

The
HIRELING MINISTRY
none of
CHRIST'S

or, A Discourse Touching the
Propagating the Gospel of
Christ Jesus. Humbly presented
to such pious and honourable
hands whom the present
debate thereof concerns.

Roger Williams
- of Providence, New England -

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In this Discourse are Briefly Touched these Particulars.

1. The National and Partitional Constitution of Churches is found to be the Grand Idol of the Nation.
2. The enforcing of the Nation to such a Constitution is the greatest soul oppression in this Nation.
3. The Hireling Ministry attending upon such assemblies or others is none of the ministry of Christ Jesus.
4. The Universities of the Nation, as subordinate and subservient to such Ministries and Churches are none of the Institutions of Christ Jesus.
5. It is the absolute duty of the civil state to set free the souls of all men from that so long oppressing yoke of such ministries and churches.
6. Ought the Nation and every person in it, be permitted to see with its own eyes, and to make free choice of what worship, ministry, and maintenance they please, whether parochial or otherwise?
7. The Apostolical Commission and Ministry is long since interrupted and discontinued.
8. Yet, ever since the beast Antichrist rose, the Lord hath stirred up the ministry of Prophecy, who must continue their witness and prophesy until their witness be finished, and slaughters probably near approaching accomplished.
9. The provocation of the holy eyes is great in all courts throughout the Nation, by millions of legal oaths, which if not redressed, may yet be a fire kindled from his Jealousy, who will not hold him guiltless which taketh his name in vain.

10. The free permitting of the consciences and meetings of conscionable and faithful people throughout the Nation, and the free permission of the Nation to frequent such assemblies, will be one of the principal means and expedients {as the present state of Christianity stands} for the propagating and spreading of the Gospel of the Son of God.

Brief Biographical Sketch

Roger Williams, 1603-1683, the founder of Rhode Island, and one of the longest living of the early New England pioneers, was a Separatist, Colonist and a Firm Advocate for the Cause of Religious Liberty, who was born into a well-connected, middle-class family, near Smithfield, {Smithfield was for centuries the site of many public executions, including some fifty Protestants during the reign of Mary I, and thus one wonders how his proximity to this infamous site may of shaped his subsequent views on persecution and liberty of conscience,} London, around 1603. Thanks to the generosity and friendship of eminent English barrister, judge and political jurist, Sir Edward Coke, Williams was educated at Charterhouse School and Pembroke College, Cambridge, from where he graduated in 1627. He himself informs us, that in his early years his heart was imbued with spiritual life. "From my childhood, the Father of lights and mercies touched my soul with a love to himself, to his only begotten, the true Lord Jesus, to his holy scriptures." By 1629 he was serving as Chaplain to the Essex Household of Parliamentary Radical, Sir William Masham, {the Masham's were distant cousins of Oliver Cromwell,} at whose home his own sentiments were being formulated, as several of those with whom he would eventually go into exile with, were introduced, including John Winthrop, John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, &c., all which would end up fleeing to New England in search of what they termed religious liberty, a liberty which was being denied them under the persecuting arm of Charles I, in the form of the King's Enthusiastic Inquisitor by name of William Laud, {Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633, arrested in 1640, and executed in 1645,} who began shamefully oppressing

and persecuting any that would dare to question the legitimacy of the Church of England.

Williams himself now, fortified with a renewed hope of being enabled to worship the LORD in spirit & truth, outside the shackles of the Established Church, soon joined the 'Puritan' migration to the New Land. Having recently married Mary Bernard, {a maid in the Masham household,} Williams embarked from Bristol on the ship 'Lyon' in December of 1630, arriving at the Massachusetts Bay Colony in February of 1631. Upon his arrival, Governor John Winthrop, considered him "very unsettled in judgment," but "godly and zealous" in his manner of life. In his journal entitled, OF PLYMOUTH PLANTATION, he has this entry, "Mr. Roger Williams, a man godly and zealous, having many precious parts but very unsettled in judgment...he this year began to fall into some strange opinions, and from opinion to practice, which caused some controversy between the church and him. And in the end some discontent on his part, by occasion whereof he left them somewhat abruptly...but he is to be pitied and prayed for; and so I shall leave the matter and desire the Lord to show him his errors and reduce him into the way of truth and give him a settled judgment and constancy in the same, for I hope he belongs to the Lord, and that he will show him mercy."

