glorious and blessed spirits continually attend on us ; they guard us day and night—inspect our secret walks—accompany us in our journeys—surround our beds—defend us from innumerable dangers, seen and unseen—and doubtless, by divine order, they often influence our thoughts, and suggest to us ideas of great importance in the various businesses of life. The apostle urges reverence and decency, in the worship of God, by the consideration of the presence of the angels in the church ; (1 Cor. xi. 9.) and it would be of no small use to us to realize that they are our constant companions, and witnesses of all our behaviour. If we fear to appear indecent in dress, gesture, word or action, in the presence of great men ; how much more would a belief of the presence of the glorious angels, who stand continually before the face of God our Saviour, awe us into a decent and becoming conduct ?

(2.) Besides, we should attend to their excellent *order* and *government*. Though the particular mode of this is not revealed to us, yet we are assured that there is, among them, a subordination of inferiours to superiours : there are thrones and dominions, principalities and power, among them. Some angels are more exalted than others, and are set in higher places of rule and authority among the heavenly hosts : yet there is no envy, rebellion, or ambition to rise above superiours ; nor any disposition in superiours to tyrannize over those below. Those blessed spirits never seek dominion where God does not give it ; they exercise that authority only which is entrusted with them. They do not stretch themselves beyond their measure, as ambitious, sinful, aspiring mortals do. Their order and government is beautiful, sweet and glorious, and should animate us to a cheerful imitation.

(3.) We ought to attend to their cheerful obedience and submission to their Lord's will. They are swift as lightning to execute his orders of vengeance or love ; yea, to perform the most disagreeable task, viz. to wait and tend upon sinful men, women and children, who are wallowing in the puddles of sin and defilement ; who are continually affronting, abusing
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and vilifying their glorious Lord and King, and casting the greatest contempt on his authority, love and goodness. *They are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation*, many of whom are among the most abandoned of sinners. 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Such were some of you ; but ye are washed.* How must the stomachs of those holy beings turn at the sight of such filthy wretches ; and yet, because their Lord requires, they, with perfect freedom and alacrity, wait on, protect, nurse and serve them, even while spurning at the love and authority of their Lord, and at all their kind services for them. When we consider this their cheerful self-denial and patience, we should with fervour pray, *Thy will be done by us on earth, as it is done by the glorious angels in heaven.*

(4.) We should consider their perfect blessedness and happiness in the communications of the fulness of the Deity in and through their and our head, Jesus Christ. Here *they* and *we* hold a sweet and glorious communion, and are gathered together in one body, of which Jesus is the glorious head.

2. We are also to be thoughtful of the glorified saints ; not to be anxious about them, for they are out of the reach of wants and prayers ; but to love, honour, imitate, and long to be with them. We should think of their once debased, suffering state, and their present glory and joy ; that *we* may be animated to patience and perseverance in our heavenly race. They, as it were, look over the walls of the celestial paradise, and call to us in the most animating language, saying, “ Ye soldiers of Christ, now engaged in yonder field of toil, labour, battle and blood, keep up your courage, maintain your ground :—the enemy is powerful, and the conflict sharp ; but your leader is almighty, and your victory certain. Jesus, your and our captain, leads to conquest and crowns, honour and glory ; and will soon, with his own hand, place the royal diadem on your heads. We once, as you do now, wrestled hard : but the victory is gained, and we triumph in unfading joy. Behold the crowns of glory on our heads—the palms of victory in our hands—the robes of state, honour and dignity with which our Lord hath clothed us. We now drink, yea, bathe and swim in the river, and eat abundantly of the *tree of life*, that is in the midst of the paradise of God. Our sorrows, pains, reproaches, are now all forgot, and Jesus, with his own soft hand, has wiped away all tears from our eyes. Hold out *faith* and *patience* a little longer—a few more hard struggles, and the day is your own—fear not, you shall conquer, for he, in whose cause you fight and suffer, is mighty to save ; and as he lives and reigns victorious over all his enemies, so ye shall very shortly rise, rest and reign with him and us forever and ever.”——There is Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, yea, all the prophets, apostles, martyrs and saints that have gone before. There is your pious husband, wife, parent, child, brother, sister and friend, who left you behind to fight a little longer, and ripen for a more weighty crown of glory. Those are looking on, and observing your courage, zeal and love for Christ, and wishing and longing to see you finish your course
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and conflict with joy, and join the general assembly of the first born, which are written in heaven.—Yea, there is God the judge of all ; and there, O ! there is Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, the loving and beloved redeemer, *waiting*, and, as it were, *restless*, till we join the joyful throng. These then should be the objects of our care, as being glorious members or parts of the body of Christ.

3. The visible saints on earth, being those my text chiefly respects, call for and are entitled to our more particular care as a part of the body of Christ, and members in particular. These are the household of faith, to whom we are especially commanded to do good ; and, though thousands and millions of them are unknown to us, yet we are to be careful for them. We are to *pray for all saints* ; to seek of God, for them, *pardonning, strengthening, delivering and persevering grace*. We should daily bear the whole militant church on our hearts before God in earnest prayer, and long that his kingdom might speedily come.

4. We ought to be peculiarly careful and concerned for those who are yet in their sins, unconverted, and strangers to the great work of regeneration. Christ prayed for all the Father had given him, though millions of them were not then called ; and it becomes us to be solicitous and restless in prayer, till every member of Christ's body shall come to a perfect state in him.

5. We must exercise a still more special care for the particular members of that part of the body of Christ, with which we are connected as members of a church—as,

(1.) When several churches are united in one confociation, presbytery or synod, then they are under more peculiar obligations to be careful for each other, than for those with whom they are not so connected ; because they are more within the reach of each other's help and assistance.

(2.) The obligation to care for one another rises still higher on those who, living in a convenient vicinity, attend the publick worship of God statedly together. This constitutes a particular church : and their frequent meetings and neighbourhood giving them greater advantages to do good to each other, than those have who live more remote, they are under greater obligations to take care one of another, than of those who are more disconnected. Here there should be a more particular care of each member, for their furtherance in knowledge, faith, purity, unity and love : for which end every one should be careful to keep their place, and not contend or strive for superiority, or higher stations in the church than God has allotted them ; *to be quiet, and do their own business* ; to keep order, and preserve the rules of God's house. The particular church, whose several members conduct thus, will *look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners*. They should be careful to heal disordered members. In this world there will be such always in the body, and they call for our tender care ; and we must labour to restore them in the spirit of meekness and charity : but when all means fail, and the gangrened member endangers the body, it must be cut off,

off, as incurable, by suspension and excommunication ; for the destruction of the flesh, that spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. And so the good and salvation of all, even of disordered members, is to be cared for by all—every member should seek the edifying of the whole body, and of every particular member, in love.

III. Shew the obligations all are under to take such care.

Here a large field opens, and invites our view ; but, waving particulars, I shall just observe,

That we all feel within ourselves a special care of each member of our natural body. The smallest member cannot receive the slightest injury without affecting the whole ; and the head, with all the other members, suffers with it ; and all unite, according to their several offices, and exert every faculty to defend or heal it. If the least bone be out of joint, how is the whole body alarmed and roused to action, care and pains to reduce it to order, and never can rest till this be done. So if honour be shewn to one member, all the others rejoice with it.

Happy, unspeakably happy, would the church be, if the same tender care should take place amo. ; all its members. The reasons obliging to this are these :

1. So is Christ, i. e. the church is one with Christ, so that it is called Christ, *Christ mystical*. The whole church is one body, of which Christ is the head, and so both make but one. Christ is made up of many members, but all these are but one body. Now if every member is a part of the body of Christ ; and if we love him (as we certainly do if we are his real members) we shall naturally be careful of every member, as being part of that one body to which we are united ; and this union is not by water baptism only, which is the outward sign ; but by the quickening, renewing and indwelling of the spirit of Christ, which is the vital bond of union.

The spirit which was given to the man Christ Jesus without measure, the fulness of which, even the fulness of the Godhead, dwells in his human nature, this same spirit is given to, and dwells in all the real members of Christ on earth, and animates them, as our souls animate the several members of our natural bodies. He, therefore, who sins against the meanest member of Christ's body, not only sins against Christ, but also grieves the holy spirit, by which they are united to him, and to one another.

2. Our own personal happiness calls for this care and tenderness.—Happiness is the desire and lawful pursuit of nature ; and they are quite lost to all the principles of reason, religion and nature, that do not seek after it. Every member of our natural bodies seeks its own happiness ; and we feel that all the other members are miserable, if one be out of order. Thus it is in the body of Christ. If I with my own happiness, as a member of Christ's body, I shall seek and be concerned for the happiness of every member, as involving my own.