As a staunch Separatist, Williams regarded the Church of England irredeemably corrupt and false, seeking a comprehensive break with its forms, policies and practices, considering it "forced worship" if the State attempted to promote any particular religious idea or practice, declaring that, "forced worship stinks in God's nostrils." He in fact considered Constantine to be a worse enemy to Christianity than Nero, because the subsequent state supported a corrupted 'Christianity,' leading to the demise of the 'Christian' Church, and of the eventual establishment of the Harlot Rome Church. He defined any

attempt to compel belief as a "rape of the soul" and spoke of the "oceans of blood" shed as a result of trying to command conformity.

Once in Boston, he quickly became disillusioned to find that these 'Puritans,' {it would seem, having taken their name from the claim that they were indeed pure in religion; and of course considering it their obligation to ensure that everyone was as pure as themselves,} of Massachusetts were not so 'like-minded,' and so soon would find himself 'outside the camp' of that form of religion which they had established. For, whilst the 'Puritans' had their theology all intact by a simple adherence to their creed & confession, that is, interpreting the Scriptures through the looking-glass of their confessions, Williams, though not wavering or compromising in the least as to fundamental Gospel Truth, and wanting to test everything by the Scriptures of Truth, had little respect for their elevated regard to the traditions of men. Counseling an honoured and kind friend, {in the winter of 1652,} to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good, he writes, "that you admire the king's book, {EIKON BASILIKE, Charles I,} and Bishop Andrewes, {Lancelot Andrewes,} his sermons, {ninety-six of his sermons were published in 1631 by command of Charles I,} and Hooker's Polity, {LAWS OF ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY, Richard Hooker,} &c, and profess them to be your lights and guides, and desire them mine, and believe the new lights will prove dark lanterns, &c.,. I am far from wondering at it, for all this have I done myself, until the Father of spirits mercifully persuaded mine to swallow down no longer without chewing, to chew no longer without tasting; to taste no longer without begging the Holy Spirit of God to enlighten and enliven mine against the fear of men, tradition of fathers, or the favour or custom of any men or times."

The 'Puritan' leaders of the Colony were emphatically endeavouring to fuse religion and politics, in their blind zeal, believing that God had given them the task of protecting and promoting their own form of religion, and thus determining to use the power of the State to enforce religious orthodoxy on every citizen. In fact, it would almost seem that when they spoke of religious liberty, they only meant the liberty to practice religion as they saw fit and to persecute anyone who disagreed with them. Many of these Puritans, being of a pharisaic disposition, {having set themselves up as dictators of the faith of all others,} like the Church of England which they had hoped to purify, had now begun to wield the sword of the same religious intolerance, which is sadly consistent with the whole bloody history of Christendom since the reign of Constantine, as such oppression and persecution revealed to Williams, "that such a religion cannot be true which needs such instruments of violence to uphold it." Upon his arrival, Williams refused the office of a teacher in the church at Boston, holding the congregation in Boston to be an unseparated people, unrepentant for having communion with the Church of England. "I conscientiously refused their offer," declared Williams, "and withdrew to Plymouth {relatively more tolerant} because, as I durst not officiate to an unseparated people, as upon examination and conference I found them to be." {This was in a letter to John Cotton, who soon himself became pastor of the Boston Church and a life-long antagonist of Roger Williams.}

Williams left Boston over these differences, eventually accepting a position as a minister in Salem, where he made his most determined effort to enforce a rigid separation of its members, breaking off communion not only with the Church of England, but with the Bay Churches as well, and "neither admitted, nor permitted

any church members but such as rejected all communion with the parish assemblies." Williams even went so far as to urge the local magistrate, John Endicott, to remove the cross from the England flag on the grounds that it was a symbol of idolatry. In his effort to maintain that great scriptural principle that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual and not earthly, and that the alliance of Church and State is destructive to religious purity and liberty, he insisted that the civil authorities were not empowered to enforce religious injunctions, calling instead for a full separation of Church and State, desiring to construct an assembly of believers, where saints were embraced as saints, and not bound by denominational shackles, creedal intolerance or ecclesiastical priesthood.