Hence it is, that the more any love Christ, the greater will be their care, zeal and labour for the welfare of the members of his body. Find a lover of Christ, and you will find one who is filled with love to the
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brethren, and tender care for the happiness and prosperity of all ; one who prays much, not for himself only, but for all the militant members of the body of Christ. He will lay out his talents to save souls ; to comfort the afflicted, support the weak ; will endeavour in love to replace dislocated members ; be patient toward the perverse ; stand by, plead for and defend the oppressed and slandered, as being of the same body with himself.—When he sees a member injured, though it be but a little finger, much more when it is an hand, an eye or the mouth, he flies to its succour, and feels the injury as offered to himself, yea, to Christ and the whole body. If I can be easy and happy, while I see a fellow member in distress, abused, vilified, reproached and persecuted, it shews that I am not vitally united to the body, nor actuated by the spirit that dwells in the head. A mortified or dead member, hung on the body of Christ only by a profession, will feel no pain, when a living member is wounded or broken ; living members only truly sympathize with one another.

If then we desire happiness as the members of Christ let us be careful for all the members of the body, as far as in our power, that there be no wound, schism, opposition or disorder in the body. Where this spirit of Christ dwells, the members will have a *natural* care one of another, as in the natural body ; and there will be no need of constraint or force. Hence will flow all those sympathetick virtues and benevolent actions, which so beautify and adorn the Christian name and character—We shall weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice—be tender-hearted, merciful, long-suffering——In a word, we shall love as brethren, be kind and courteous, polite, easy, gentle, good, tender, affectionate and forgiving. Against these there is no law, but that of the kingdom of hell and darkness, in which the god of this world rules and reigns.

I pass to make some reflections.

REFL. I. When we consider Jesus Christ our redeemer, as the Lord and Sovereign of so great and glorious a body ; of such an extensive family or kingdom ; we see abundant reason to glory in him, as higher than the kings of the earth, and more worthy of honour, adoration, reverence, love, obedience and praise, than the most exalted monarchs, yea, than the brightest seraphim in glory ; and to glory and pride ourselves in our relation to him as our head, Lord and Saviour.

Let us think much of the king we own and honour ; the head we are united to and one with. This is no petty prince that commands a *clan*, a *county*, a *province*, an *island*, or even a *continent*, or the whole of this *globe* : the greatness and glory of these is outdone even by the glory of the grass of the field : but Jesus is head over all, and is prince of the kings of the earth, who receive their crowns, sceptres and honours of him at his will. Our Lord is above them all, and they are but his servants, and the most of them his bond slaves, who do his will only by constraint.

To this high and princely *one*, we not only submit as his subjects, and glory in him as our Lord ; but (ravishing thought !) to this fair, this ruddy *one*, this chief among ten thousands—to this matchless, peerless *one*
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are we married, and of twain made one flesh, one body. We, who are more loathsome and vile in his sight, by nature and practice, than the vilest worm or toad can be to us, are embraced in those fair arms of incarnate love, which once were stretched wide on the cross, as ready to receive us, but now sway the sceptre of heaven and earth. That sweet, that pure mouth, which once uttered groans and sighs, and, with bitter and long complaints, breathed out his soul to death, now gives us the tender kisses of his exalted and reigning love. He is gone before, and, while we are weeping and groaning in the valley of tears, he is, even now, preparing our downy bed, and perfuming it with the choicest spices of his paradise above: he is sitting up every room in his palace in the highest taste, and with the most exquisite skill, that we may, after our weary journey, repose to rest, and be solaced in his most near and tender embraces, through the never ceasing ages of eternity.

Who so honoured! who so privileged as we! *We are now the sons of God*, though the world know us not; yea, we know not *ourselves*, as yet, *what we shall be*; but *this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*. This, this is the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils and wicked men—such as we, to be matched and made *one* with this fair, renowned King! O, let us wonder, adore and love!—Let us glory in him, and pride ourselves in his name, yea, cross too. Let us never be ashamed to own and stand by him, though surrounded with enemies, though in rags, disgrace, reproach, prison or death. Mary could say, *they have taken away my LORD*—What! would she own him as *her Lord*, when set at nought by all the great, and the chief leaders of the church of God, and when crucified and buried! Would she confess and stand by him in this lowest abasement! and shall we be ashamed of him now he is risen and ascended to glory! I say, shall we now be ashamed to own him in his suffering members on earth! Much of his body is yet in this state of trial. We yet see Christ suffering in his members, slain, buried and mouldering in the graves of reproach, slander and persecution; and shall we be ashamed to own him, and plead his cause? To desert his members when in affliction, is counted a forsaking Christ. *I was sick and in prison, and ye came not to me*.

REFL. II. How animating and cheering the thought, that angels and we are one body in Christ, all united to one head, all of one family, and all drink of one fountain, even of God himself; all whose ineffable communications flow to them and us through one and the same medium, even Jesus our Immanuel, our head and husband. Heb. xii. 22. O blessed day, when we shall actually join those sweet and blessed choirs, in celebrating the glory, grace, love and power of God manifest in our flesh.

REFL. III. We have no reason to expect better treatment from this world, than Christ met with. If we are the members of his body, and conduct in any measure as he did; and if he was abused, slandered and persecuted in the world; we may not hope to fare better. *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. If they have called the*
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master of the house a drunkard, a debauchee, and a devil, much more those of his household. Why should we repine to meet with the same abuse our Lord suffered?—But, alas! these vile hearts are ready to think, that Christ should have born all these sorrows too. How reluctant are we *to fill up what is yet behind of the sufferings of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the church!*—O blessed Jesus, forgive this impatience, and arm us with more zeal and courage to bear the cross. We know that *thou hast suffered, leaving us an example, that we should follow thy steps;* but our flesh is weak and rebellious—O strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die.

REFL. IV. If all believers are members of Christ's body, and one with him, it is easy to see that those who injure and persecute them, are guilty of heinous sin, as they persecute and abuse Christ. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* said Jesus, when he was only persecuting his visible saints. Such are enemies to Christ, a nuisance to his body, and carry the marks of darkness and death upon them.

REFL. V. If Christ has so loved us, as to unite us to himself, and take all believers into one body; we ought surely so to love all the members of this one body, as to seek the best good of every member, and to be tender of their peace and comfort; to have a fellow-feeling for each other, and, by bearing one another's burdens, strive to fulfil the law of Christ, which is no other than the law of love. Can we see our glorious King sweating under burdens for us, and we be averse or ashamed to put a finger to ease the burdens which lie on his members, and are ready to crush them to the grave? O, how unkind this return!

REFL. VI. How clearly does this comparison of the church to the natural body evince the necessity, yea, the certainty, of different offices and officers in the church of Christ; for *every member hath not the same office.* What a monster would that body be, that were all eye, all mouth, &c.? And what a monster would that church be, in which all were *apostles*, all *prophets*, all *helpers* or deacons, all *governours* or ruling elders, &c. Surely, by this parallel, God teaches us, that there are different offices and officers in the church; and also what these offices are; and that government is no more placed by him in the hands of the members at large, than the ministry of the word and sacraments; and the reason is the same in both, viz. because they are unqualified for both alike. How dangerous then for men to assume a station and office in Christ's house which he has not assigned them!

I close with an address to my brethren now met in judicature to consult the affairs of Christ's house.

FATHERS and BRETHREN,

Ye are members of Christ, and not the lowest in his body. Ye are as the hands and eyes, most important and useful members. These your high and honourable stations in the body, as they call you to greater hazards and trials, so they oblige you to double watchfulness, care and zeal for the good of the body. You are not only, in common with other members,

to have a care of them, but are set as the eyes to guide, as the hands to work, defend, or bind up what is broken. Ye are Christ's stewards and officers in his house, both to give to every one his portion of meat in due season, and also to rule and govern his family agreeable to his laws. You, in the church below, are, as the archangels in heaven, placed in an higher order than other members; and therefore should be careful *to use the authority the Lord hath given you to edification, and not to destruction*; in meekness and love exercising the discipline of his house; not *lording* and tyrannizing over others, nor usurping dominion over other denominations of Christians, who never owned any subjection to you, nor using rigour towards those under your rule. In this corrupt state, there is great danger of tyranny in rulers, and of envy and rebellion in subjects; and both these are destructive of the peace, happiness and edification of the body. Let us shun these, and study the best good of the whole. Let us use lenitives where we may, and more sharp medicines only where these are ineffectual.

As to myself, I rejoice in this opportunity to meet you once more as a judicature of Jesus Christ, and that I have the honour again to speak to you from God. You have all doubtless heard, and been grieved at the reports spread through the land concerning me, which probably have prejudiced the minds of many who are now my hearers. But the time approaches, when, I trust, those slanders will be, in a happy measure, wiped away, and appear to be the effect of malevolence and opposition to the truth; which discovery would have been more clear and full, could I have prevailed with my backbiting accusers to have regularly appeared before this Presbytery, and had their and my evidences face to face.

But should the popular clamour so stop the mouths of my witnesses as to deprive me of that exculpation I have a right to, I pray God to give me grace to submit to his will, and with my divine pattern, in a similar case, commit myself to him that judgeth righteously.

But allow me to assure you (and I think I have the mind of Christ) that I expect for myself; and permit me to warn you, also, to look out for and expect to meet *revilings, slanders, reproaches, persecutions and abuses* from the world, if you determine to fight boldly under the banner of Christ.—There are but two kingdoms in the world, Christ's and Satan's. These are in perfect opposition. And is it possible that those who list under Christ, and *really* oppose the god of this world, should leave the field without any conflict? Such as do but make feints against Satan may go through with ease, yea, applause from his pretended foes; but not so they who give home thrusts at his cause and interest. He bruised the heel of our all-conquering General, who hath assured us that we must look for the same treatment.

I am persuaded, that had I swam with the stream, as some have done—had I been what the world calls *prudent*, and spoken with caution, that is, in plain English, handled the word of God deceitfully, my name would have shone with at least usual lustre. But I dare not daub with untempered mortar, nor shun to declare the whole counsel of God. I

I hope you, my fellow soldiers in this field of battle and blood, will put on hardiness, and keep yourselves clear of the blood of all men, by a bold and faithful testimony for the truth, and against the errors and sins of the times, even though this should rouse against you all the combined legions of earth and hell.—As to me, I have been almost slain in the combat, and am still bleeding and weak with my wounds. I beg the earnest prayers of you all for me—that Jesus would heal and strengthen me, and furnish me for the work and sufferings he hath allotted me in the latter stages of my weary journey.

And I beseech you, brethren, to arm yourselves with faith, courage and patience. Come with me; let us visit mount Calvary. Here behold the Captain of our Salvation bearing his cross, sweating, groaning, crying, dying under reproach, pain and shame——But he is risen!—he reigns—he intercedes for us—he is touched with a feeling of our sorrows—he puts our tears into his bottle. He hath told us that the world shall laugh, and we shall be sorrowful; but that our sorrow shall be turned into joy—He is now brightening our crown of glory, by our sufferings, and encouraging us by his example and promises—Hold out faith and patience a few sorrowful days and nights more—Jesus looks on—he loves to see us valiant for him against the flesh, the world and the devil—He leads, and we shall conquer—we may die in the conflict, but we fall to rise to a brighter crown——O let us encourage and support each other to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. I rejoice that my race is almost run—My sun will soon set, and the evening of rest will soon come—come to me and to you all, both ministers and people, who, loving and longing for his appearance, and being faithful unto death, shall receive of him a glorious crown of life. Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly. AMEN and AMEN.



A BRIEF PLAN

OF

Presbyterian Church Government.

IN each particular church there shall be a session or presbytery, consisting of the minister (while there is one) and ruling elders, which shall be vested with full power of judgment, rule, order and discipline in the church, to which every member shall be subject. And these to be in relation to one another and the whole church in the following manner.

1. The minister (while there is one) to be the moderator of the session, *ex officio*.

2. These ruling elders shall be chosen by the congregation, and be their representatives in session.

3. When any case shall come before the session, in which the minister and elders shall differ in judgment, the matter in debate may be carried by reference or complaint of any member to the presbytery for their decision*. Yea,

4. When the judgment of the session shall be published, either party may appeal to the presbytery; or if any *brother* or *sister* of the church shall be aggrieved thereby, they or either of them may state their objections, and prosecute them before the presbytery for their decision.

5. That in case of a complaint against the minister, the session shall not take jurisdiction; but after Christian private endeavours to heal the difficulty, the case may be carried by regular complaint of either party to the presbytery. But,

6. That no complaint shall be sustainable, either by the session or presbytery, where the particular charges are not tabled in writing, and the accused served with a fair copy of them, specifying the crime or action *what*, time *when*, and place *where*, together with the proofs and names of the witnesses for the support of the charge, which shall be given to the defendant, at least ten days before trial, or more if the judicature shall judge needful.

7. When

* In page 5 of *Brief History*, &c. note, I have said, "Here the minister has a full negative on the session and whole church." This being understood, by some, as though the minister had the sovereign power to put a final end to the process, and so controul the whole church; I here observe, that all I intended by it is, that the minister can stop the session or eldership, which is the whole church representatively, from proceeding, but that either he or the elders may complain to the presbytery, which is no more than the privilege of every brother and sister in the church, as appears in the 4th article of my *Brief History*.

7. When there is no minister, the ruling elders may form a session, choose a moderator and clerk, and proceed as a judicature.

8. That the presbytery shall have a decisive power of judgment, from which there is no appeal, till there shall be a synod ; yet they may revise their judgments.

9. That no complaint shall be received, by the session, of any offence, till the steps directed by Christ, Matt. xviii. 15. &c. are previously taken ; and that the person who shall complain before such steps, shall be liable to reproof or censure, as the nature of the case shall appear to the session to require.

10. That no minister be dismissed from his people while his usefulness among them is not impeded, and they give him a support.

11. That if any person, belonging to this body, and within our jurisdiction, shall leap over and endeavour to invert the whole, or any part of the preceding articles, he or they shall be treated as delinquents, and be subject to reproof or censure, as the nature of the offence shall appear to require.

Gray, Sept. 9, 1784. Voted that the preceding Plan of Church Government be printed with Dr. Whitaker's Sermon.

Attest.

SAMUEL PEARLY, Mod'r.
JOHN STRICKLAND, Pr. Clk.

The Determination of the Salem Presbytery, at their Session at Groton, State of Massachusetts, June 11, 1784, on the Case of the Rev. Dr. Whitaker.

A Representation having been made to this presbytery, by the Rev. Dr. Whitaker, of the treatment he hath met with from most of the third church in Salem, of which he is pastor ; and finding, on *full evidence*, that the Doctor has taken regular steps to cite them before us, and tabled his charges against them in a proper manner, and also called on them to bring in their charges against him, to be tried before this body ; but that they have neglected to exhibit any charges against the said Dr. Whitaker, and in violation of the laws of Christ, and the rules of this judicature, and of their own solemn covenant to submit themselves to this presbytery, have not appeared to answer to the charges exhibited to them to be heard and tried at this time and place : which conduct we esteem contumacious, which is evident from their vote of Jan. 7, 1784, at a disorderly church meeting, in which they declare, that they will not be subject any longer to any presbyterian government whatever, and that twenty of the brethren signed their names to this disorderly withdraw and breach of solemn covenant ;

nant ; and as their present conduct evinces their continued contumacy, this presbytery see no prospect of bringing those brethren to any regular conduct ; and therefore, according to the rules of Christ, and this body, we are obliged to enter on an hearing, *ex parte*, of the charges exhibited by Dr. Whitaker against them.

And upon a careful and candid consideration and view of the whole of the charges, and evidences brought, from their votes and other authentick records, to support them—and after solemn prayer to God for direction, we find ourselves obliged to conclude (though with grief and sorrow) that the said twenty brethren have conducted in a very disorderly and unchristian manner toward Dr. Whitaker, and also contumaciously, in refusing to hear the church to which they, according to the laws of Christ, had solemnly covenanted to be subject. Therefore we are obliged, by divine institution, to declare them unworthy the communion of saints, till they shall manifest repentance.

And whereas the aforesaid twenty brethren, in their disorderly and tyrannical treatment of their pastor, have called in a congregational council, to which neither they nor he were constitutionally subject, and have cited him before them, and exhibited to him six general charges, without date, address or signature, and without time *when*, place *where*, action *what*, or the names of any witnesses, and without the name of the court, time and place of trial, and which charges, being only *general*, cannot be sustained by any regular court, but are to be considered as *calumny* and *slander* ; and did adduce particulars, before said council, behind their pastor's back, without giving him any notice of them, and which they still refuse to inform him of, though often and earnestly called upon for them, and also refuse to appear before this judicature (to which they have promised subjection) to defend themselves or accuse him, or support any charges ; therefore Dr. Whitaker begged leave to be his own accuser, that he might, as far as the circumstances of the case would admit, answer to the calumnies which his adversaries had spread behind his back, but which they refuse to charge him with where he can answer for himself ; which calumnies and slanders, we reasonably suppose, are summarily contained in those general charges that were exhibited to him, and laid before their council : This presbytery, on carefully attending to said charges, and the evidence that was or could be produced (while the accusers and their witnesses will not appear) for the support of them, and taking every measure within their reach to come to the knowledge of the truth ; and observing the Doctor's frankness and readiness to expose his own foibles, and to take every step to have his character searched, even to the requesting this body to adjourn to Salem, and to cite his accusers to appear and support their charges—attending carefully to these things, and to what the Doctor had to offer to invalidate the witnesses who he had heard were the chief to support the charges, we do judge, that said witnesses ought not to be admitted ; and if they were, that their testimony being *singular*, and no two asserting any one fact, they could not support a charge of slander against an elder.