Interestingly, there are some who credit Williams with founding the first Baptist church in America, and somehow make him the founder of the Baptists in America, which considered in the historical light of his seemingly brief adherence to Baptist Principles seems seemingly unfounded. Whilst it's true that Williams, along with eleven others were baptized by immersion by Ezekiel Holliman, {who had followed Williams from the Salem Church where he had briefly taught several years before,} in the March of 1639, {Holliman baptized Williams, and then Mr. Williams immersed Mr. Holliman, and the rest of the group,} all confessing their faith in Christ, and embracing the Scriptural mandate for their actions; yet, it was Williams himself that began only a few months later to question the legitimacy of their proceedings, and in fact began to publish his sentiments that there were no true churches, ministry or church authority on the earth, and that Christ's true church could not be known among men until Christ himself returned to establish it. Because of these, and other like sentiments, Williams broke ties with the Baptists, set up meetings in his own home, and it would seem, after a short period broke ties with all

religious groups altogether. According to Cotton Mather, the Williams 'society' had 'come to nothing' by 1642, with the defection of its leader from the principles on which they began. One friend of Williams, {Richard Scott,} describes it this way, "I walked with him in the Baptists' way about three or four months, in which time he brake from the society, and declared at large the ground and reasons of it; that their baptism could not be right because it was not administered by an apostle. After that he set upon a way of seeking {with two or three other men that had dissented with him} by way of preaching and praying; and there he continued a year or two, till two of the three had left him." Regarding the ordinance of baptism itself, he writes in 1649, "at Seekonk a great many have lately concurred with Mr. John Clarke and our Providence men about the point of a new Baptism, and the manner by dipping, and Mr. John Clarke hath been there lately and hath dipped them. I believe their practice comes nearer the first practice of our great Founder Christ Jesus, than other practices of religion do, and yet I have not satisfaction neither in the authority by which it is done, nor in the manner; nor in the prophecies concerning the rising of Christ's Kingdom after the desolations by Rome, &c."

His views on observing a legal 'sabbath' would also bring him into conflict with the pharisaic spirit of the pilgrims, for he writes in a letter to Samuel Hubbard, {Hubbard came to Salem in 1633, removed to Springfield, and was one of the five founders of the Baptist Church there,} written around 1672, "after all that I have seen and read and compared about the seventh day, {and I have earnestly and carefully read and weighed all I could come at in God's holy presence,} I cannot be removed from Calvin's mind, and indeed Paul's mind, Colossians chapter two, {"let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday,

or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ," Col.2:16-17,} that all those sabbaths of seven days were figures, types and shadows, and forerunners of the Son of God, and that the change is made from the remembrance of the first creation, and that figurative rest on the seventh day, to the remembrance of the second creation on the first, on which our Lord arose conqueror from the dead."

According to Williams, the true church was built upon Apostolic Foundations, and because of the breakdown in the apostolic office it needed to be restored or reestablished; their office, he maintained, was violated through the nationalization of the churches, which moved the Holy Spirit to withdraw his authoritative sanction. This would align with his conclusion that all existing churches were hopelessly corrupt for "there were no churches since those founded by the apostles and the evangelists, nor could there be any, nor any pastors ordained, nor seals administered but by such." The true church, he went on to say, would only be restored when "new apostles" in a new age "recover and restore all ordinances and the churches of Christ out of the ruins of the Anti-Christian apostacy." The cause for withdrawal, then, was apostasy, and whilst Williams did confess to a continuing ministry, he would maintain that it was in fact devoid of apostolic authority. He says that, "in the poor small span of my life, I desired to have been a diligent and constant observer, and have been myself many ways engaged in city, in country, in court, in schools, in universities, in churches, in old and new England, and yet cannot in the holy presence of God bring in the result of a satisfying discovery, that either the begetting ministry of the apostles or messengers to the nations, or the feeding and nourishing ministry of pastors and teachers, according to

the first institution of the Lord Jesus, are yet restored and extant.”