Therefore we are of opinion, that the charges, which seem to have been the chief ground of uneasiness, *are not supported* ; and we conceive
C them

them to be either frivolous or justifiable, as the facts appear to us to stand.

We give it as our serious judgment, That Doctor Whitaker has been grievously abused by the backbiting and detraction of his brethren——That their calling a congregational council to try him was tyrannical, oppressive and defamatory, in its nature and tendency——That said council had no right to hear or judge any thing about Doctor Whitaker——and, That their assuming jurisdiction over him was tyrannical, and a breach of brotherly love and communion between them and their presbyterian brethren, and discovers a desire of unlawful dominion, and is highly grievous and offensive to this body, and must be so to our presbyterian brethren, and to all the friends of freedom and liberty of every denomination of Christians; which therefore we do most heartily disapprove, and with abhorrence detest; and cannot but lament that another denomination of Christians, in these free states, should claim authority and jurisdiction over us presbyterians, who have behaved peaceably, and lived in brotherly love with our congregational brethren.

That as said council was unconstitutional, called *wholly* without the knowledge of Dr. Whitaker, and a court to which he was in no sense subject, any more than to a court of episcopalians or cardinals, his refusing to be heard and tried by them was truly commendable, and can by no means bear any mark of contumacy, but would, in a parallel case and parallel circumstances, have been commendable in any minister of a different denomination, throughout the whole sphere of created intelligence.

That we have satisfying evidence, that much of the council's result is founded on *false* representations -- conceptions, particularly their foundation resolves, viz. "That the third church in Salem was not presbyterian when the Doctor took the charge of them in 1769; and that they were brought under the care of this presbytery by Dr. Whitaker in a clandestine manner." In opposition to this, we affirm, that said church was ever deemed a presbyterian church, from the time of his settlement among them; and their covenant with the Doctor involves every essential of the presbyterian form, and excludes all those of the congregational, which distinguish it from the presbyterian. And we have the fullest evidence, that said church was brought under the care of this presbytery in as fair, open and candid a manner as possible, even by the desire, choice and request of a large majority; which evidence we have, not only from original papers now in our hands, but from the declaration of those very men, who now represent the Doctor's conduct, in this matter, as *clandestine*, which they openly, boldly and resolutely made before this presbytery at Salem, in 1774, when the same objection was made by his adversaries: therefore their declaring the contrary now, after ten years quiet subjection to this body, is a direct contradiction of themselves, and proves them so unstable and wavering, that their testimony, in matters of controversy in which they are interested, is not to be relied on; that they *say* and *unsay*, to serve a favourite purpose.

That notwithstanding what they and their council have done, or can do, to dissolve the Doctor's pastoral relation to said congregation, it still continues undissolved both in *foro conscientie* and *foro civili*——That said council's censure of Dr. Whitaker is unconstitutional, cruel and defamatory.

tory, even if he had been as guilty as they suppose, the court being illegal.

That the manner of bringing and admitting those general charges against the Doctor, if the court had been legal, is a breach of the rules of justice and equity, as it deprives the accused of that privilege of self-defence, which God, reason, law, and every well-regulated court, allow as the indefeasible right of every man.

That having carefully attended to the paper of general charges against the Doctor, and to those particulars adduced under them which we could by any means come to the knowledge of, we are satisfied they are frivolous and unworthy of notice, or else such as are not supported by sufficient, credible evidence, and ought to be considered as false, till proved by good and credible witnesses before this judicature.

That those twenty brethren refusing, after being, by the Doctor, repeatedly and earnestly called on, to table and prosecute any particular charges against him before this judicature, to which they covenanted to be subject, is a strong presumptive proof, that they have nothing to lay to his charge which they consider as supportable on a fair trial. And their exhibiting general and irregular charges before a court, to which they knew the Doctor would not, and could not submit, is too clear a proof that they designed, in an unfair and clandestine manner, to stab and wound the Doctor's character and usefulness, by procuring and publishing their censure of him to the world. We cannot but esteem such treatment of any, especially a minister of Christ, exceedingly unjust, cruel and tyrannical, much more one who has been so abundant in labours for a people, and spent so many years, and so much of his own estate, in their service, as it is evident the Doctor has for and among that people.

And as those brethren will not (because, as we suppose, they cannot) bring and support any charges against the Doctor's character; therefore we judge he stands clear and acquitted of all, as though no rumours had been spread to his dishonour, till some charges shall be regularly brought before this body, and duly supported; and that the Doctor ought to be as cordially received by all the churches of Christ, as though said council and charges had never existed. And accordingly we do recommend the said Dr. Nathaniel Whitaker to the Christian and ministerial fellowship of all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying that wherever the providence of God may call him, they will receive him as an able and faithful minister of the gospel.

This presbytery taking also into consideration the unhappy breach and disaffection which hath taken place between the Doctor and his people, through the subtilty of Satan and his instruments; and being satisfied that the Doctor cannot be comfortable and extensively useful among them, at his request, we declare his pastoral relation to the third church in Salem, and to the society meeting with them, *dissolved*, as soon as the said society shall pay him what yet remains due, according to the true intent and meaning of the seventh article of the plan for building the Tabernacle in Salem, until the time they passed votes for his support, and from that time shall fulfil their votes, in money as good as when voted, until his dismission shall take place, with interest on the whole arrears till paid; and shall also pay the Doctor a reasonable reward for

his labours on the Tabernacle, or shall some way compound with the Doctor for said arrears.

And as said society have refused to admit the Doctor's labours among them since the 25th of March last, if they shall still continue to neglect, or not invite him; we believe it is his duty to improve the excellent talents God hath given him, in preaching to such as desire to hear him there, or in any other part of God's vineyard where his labours shall be desired, still holding himself in readiness to serve said third church in Salem, till his dismissal shall take place.

And this presbytery cannot but lament the sad and destructive breach that has taken place in the third church in Salem, through the subtilty and artifice of the enemy of souls; and do not only solemnly admonish and rebuke those brethren for their irregular and schismatical conduct, but exhort them, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to consider of their ways, and repent of their sin in this affair, and make compensation to their pastor for the injury they have done him; and to remember how, with travail and many crosses, he has served them, and taught, warned and exhorted them; and that they will have to answer to Christ, in the great day, for all the excellent and precious means of grace they have enjoyed under his ministry.—We exhort the Rev. Dr. Whitaker to a careful search, why the Lord is thus contending with him; and to double his diligence in watching and labouring against sin, Satan and the world, and for the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ; praying that all these trials may be for the furtherance of the gospel, and his greater purifying and increase in grace, and of his crown of eternal glory.

We cannot close without expressing our surprise, grief and astonishment, that our brethren of the congregational persuasion, who profess a regard for us as brethren in one common Lord, and in all the essentials of faith, should so little regard that divine injunction, (1 Pet. iv. 15.) *not to be busy-bodies in other men's matters*; that they should assume jurisdiction over a member of a body of another denomination, cite before them, and enter on an *ex parte* hearing, receive general charges, and admit particulars to be adduced under them, of which the accused was perfectly uninformed; pass an heavy censure, and then, without using any brotherly and tender means to bring the supposed offender to repentance, publish their censure to the world! which looks like a design to injure, not reform; which is very opposite to the spirit and temper of the blessed Redeemer.

We earnestly beseech those brethren to inquire whether, on the supposition the Doctor had been as faulty as they suppose, such a procedure is the effect of the spirit of love, which is the fulfilling of the divine law—especially as they could not charge the Doctor with contumacy in refusing their jurisdiction, and as they own they had none over him; and whether they have not given just occasion to all thinking and judicious Christians, of every denomination, to be both grieved and greatly alarmed at the consequences that may and probably will follow so unusual and rare a precedent, if justified; and whether, if, in vindicating their conduct, they should, as is threatened, publish those slanderous reports, brought before them, to the world, still further to wound the Dr.'s character; and appeal to the tribunal of the publick, before which it is not ordinarily possible for a

man to defend himself by a proper and clear confutation of charges, however false, or invalidation of witnesses, however insufficient; will they not discover too much of an *unkind*, not to say *vengeful spirit*, and stain their hands with unfairness, injustice and backbiting? We beseech them, for the love and fellowship of the holy Spirit, for the honour of Christ and his cause, that they will put on bowels of mercy, meekness and charity, humbleness of mind and tenderness; especially to one who has shone as an eminent light in the churches, and who may, for ought they know, be falsely accused, and injuriously testified against, which we are at present persuaded would have been made to appear, had he been allowed a fair hearing before a proper court. What if they should be found meddling where they had no business? to have done very wrong in entering on an hearing of one not under their jurisdiction? to have censured one they had nothing to do with? and to have injured one who is innocent?—Will not the Lord require this at their hands?