In regards to self-induced ‘conversions’ and forced confessions; in essence, those seeking to compel men to convert to their opinions, {in their effort to mass manufacture ‘saints,} regardless of their ‘Calvinistic’ confessions, to Williams were guilty of the Arminian & Popish error of free will, as if it lay in the power of a man’s will to believe & embrace the Truth of the Gospel, simply because the Magistrate threatens him with punishment if he doesn’t. For him, such implications seemed contrary to what the Lord had taught him, in that he once castigated the “Arminian Popish doctrine of Freewill” as a “whorish” doctrine. In his pamphlet, THE BLOODY TENANT OF PERSECUTION, he states, “first, of an appearance of that Arminian, popish doctrine of freewill, as if it lay in their own power and ability to believe upon the magistrate’s command, since it is confessed that what is submitted to by any without faith is sin, be it never so true and holy. Rom.14:23. Secondly, since God only openeth the heart and worketh the will, Phil.2:13, it seems to be a high presumption to suppose, that together with a command restraining from or constraining to worship, that God is also to be forced or commanded to give faith, to open the heart, to incline the will, &c.”

Although his insistence upon an uncorrupted apostolic succession and separation from all evil church affiliations made it literally impossible for him to identify with any visible assembly, and his conviction that the true New Testament ministry had apostatized, he had few quarrels with the institution of the Church itself; admitting, even to the Quaker George Fox himself, {whom Williams believed was heretical,} “that if my soul could find rest in joining unto any of the Churches professing Christ Jesus now extant, I would readily and gladly do it.” Williams, writing to Governor Winthrop,

asserted that he felt like, "Lot among the Sodomites" whilst at Salem for "that amongst all the people of God, wheresoever scattered about Babel's banks, either in Rome or England, &c, your case {Massachusetts} is the worst by far, because while others of God's Israel tenderly respect such as desire to fear the Lord, your very judgment and conscience leads you to smite and beat your fellow servants, expel them from your coasts, &c., and therefore, though I know the elect shall never finally be forsaken, yet Sodom's, Egypt's, Amalek's, Babel's judgments ought to drive us out, to make our calling out of this world to Christ, and our election sure in him."

His life, his correspondence and the few writings which Williams left behind all shadow forth the fact that whilst he held in esteem those so-called reformations under Luther and Calvin, evidently setting forth that they indeed were great lights amidst such devastating spiritual darkness, yet a spirit of compromise and an unholy alliance did dull their endeavours. One old writer made this observation, "although I admit the reformation under Calvin and Luther, and that they were great lights in that dark time, yet their anti-Christian and wrong principle or spirit appears in their setting up and establishing their societies, for the church of Christ had still remained through all this dark and worst of times, suffered the rage and awful persecution of Satan's kingdom. And now, Calvin and Luther, instead of uniting with the suffering church of Christ, which had ever lived and remained the light of the world, {though weak and contemptible,} they formed other societies, which were that moment the body of antichrist, or daughters of the old mother Rome, because they were anti or opposite to the church of Christ, and have remained the enemies of the church ever since. The same may be said of every sect which has sprung from them ever since. And although I admit there may be, and are, saints amongst all those various sects,

yet they are guilty of fornication, and belong to the body of anti-Christ." This statement could easily have been made by Williams himself, as it distinctly echoes the sentiments embraced throughout his writings.

Eventually, Williams was banished by the Puritan leaders from the Massachusetts Bay Colony for spreading "new and dangerous opinions," including his teaching that the Civil Magistrates had no authority to enforce the "First Table" of the Ten Commandments, and his objections to the Commonwealth's loyalty oath, because by forcing persons who by 'puritan' definition were unregenerate to take an oath, was for that person to "take the name of the Lord in vain." Tried, condemned, and sentenced to banishment by the General Court in 1635, he was forced {due to his own illness, and his wife's pregnancy, he was given an extension} to flee the Colony in the dead of winter to avoid likely detention and possible execution. The official sentence of the Court read as follows, "whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the church of Salem, hath broached and divulged diverse new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates, has also written lies of defamation, both of the magistrates and churches here, and that before any conviction, and yet maintaineth the same without retraction, it is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks now next ensuing, which if he neglect to perform, it shall be lawful for the Governor and two of the Magistrates to send him to some place out of this jurisdiction, not to return any more without license from the Court."

With the help of friendly Indians, he escaped into the New England wilderness, finding refuge on the edge of Narraganset Bay where he, along with a few other refugees from Salem, established the Providence Plantations, {which became the Colony of Rhode Island,

in essence the first beacon of real independence that ever waved over American soil, providing shelter for godly outcasts,} in 1636 as a refuge offering what he called "liberty of conscience" or a "shelter for persons distressed for conscience." He blamed John Cotton for his banishment and stated that Cotton was the chief spokesman for the colony and the source of his problems. In his later writings, Williams recalls how he was "denied the common air to breathe...and almost without mercy and human compassion, exposed to winter miseries in a howling wilderness, {for fourteen weeks,} not knowing what bread or bed did mean." Although the situation was grave, he would recognize the loving-kindness of the LORD in sustaining him throughout this period, along with a deep sense of gratitude to the Indians for their hospitality, which kindness he sought to repay throughout the rest of his life, learning their language and forming lasting friendships with their leaders.

In a letter he writes, "sir, I hope shortly to send you good news of great hopes the Lord hath sprung up in mine eye, of many a poor Indian soul enquiring after God. I have convinced hundreds at home and abroad that in point of religion they are all wandering, &c., I find what I could never hear before, that they have plenty of gods or divine powers, the sun, moon, fire, water, snow, earth, the deer, the bear, &c., are divine powers. I brought home lately from the Narragansetts the names of thirty-eight of their gods, all they could remember, and had I not with fear and caution withdrew, they would have fallen to worship, O God, {as they speak,} one day in seven, but I hope the time is not long that some shall truly bless the God of Heaven that ever they saw the face of English men."

In 1644, whilst in England, {in the midst of the English Civil War,} attempting to negotiate a Charter for Rhode Island, {which he obtained through the offices of

Sir Henry Vane, a leading Parliamentarian, who worked closely with Oliver Cromwell - charged for treason and beheaded in 1662,} despite strenuous opposition from Massachusetts' agents. During this period, Williams began a pamphlet war with John Cotton, starting with the publication of his pamphlet, {considered by some to be one of the best defenses of liberty of conscience,} THE BLOODY TENANT OF PERSECUTION, during which, they both published many replies and debated their ideas at length. Throughout his pamphlet, all forms of religious persecution are vigorously condemned, since persecution liquidated both erroneous and true consciences and only God was able to separate the one from the other. The believer in Christ was not to mount the judgment seat of Pilate, for the follower of Christ was promised only a "cross" and not a sceptre and the grace of God was not evidenced when the persecuted became the persecutors. The book was emphatically denounced by the Westminster Assembly, and was ordered by Parliament to be burnt on the 9th of August, but by this time Williams himself was already on his way back to New England. This fanatical practice of book burning was adopted by the pilgrims as well, for in writing to John Winthrop the Younger, in 1654, he says, "we also hear that two of Mr. Dell's books were lately burnt in Massachusetts, {possibly,} containing some sharp things against the Presbyterians and Academians, of which I brought over one called THE TRIAL OF SPIRITS." {"The trial of spirits, both in teachers and hearers; wherein is held forth the clear discovery and certain downfall of the carnal and anti-Christian clergy of these nations. Testified from the word of God, to the University congregation in Cambridge, by William Dell.}

The brief pamphlet entitled, CHRISTENINGS MAKE NOT CHRISTIANS, was also published at about this time, {1645,} in which Williams criticizes the extensive efforts to

'evangelize' the Native Indians, his primary objection being his persuasion that most of so-called Christendom, be they Protestants or Papists, exhibit no more faithfulness to the true message of the Gospel, essentially Christ crucified, I Cor.2:2, than any other heathinish religion, and thus by introducing them to this mongrel form of the christian faith, one would essentially convert them from one damnable religion to another, rejecting entirely any form of sacramental coercion as a tool for molding religion and conscience.