It is intimated by one of them, “that they referred the Doctor to this presbytery for a final decision of his case.”—If we are to decide it, why have they censured him beforehand? Should they not have been silent till his trial could be had before the judicature to which they own he belongs? And is it consistent with charity, for them to publish what they suppose to be faulty in the Doctor, before such a final decision could be had? Is not this refusing this presbytery the privilege of trying its own members, and a direct breach of the law of Christ, Rom. xiv. 4. *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.* On the whole; whether Dr. Whitaker was guilty or not, we cannot comprehend on what rules of reason or equity said council could enter on an hearing of his case, when, at the time, they own they had no jurisdiction over him! for which reason they could not charge him with contumacy in refusing to submit to them, which is the only justifiable reason for proceeding to an hearing *ex parte*.

Finally, we earnestly exhort all, to *study to be quiet and do their own business*; to suspend all evil surmisings, and not regard the *ex parte* censure of a *party council* passed on the Rev. Dr. Whitaker, nor the slanderous reports spread round the land against him, by those who, for some base end, will not, or are afraid to appear, exhibit and support any charges against him before this court, to which alone he is of right amenable. We claim this right; and we must esteem those as usurpers who wrest it out of our hands. We are ever ready to attend to complaints duly offered—to vindicate the innocent, and condemn the guilty, as God shall give us light; and we now call upon those twenty brethren, as they will answer it to God, to table their complaints regularly, before this judicature, against the Doctor, and serve him with a fair copy of them, specifying actions what, time when, place where, with the proofs and names of the witnesses, at least sixty days before the next stated meeting of this presbytery, of which we now order the clerk to give them timely notice; and that they then appear to support said charges, and to give the reasons, if any they have, why the censure passed on them in this minute should be removed*.

In

* Those brethren were accordingly notified, yea, were informed, by order of presbytery, that, if they should desire it, the presbytery would meet on the spot to hear the case. But they disregarded the whole.

In the mean time we believe it our duty, and consistent with good order and the law of charity, to support the Doctor's character (as nothing as yet is made to appear against it worthy of reproof or censure) till such charges shall be regularly supported as shall warrant a censure. And therefore we again heartily recommend him as an able, and we trust a faithful minister of Jesus Christ to all who hold the Westminster Confession of Faith, and communion with.

The presbytery voted to accept this result, brought in by their committee, after three readings.

Groton, June 11,
1784.

Attest. SAMUEL PERLEY, Moderator.
JOHN STRICKLAND, Presb. Clk.

A true copy extracted from the minute.

Test. JOHN STRICKLAND, Presb. Clk.

N. B. The Rev. John Houston, being confined by sickness, was not present when the above was voted.

*Presbytery's Recommendation of Doctor WHITAKER.—
Done at Gray, September 9, 1784.*

THE minute of the last session of this presbytery respecting the Rev. Dr. Whitaker being considered, the presbytery finding that both the moderator and clerk wrote last June to the twenty disaffected brethren of the third church in Salem, offering, in the name of this body, to meet at Salem, to hear and determine matters between the Doctor and them, if they would, by a line to the moderator, desire it; and also that the clerk, by order of this body, did last June cite the said twenty brethren to appear before this presbytery at this time and place, to answer to the charges regularly tabled against them by Dr. Whitaker, and shew reasons, if any they have, why the censure passed on them, at last session in Groton, should be removed; and that he, by our direction, did call on them to table their charges, if any they have, regularly against the Doctor, and appear at this time and place to support them: But notwithstanding these fair and tender measures used towards them by this presbytery, and the many calls given them before by Dr. Whitaker, to bring matters before this judicature, to which alone they were amenable, the said twenty brethren have not intimated any desire to the moderator of our meeting, nor tabled any charges against the Doctor, nor obeyed the citation of this judicature, to which they solemnly covenanted to be subject, but continue obstinate in their contumacy—therefore we are obliged to continue the censure passed on the said twenty brethren.—The above conduct of the said 20 brethren more fully confirms this presbytery in their judgment, that their contention with the Rev. Dr. Whitaker is without sufficient grounds; else they would, as all must presume, have tabled and prosecuted some charges, before a court where the Dr. could have confronted them; especially as both the Doctor and this body have given them all the fair advantages possible for this end, which render their contumacy more aggravated and inexcusable.—We also judge that Dr. Whitaker stands fully acquitted of all those slanders spread concerning him; and that no *ex parte* evidence brought before that illegal council, called by those brethren, to which the

the Doctor was in no measure subject, nor any judgment they could pass on any, much less an *ex parte* hearing, will or ought to have any weight, to the Doctor's disadvantage, with judicious Christians of any denomination, in any part of the world—And we now declare him in full charity and regular standing with this body, and heartily recommend him, as a minister of the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ, to all the people of God where Providence may call him.——A true copy, attested at Gray, this 10th of September, 1784.

SAMUEL PERLEY, Mod'r.

JOHN STRICKLAND, Clk. Pr.

A P P E N D I X,

Containing brief Remarks on a Pamphlet, entitled, *A Brief Defence of the late Council's Result, &c.*

THE author of this pamphlet seems to be of the *forlorn hope*. He first shifts his ground, by representing the C. in his very *frontispiece*, or title-page, as on the *defensive* against my attacks. The title ought to have been, *Another murderous stab at the character of Dr. W. and of the Salem Presbytery, in order to save, if possible, the credit of the late C. justly dying under the clear and incontestible facts represented in the Doctor's Brief History*. The truth is, the late C. made their attack, last winter, on me, while I stood on my own ground, in my own territories, and made no inroads on them.

Of this injurious treatment I gave a brief history, demonstrated by facts, so established, ~~that~~ the author of the *Defence*, or rather of the *new assault*, has not proved, nor can he prove, one of them materially wrong. This convinced the publick of the usurpation and tyranny of that C. and raised a general disgust.—Sinking under contempt for such *rare* conduct, for being *busy-bodies in other men's matters*, and usurping dominion over another denomination, something must be done to avert the torrent of ruin.

The artillery used in the Brief History was too well pointed to be resisted—The dernier stratagem was, by a *new assault*, to murder the managers of it.—For this end, a champion steps forth, clad in a coat of mail, composed of *sophistry* and *falsehood*, attended by a number of armour-bearers to assist him in his enterprise: even some of the venerable C. I am informed, lent their aid, to carry on the dastardly design. But their weapons, being *carnal*, are too weak for execution, and may be ranged in the following list, viz.

- I. Sophistical arguments.
- II. Misrepresentation of facts.
- III. Wilful and deliberate lies.

The first is all the author's own; and the two last must be divided between him and his coadjutors.

I will touch briefly on these three, adducing only a few instances, out of many, as a specimen of the rest.

For when it is once evident, that an author *wilfully* and *deliberately* misrepresents facts; and takes up wilful and deliberate lies, from others, and publishes them, in order to support his cause, there can be no doubt but that

that his case is desperate ; and no credit can be given to any of his representations. How far this rule applies to the author of the Defence, will appear in the following sections.

S E C T. I.—*Instances of Sophistry.*

T H I S author would fain defend the late C. from the guilt of usurpation and tyranny : this can't be done, but by proving, *That the third church in Salem was a congregational church when I took the charge of it in 1769.* To this end he uses a cloud of arguments (as he calls them) in sections I. II. and III. not one of which is conclusive. I shall instance on two only.

INST. I. He founds a chief argument on the *name of the church*, which was not altered when it became presbyterian, viz. *The third church in Salem.* From this he infers, that it still is a *congregational church**. But can this conclude ? In Boston the churches are not called the *first, second, &c.* but the *Old Brick, Old South, &c.* Now, had the *Old South* become presbyterians, and still retained the name, would a fair logician infer, that it is therefore a congregational church ? The sophistry is too obvious ! for logick teaches, that names do not alter things.