In that work he asserts, "if now the bodies of Protestant Nations remain in an unrepentant, unregenerate, natural estate, and so consequently far from hearing the admonitions of the Lord Jesus, Matthew 18, I say that they must sadly consider and know {least their profession of the name of Jesus prove at last but an aggravation of condemnation} that Christ Jesus hath said, they are but as Heathens and Publicans, verse 17; how might I therefore humbly beseech my country men to consider what deep cause they have to search their conversions from that Beast and his image? And whether having no more of Christ than the name, {beside the invented ways of worship, derived from, or drawn after the pattern of Rome,} their hearts and conversations will not evince them unconverted and unchristian christians, and not yet knowing what it is to come by true Regeneration within, to the true spiritual Jew from without, amongst the Nations, that are Heathen or Gentiles."

Returning from England with a Patent from Parliament for, "the Providence Plantations in Narragansett Bay," which incorporated Providence, Newport, and Portsmouth into a single English Colony, he found himself as a sort of commissioner of peace, averting potential bloodshed between rival Indian tribes, and the ever looming dread of the Colonists being themselves

mascaraed by hostile tribes. Through his peaceable negotiations he became instrumental in keeping a settled peace between the Colonists and Indians for nearly 40 years.

Another trip to England between 1652 and 1654, upon which return he was immediately elected as President of Rhode Island, {from 1654 to 1658,} and subsequently served in many offices in town and colonial governments. During the later years of his life, he saw almost all of Providence burned during King Philip's War, 1675-1676, which pitted the Colonists against the Indians with whom Williams had good relations in the past. In the space of little more than a year, twelve of the region's towns were destroyed and many more were damaged, the economy of Plymouth and Rhode Island Colonies was all but ruined and their population was decimated, as more than half of New England's towns were attacked by Indians. Williams, although in his seventies, was elected captain of the Providence Militia. That war proved to be one of the most bitter events in his life, for although his efforts helped keep Providence from almost being completely burnt, his own house was destroyed in the uprising. He lived to see Providence rebuilt, continued to preach, and interest himself in the affairs of the Colony in spite of failing health.

Williams died sometime between January and March in 1683 and was buried on his own property. Fifty years later, his house collapsed into the cellar and the location of his grave was forgotten. A good summation of his life may be gathered from his own writings, "what are all the contentions and wars of this world about but for greater dishes and bowls of porridge? But here all over this colony a great number of weak and distressed souls, scattered, are flying hither. The Most High and Only Wise hath provided this country and this corner as a shelter for the poor and persecuted according to their several

persuasions. And as to myself in endeavouring after your temporal and spiritual peace, I humbly desire to say, if I perish, I perish. It is but a shadow vanished, a bubble broke, a dream finished. Eternity will pay for all."

**To all such Honourable and Pious hands,
whom the present Debate touching the
propagating of CHRIST'S Gospel concerns;
and to all such gentle Bereans, who with
ingenious civility desire to search whether
what's presented concerning Christ Jesus,
be so or no.**

All Humble Respective Salutations.

It being a present high Debate {Honourable and Beloved} how the Gospel of Christ Jesus might more be propagated in this Nation. 2. And being desired by eminent friends, to cast in my mite towards it. 3. And having been engaged in several points of this Nature, in my former and later Endeavours, against that bloody Tenent of Persecution for cause of Conscience. 4. And also having been forced to observe the goings of God, and the spirits of Men, both in Old and New England, as touching the Church, the Ministry and Ordinances of Jesus Christ; I did humbly apprehend my Call from Heaven; not to hide my Candle under a Bed of Ease and Pleasure, or a Bushel of Gain and Profit, but to set it on a Candlestick of this public Profession, for the Benefit of others, and the Praise of the Father of all Lights and Godliness.

2. For the substance and most of this, I suddenly drew it up, and delivered two copies unto two eminent friends of Jesus Christ and this Nation; but being importuned for more copies than I was possibly able to transcribe, and being {therefore} advised by some honourable Friends, to use the help of the Press; I am thus beyond my first Intentions and Desires held forth in Public.