INST. II. Because I was so catholic and liberal, as to be zealous for ministers and churches adopting a *form* of consociation of churches on a *liberal* plan, he concludes, that “ this demonstrates that I did not apprehend that my plan was necessarily *presbyterian* ; but that it might, in a perfect consistency therewith, be consociated with *congregational churches.*” And hence he infers, “ that the C. had good grounds to say, the third church in Salem was a congregational church when I took the charge of it in 1769.” Def. p. 11, 12.

But if said *form* of consociation was *perfectly presbyterian*, then his conclusion fails ; but the author knows it was so, excepting liberty of governing internally by the *session* or brotherhood, and of baptizing, or not, the children of persons not in full communion. This too is perfect sophistry.

For supposing I had thought (as I did, and do still) that *this*, or any other presbyterian church, might consistently join with congregational churches, in such a *form* of consociation as would make them essentially *presbyterian*, (as that form did) would this prove all such churches to be congregationals ? Would it not rather prove, that all those congregational churches had become presbyterians ? All would think so, but this author.—Base sophistry !

Were it needful, I could shew his other arguments to be equally sophistical ; but these may serve for a specimen of the whole.

The fact is, I have proved in my *Brief History*† that this was *essentially* a presbyterian church when I took the charge of it in 1769. Therefore, whatever name I, or the C. have given it, will not, cannot alter the fact.

S E C T. II.

Instances of misrepresentation of facts, either wilful or thro' mistake.

INST. I. Defence, p. 11. he says, “ The Dr. for several years after he took the charge of the third church in Salem, was moving to obtain an explicit and formal *consociation of churches*—(which was drawn up,

* P. 5, 8.

† *Brief Hist.* § 1.

and

and is now in my possession, in the Doctor's own hand-writing——)."

Note these words, "which was drawn up in the Doctor's own hand-writing" (the other words, "*and is now in my possession*," being a parenthesis, cut off by commas). This author knows, that this was not "drawn up in my hand-writing," which intimates that *I drew up the form*. He knows, if his memory is not very short, that he sent me that form, in his "own hand-writing," and was, as I always thought, drawn up by him, which I now have in my possession—and he urged me to promote it—and of which I sent him a copy, in my hand-writing. How false then is his representation, and what impudent imposition on the publick! and how low a game does that aged divine play, to gain his point. A tottering cause needs such *base craft* to support it.

INST. II. This author would fix a misrepresentation of facts on me respecting 'some anecdotes concerning former ministers in this place,' "i. e. in Salem," by which he insinuates that I intended *all Salem*. The strength of all he has said lies in my phrase, '*in this place*.' Had I said, *among this people*, he would have had no colour for his parade. Having construed my words to mean *Salem at large*, he adds, "But if it" (that is, what I had said) "can be proved to be a misrepresentation—how amazingly impudent must the Dr. be! and what a character must he have, as a minister of Jesus Christ, which needs the ruin of a people's character, for an hundred and fifty years, to support and vindicate it?"

But if it is evident that this author is guilty of wilful misrepresentation in this and other matters, he cannot complain if I retort his own words, and say, "How amazingly impudent must he be! and what a character must he, and that venerable C. he attempts to defend, have, which needs the ruin of the character of a single persecuted man, to support it!!!"

That he is guilty of such a wilful misrepresentation, depends, not on my assertion, but on his *own* quotation from my *Brief History*, which closes with these words—'*When they gave me their call, I was ignorant of their genius, and therefore accepted it.*' Did he not know that by (*in this place*) I meant only the people whose call I accepted? Yes, surely. Yet with these words under his eye and flowing through his pen, and with all this evidence staring him full in the face, he has the confidence to tell the world, that I intend to "ruin the character of a people for an hundred and fifty years"—that is, of the town at large, which has stood so long; for he knows that the people, who gave me a call, have not existed, as a distinct people, half that time. Their first church record bears date Feb. 20, 1743.

INST. III. From p. 25. of my Hist. this author quotes these words, viz. '*Before a proper court I fear no ill consequences, but from false witnesses, to procure which large bribes have been offered, as I can prove.*' This, he affirms, "is an insinuation, that some of my late church have been guilty of the heinous crime of offering large bribes to procure false witnesses against me."

This, for a man of truth, is too shocking! The author knows, and every reader knows, that the above quotation contains no such insinuation. This is *bare-faced conduct*—I did not insinuate that any man in

particular, or men of any particular church under heaven, were guilty of this, and he knows it.

I now declare, I never suspected one of my late church in the instances referred to. The guilty person is well known to me : and though I am called on, under a severe anathema, to publish his name, I will conceal it, till a convenient time shall offer, to make him a publick example to others, and leave him, in the mean time, to the stings of his own conscience, which, I pray God, may be such as to humble and reform him ; and that a true remorse for such false and defamatory assertions may evidence this author's true repentance.

INST. IV. This author would exculpate the C. from "being the passive tools of the church," by charging me (Def. p. 18.) "with a manifest design to misrepresent and ridicule the C." because I say, '*they confess themselves constrained by one party.*' And to prove this charge he adds, "The C. has not confessed, nor uttered a word, as a C. to the publick, but what is in their result ; and in that they have neither confessed that they were constrained *by one party* to the steps they took, nor uttered any thing implying it."——Strange ! Did I say, that the Council published this in their result ? He knows I did not. But though they "did not confess this to the publick *in their result*," yet their scribe published it from the *minutes* of that C., Forbes' Serm. p. 26. note. Now if in their minute, published by their scribe, they confess this ; why should he deny it, merely because it was not in their result ? It makes no odds, whether it was in their result or minutes ; since it was published as the conduct, and so as carrying the weight, of the C. This is mere *gambling* to gain the stake by fraud. The extract from the minute, as published by Mr. Forbes, (Serm. p. 26.) is this : "The general view of the Dr.'s character and conduct, which the C. found themselves *constrained to take*, by the *earnest desire* of the whole church (three excepted) &c."——I now leave it to the reader to say, whether I perverted the natural sense of this minute, when I said, *that they were constrained by these brethren—that they confess themselves constrained by one party, &c.* I now speak plainly, that this minute is an open confession, that the C. were *constrained by one party* ; and therefore were, in a proper sense, *the tools of a party*. This sets them in a truly *ridiculous light*, but they may thank themselves for it : it is their own confession, if Mr. Forbes has done them justice. This author had no way to avoid the ridicule and contempt, but by *denying the truth*. But *truth* it will be still, however he may deny it, nor can all their art wipe off the stigma. I own it was a sad blunder in the C. and which prudent men would have avoided, to make this minute ; a greater to publish it ; but worth of all to be in fact tools to a party, which the minute implies.

The following instances the author seems not to be the *real*, but only the *foster-father* of ; but which he cherishes with great fondness, and holds them up to view with seeming delight.

INST. V. This author (Def. p. 11.) says, "When the third church accepted the Dr.'s form, divers of the members will attest, that the church had no design to adopt the presbyterian government—that the church
would

would not accept the Dr.'s plan of ruling by the session, till they had got liberty inserted, as they thought, of setting it aside, if, upon trial, they found it not agreeable—in a clause of this import—*provided, the plan be set aside, or the alteration be made by the church as an organick body.* The phrase *organick body*, it is said, the Dr. tucked in."

This is a group of false representation. Yet,

1. I doubt not that divers will attest as he says: for divers of those members, in the year 1774, attested openly, that I acted fairly and openly in bringing the church under the presbytery, who now attest that I acted *elandslinely*. Their attestation, therefore, can't have great weight.

2. It is *absolutely false* that *the church* ever objected to the plan of *ruling by the session*. All the church appeared cordial in accepting the plan, except two or three, and they complied. To gratify these, I suppose it was, that the church, after deliberating on my plan, from the 12th to the 19th of May, 1769, and voting that *they unanimously accepted it*, added these words, in *their answer to me*, viz. "And this church are of opinion, that if any member of the church shall appear to have scruples of conscience respecting being judged by the eldership, on their manifesting the same to the session, he or she may, *for the present*, have the liberty of a trial by the brotherhood; yet reserving to the church, as an *organick body*, the liberty, at any time hereafter, to alter any of the articles in the Dr.'s answer, or any thing in this present reply thereto, as it shall please God to give them light from time to time." Chh. Rec. p. 51.

I well remember that I, in conference with the church before, explained to them the phrase, *organick body*, in the very words of the Cambridge Platform, viz. "That no church-act can be consummated without the consent of both," i. e. of officers and brethren. They therefore understood the phrase, when they used it in their reply to my answer, which contained my plan.

I ask, how, in the name of common sense, I could tuck *this phrase* into their reply to my answer? It was not I, but they, who gave the reply. This author may say, as in another case, "that they did it under my influence."—Perhaps they were all a set of fools, and employed me to vote and write their reply, and do all their acts for them! This is implied by this author.—A learned man of the church, years after, publicly charged me with *tucking something in*; perhaps he meant this phrase; but he publicly asked my forgiveness for the injurious assertion.

That the church understood this phrase, and were fond of *government by the session*, is evident from *this*; that after making trial of *this plan* for more than 3 years and a half, they revoked and wholly set aside the above *saving clause* in their reply, and fully established the complete presbyterial power of the *session*, and restricted all the members of the church to be tried by it, with only three in the negative. See Chh. Rec. p. 60. But any thing to serve a base turn, no matter how false.

INST. VI. In p. 12 this author gives the publick two votes of proprietors legally warned, October 17, 1774.

"Vote 3. It was put, whether they approved of the late innovation of a presbyterian government; and carried in the negative unanimously.

"Vote 4.

"Vote 4. It was put, whether they approved the Rev. Dr. W.'s manner of making the late innovation; and carried in the negative unanimously."

I never heard of these votes till I read them in this author's Defence; and they were as unknown to many of the people. The author, at the council last winter, handed these votes to the sworn clerk for 1774, who, on seeing them, told him and the C. that he had never seen them before; that they were not recorded by him; that he suspected jugglery in the case, and warned them not to rely on them as the voice of the people. Yet, it seems, the C. gave them full weight; and this honest author has, after fair warning, published them as the voice of the people!!! Honestly must blush, and Truth hide her head at this!!!

Some time after, the said clerk was informed of what had slipped him, viz. That some of the disaffected applied to the committee for a warning, which they refused—They then applied to authority, set up a warning, and, as they say, passed said votes. Now, admit this to be fact; yet as none regarded the warning, nor attended the meeting, but a small party; and as the propriety were dissolved twelve days before, by the burning of the house; and as the votes were never delivered to the stated clerk to be recorded, but were recorded by another clerk chosen by that small party, after they ceased to be proprietors; so they were kept from the knowledge of the people; nor were they agreeable to their minds, as appears from these things:—

1. About a month before this, 21 of the members of the church (many of which were proprietors) were unanimous, both for presbytery. and approving the *manner* of making this *innovation*, as it is called: had any of these been present, they would have spoiled their *unanimity*.

2. From the middle of Sept. 1774, when the presbytery dismissed the 14 uneasy brethren, I never heard from the people a word of complaint of the presbyterian mode, nor of my manner of bringing the church into it, till 1784; but, on the contrary, in this very month of October, after the house was burnt, a petition, addressed to the Boston presbytery, to sit at Newbury-Port the 8th of November, was signed by more than 60 of the people, in which they declare this church to be presbyterian,* and say, "As this church, with our pastor, have lately put themselves under the care of this Rev. presbytery, and therefore we have not reason to expect much help from the congregational churches around us, who are not friendly to the presbyterian church-government: a glaring instance of great unkindness we now have, and, we suppose, on this account, in being refused the privilege of meeting with the Rev. Mr. Barnard's people, though they have room enough."

This I suppressed in my Brief History, lest it should disgust the Rev. Mr. Barnard's people—but am now compelled to publish it, to prove that they were fully presbyterians.—Now, is it possible that these votes could be the *unanimous* voice of the people, or that this author could suppose them to be passed unanimously by the people at large? Surely these votes would, by him, in an opposite case, be counted for nothing.—But any thing to serve a turn—no matter how unjust.

INST.

* *Brief Hist.* p. 13.

INST. VII. This author represents me as giving a false representation, as to what I received of my people, in my Brief Hist. p. 26. and gives a state of accounts signed by the treasurer; in which are several errors.

1. It is said that my house-rent for 1775 was £.12, but it was £.33. This sum the people voted me in lieu of an house, and was my own, exclusive of £.133-6-8 salary. One year, indeed, I gave £.12 for one year, but have given £.48 for many; the average is more than £.33. This sum of £.33 I deducted from the money I received the six years I mention.

2. I calculated the money I received, on the necessaries of life, as they cost me from time to time. If, therefore, there should be some difference in our accounts, this would not fix any misrepresentation on me.

3. The account says, "From Oct. 7," (it should have been Nov. 1) "1782, he was to collect £.160 on 60 pews; if he let out more, he was to deduct from the 60 pews in proportion: he let out near 100 pews, and deducted nothing from the said 60, except about 2d. on the pound for one quarter; and therefore he must have collected near double the money that he was to have by contract." Def. p. 23.

This is a gross misrepresentation in several respects. I shall instance only in one, viz. "That I was to collect £.160 on 60 pews:" for,

1. I was to raise it on any or all the pews in the house, as I could.
2. This £.160 was voted to be averaged on the necessaries of life, so as to enable me to purchase as much as £.160 would before the war. But this author and the treasurer know, that such an average would rise much higher than the nominal sum of £.160 in 1781, 1782 and 1783. The proprietors, conscious of this, voted me, of their own accord, before the vote for £.160, near double; and it should have been quite double, as the prices of necessaries were so.

The truth is, while I collected my salary (which I undertook, because the people told me they could not collect it) I quarterly fixed the average justly, according to their vote, and the *wholesale* prices of the stipulated articles. The tickets I gave out will shew what I received, which, compared with the average, will demonstrate, that I received far short of the vote, though once I let about 80 pews.

INST. VIII. The delight this author takes in slander appears from his Def. p. 27. where he says, "The people were convinced that I had been *tampering* with a certain person, to make him deny, in open court, in a solemn manner, that he ever uttered any such things of me, to the person sued, as the latter said he had heard him utter."

Horrid insinuation! The people *convinced*! This is false; for *conviction* supposes evidence; which they had none, unless it was false—They might suspect this, or any thing else. But what if I am innocent of this black crime? (as God knows I am)—Will not the *suspectors*, but especially the *publisher* of this false slander, be condemned for false men? But what does this vile slander avail for the defence of the C.? Surely nothing, unless their honour depends on procuring my ruin by falsehood.

I find the committee of the church and society have attested the truth of the author's state of facts, especially in section 5. But that said section contains

contains some horrid misrepresentations, I have already shewn in a few instances, which are sufficient to destroy the validity of such interested witnesses.

I think it needless to defend myself against the crimes, mentioned p. 26. of *maculating*, making saltpetre, &c. for the safety of my country, and with hard hand labour, to procure bread for my family, while I constantly performed the labours of my office among my people, who, he says, "were a good deal wounded in the time of it, by my undertaking these things." If they were, their wound was secret; nor did they complain of it till last winter, five and six years after; but some of them commended my industry to procure bread, by my own labour, while I served them in the ministry. But after all, I have sunk hundreds of my interest in their service, which I had independent of them, and which in justice they ought to refund.

INST. IX. In Def. p. 35. he says, "The Doctor now says, that said brethren, being dismissed, were no longer members of the said 3d church; yet the C." (i. e. the C. which met in 1775) "found much opposition from the Dr. and his session, founded on claims to said brethren as belonging to them."

This I affirm is an absolute falsehood: whether it be wilful or not, his own conscience is judge. The session laid no claim to those brethren at all; but as they thought it their duty, so they warned the then C. of the danger of receiving members we thought, and offered to prove, before a proper court, to be disorderly. This author was one of that C. and could not but know this to be the fact. I defy him to prove, by any writings or words that passed between the session and them, that *we laid any claim to those brethren as belonging to us.*

But the instances of misrepresentation and falsehood in this Defence are so many, that I will trouble the reader with only one more out of the throng.

INST. X. This author, not content to stab me by false slanders, violently attacks the Rev. presbytery to which I belong, and which the C. even without a citation or hearing, had censured as incompetent judges in my case, (Forbes' Ser. p. 26. note, extracted from the minutes of the C.) which is not only *folly and shame to them*, if Solomon is right, but peculiarly arrogant and assuming. No wonder that they, who assume the prerogative to censure a presbytery unheard, should usurp dominion over a single member.—As this author could not but know that the late C.'s exercising jurisdiction over a member of that body is reprobated by many, as usurpation and tyranny; to save them from reproach, something must be done——Finding that the presbytery had supported my character, to attack me alone would not do, unless the presbytery also are annihilated, or brought into publick disgrace. To accomplish this, he picks up new matter to support the C.'s judgment, made up four months before he or they had this evidence, (if it can be called such) which he publishes in his *Appendix*, consisting of a series of as scandalizing, malicious, barefaced lies, as could be invented by the author of them, which were begotten by the devil, conceived and brought forth by the Rev. N. Merrill, and midwived into the publick by this author.

This

This Mr. Merrill, falling under the censure of the presbytery, not for *refusing to join with them in acquitting me, and censuring the church*, as he says; but for wilful lying, and appealing to God for the truth of *that*, which every member of the presbytery present knew to be a deliberate falsehood, he flies to this author for refuge; tells him a pack of lies; obtains from him (as I have good evidence) a recommendation, purporting, that *if the said Merrill was in good standing before with the presbytery, and if his account of their conduct was true, he recommends him*; and several Rev. gentlemen's names are subscribed.

How admirable this conduct! If Judas did well, he might be commended; but he did ill; and so has Mr. Merrill.

I will remark no further on this curious Appendix, one page of which contains more than seven wilful, deliberate lies, as I can prove; but only insert the testimony of the committee of the Salem presbytery in this case.

“THE committee of the Salem presbytery, met at Sylvester, Sept. 20th, 1784, having just seen a pamphlet, entitled *A Brief Defence of the late Council's Result*, &c. in the Appendix to which are published some affidavits in favour of the Rev. Nath'l Merrill, in which is a *great mistake*, not to say falsehood, as is fully evinced by the minute of the presbytery in the case, and confessed by Mr. Merrill, p. 3.

“Said Appendix also contains some anecdotes of the Salem presbytery, which the author takes from the said Mr. Merrill, in which is a catalogue of glaring falsehoods, as every member of the presbytery, then present, can testify, and which appear so *deliberate, wilful and malicious*, that had the Rev. Dr. W. (whom the author, with a sneer, calls the *president*) been found guilty of one such instance, he would have felt the rebuke and censure of this body, and, without repentance, been deposed.

“It is surprising that a gentleman, who makes so high a profession of conformity to the meek and gentle spirit of Christ, should, out of zeal to sink the presbytery in the esteem of the publick, place such confidence in the veracity of one, who, for years, has not sustained the fairest character for truth and virtue, as to risk his own character upon it, in publishing his reports, without better evidence than that of one under censure for no other crime than false dealing, and repeatedly appealing to Heaven for the truth of a deliberate and wilful falsehood. A good man will not easily believe an ill report. But this author, on no better evidence than that of an enraged complainant, has taken up a reproach against a regular judicature of Christ, and believed them guilty of very partial, unconstitutional and horrid abuse of one of their members.

“How absurd is it for him to say, (Appen. p. 5.) ‘*If the above is a just representation of facts, we may conclude, &c.*’ He ought to have known it to be *just*, before he published it: and he could very easily have known it to be *deliberately false*, had he chose it; and thus saved his labour in transcribing Mr. Merrill's lies, and drawing such formidable conclusions from them. Must not charity itself conclude, that an intemperate and misguided zeal against presbytery has made him stoop to be a conduit to the publick of a poisonous stream of falsehood, which he supposes may
be

be such? Therefore, to save that author further trouble in publishing, unknown, either truth or falsehood in this affair, we do testify that the state of facts, as published from Mr. Merrill, as to the chief important points, is *absolutely* false: therefore the conclusions, justly drawn from them, are false also—and we justly infer, that one, who is so forward, on such slight evidence, to censure a regular judicature of Christ, and slander them to the world, will be as ready, on as slender evidence, to censure and defame individuals, which, for this and other reasons, we think is the case in said pamphlet, as to the chief object of his opposition.

“ On comparing Mr. Merrill’s original paper, we find the author has published a grossly false copy. And we testify, that after said Merrill had read a part of said paper, he refused to give the presbytery a true copy, or even to see the original, till they would pledge their honour not to improve any thing in it, which he had not read before, against him. The part he did not read contained his protest and declination, which, he often declared, was a secret, and not designed to be laid before the presbytery.

“ The above, being read and examined, was unanimously voted.

Test. SAMUEL PERLEY, Moderator.
JOHN STRICKLAND, Presb. Clk.”

On the whole, it is too manifest that this author delights in slander, as his element, or else that the defence he has undertaken has *constrained* him to it, since he has been so industrious to collect and publish such a mass of demonstrably false reports; and so vicious as wilfully to misrepresent facts, in order to destroy my and others characters, and all without the least provocation.

If this springs from a natural propensity and delight, it can admit of none, if from constraint, it can admit of only a *forlorn* defence, even a worse than the real or pretended necessity of the thief or highway-robber.—For “ he who steals my purse, steals trash—it was something, nothing—it has been a slave to thousands; but he who filches from me my good name, robs me of that which not enriches him, but makes me poor indeed.”*

For the author’s sake, for the sake of religion and humanity, I wish his name concealed. The publick shall never hear it from me, without pressing necessity. But as the highway-robber is guilty of his own blood, who dies by the hand which resists his attack, so he would have no cause to complain, should he die by the retortion of his own murderous weapon; with which he has been wounded once before, and justly in some respects, by a man much his superiour; and of which he is still bleeding. ✕

However, I will not close without thankfully acknowledging the correction he administers, (tho’ with the briars and thorns of the wilderness, and with an indelicacy unbecoming his profession) where he refers to what I say, p. 5. of my Brief History, viz. *Here the minister has a full negative on the session and whole church, &c.*—I freely own that this is tyranny with a witness, in the sense in which I now find many people understand it, viz.

That

That it implies a power in the minister, sovereignly to put a stop to an action, by his negative, and so prevent the church from a fair remedy ; which is the case when this power is exercised in congregational churches, where there is no appeal.—That I had right ideas of a negative, I will not say ; but right or wrong, all that I intended by it was, that while there is a minister, he being *ex officio* moderator of the session, and executioner of their sentences, they cannot proceed to issue any cause without his concurrence ; yet there lies an appeal or complaint to an higher judicature. This is all I meant by a negative ; and this, as I conceive, belongs to every member of the church, as I have expressed it, Brief Hist. p. 6. where I say, “ 4. My answer invests every brother and sister in the church, *singly and alone*, to arrest or stop the execution of any sentence of the session, by stating and prosecuting their objections before an higher judicature.”—But after all, if I am mistaken in my conceptions on this head, I wish to be set right by the instruction, not abuse, of any man.—But such a negative appears to me to be essential to the liberty of both ministers and people.

From the preceding pages, 'tis clear, that those who can so readily believe, take up and publish such behind-back reports and surmises, on such slight evidence, in order to scandalize their brethren, (and doubtless several of that C. approved this Defence) will as easily take up with as slight evidence before an *ex parte* C. behind-back. Such boldly violate that command, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*. This requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between men, and forbids whatever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name. This author has murdered his own, and has endeavoured to murder the good name of others ; which he has done without any offence offered him. I appeal to the world as to my delicate treatment of the C. in my Brief History.

As to the C.'s conduct and Result, they are totally indefensible, unless they can prove that they had proper jurisdiction over me. If this cannot be proved, if they had none, (which they own) they were wrong *ab initio*, and every step they have taken will, by the impartial, be esteemed tyranny and usurpation, and they be considered as *busy-bodies in other men's matters*. All they can say, tho' they should publish a thousand crimes of the first enormity, and ten thousand behind-back evidences to prove them, would not be a *dust in the balance* towards justifying their conduct, nor in the least wipe off the scandal and just reproach which they have brought on themselves from all men of discernment, of every denomination. Their further slandering me, as they have done in the Defence ; and their proceeding to publish (as has been threatened) what they heard in their unlawful C. behind my back ; and the author of the Defence's *very compassionate concealment of the general charges, the names of the witnesses, and the matter of their depositions, &c.* and the tender feelings of the C. towards me, published, p. 31. in a way tending to slander me, by a hint of real crimes mercifully kept behind the curtain (the usual manner of black defamers, when they mean to stab characters fatally)—I say, all this will be, and is only adding *sin to sin*, and going from *bad to worse* ; but can in no measure

help their cause, but will plunge them deeper in guilt, and remove them further from popular applause, the desired object.

But it is now too late to attempt the proof of their jurisdiction over me : for at the very time when they *did* what they *did*, they, under their scribe's hand, in their name, say, " they claim no jurisdiction over me—" which is confirmed, in a letter to me, by their scribe, since. Every word, therefore, they have said or shall say; to prove their jurisdiction, is and will be in perfect contradiction to the sense they had of the case, at the time of action. Therefore, could they now prove (which they cannot) a right of jurisdiction, (since by their own confession they then had none) the proof would come too late, and they are as chargeable with *intentional* usurpation, tyranny, &c. as though no such proof could now be found.

The only consistent step they can take to remove the scandal given to all *thinking* Christians of every denomination, is, to retract and confess their fault. If God gives them such a temper, harmony will be restored. But while they justify themselves, whatever they may imagine, they will sink in the esteem of the judicious. Publick repentance alone can restore them to the esteem of the wise, and peace with themselves.

May the Lord grant to them, and to all, that spirit of love which disposes to make full restitution for injuries, and cements the hearts of all, of every denomination, who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

F I N I S.