3. If ought I have expressed seem harsh, dissatisfactory or offensive; I am humbly bold {I hope in the power of the Most High} to profess my readiness to discuss, debate, or dispute, either by Word or Writing, with whom, or before whom soever the present Debate concerns, with all Christian meekness, and due submission.

4. It is true, I do absolutely deny it {against all comers} to be the Burden of the Civil State to take cognizance of any Spiritual cause; and I do positively assert it, to be the proper and alone work of the holy Son and Spirit of God in the hands of his Saints and Prophets, to manage Heavenly and Spiritual causes, and that only with Spiritual Weapons against Spiritual Oppositions. And therefore, that the Higher Powers have been constantly deceived by the Mercenary and Hireling Ministry; who being themselves deceived, deceive; and flop about {as the wind, and time, and advantage blows} from Popery to Protestantism; from Protestantism to Popery; from Popery to Protestantism again! From Prelacy to Presbytery; from Presbytery to Independency; and perhaps again to Presbytery and Prelacy, if not to Popery {in some cases} rather than lose {as they say} the Liberty of Preaching. But what that loss is of somewhat else, {gain, honour, &c.,} let themselves, and all men, judge impartially in the fear of God.

5. Yet, I humbly acknowledge, {as to personal worth,} I deal with men, for many excellent gifts, elevated above the common rank of men; yea, and for personal holiness {many of them} worthy of all true Christian love and honour. In which respects when I look down upon myself, I am really persuaded to acknowledge my unworthiness to hold a candle or a book unto them. And yet, if I give flattering titles unto men, my Maker {said Elihu} would quickly take me away; and why therefore, {since I have not been altogether a stranger to

the learning of the Egyptians, and have trod the hopefulest paths to worldly preferments, which for Christ's sake I have forsaken,} since I know what it is to Study, to Preach, to be an Elder, to be applauded; and yet also what it is also to tug at the oar, to dig with the spade, and plow, and to labour and travel day and night amongst English, amongst Barbarians! Why should I not be humbly bold to give my witness faithfully, to give my counsel effectually, and to persuade with some truly pious and conscientious spirits, rather to turn to Law, to Physick, to Soldiery, to Educating of Children, to Digging, {and yet not cease from Prophesying,} rather than to live under the slavery, yea and the censure, {from Christ Jesus and his Saints, and others also,} of a mercenary and hireling Ministry?

6. To which end, my humble and hearty cry is to the Father of Lights, to plead with all his Children of Light effectually; so that they may look up, wonder, and say, am I a child of Light? Is the Father of Lights my Father, and the Saints my fellow Brethren and Scholars in Christ Jesus, the children of Light also? What make I then in dark places, like those that have been dead of old? What make I amongst the Graves and Tombs; the Livings, Benefices, Promotions, Stipends, &c?

I have been told of a conversation between the truly Noble Earl of Essex, {in Queen Elizabeth's days,} and a truly able and zealous Non-conformist. "I have," said the Earl, "been studying a great while these two points; first, the persons of the Bishops; and I have laboured with the Queen to prefer none but good men to her Bishoprics."

The next thing is their Places, which if I find them to be as bad as their persons be; then, then, &c., but they soon chopped off that noble head, &c. That same blessed Spirit breaths {I doubt not} in many heavenly spirits of our times in Parliament, in Council, in the Army; and their

holy desire hath been to prefer the choice and flower of able and godly men to places in City, in Country, and in University. It may yet so please the Father of Spirits, to stir up their noble minds to meditate as well upon these hirelings places, as they have too well known their persons. It may also be, that his most holy and pure eye sees that they have been highly honoured, and enough already. More work is left for growing sprigs, for whom some crowns are kept to which their fathers heads were not so fitted.

7. And yet although I humbly give the Civil state it's right, to wit, to take down places or persons which themselves or fathers have erected; yet am I also far from taking off a yoke from one, to clap on the neck of others. Let the towns, the parishes, and divisions of people in the Three Nations be undisturbed by any Civil Sword, from their consciences and worships; though traditional, though parochial, and let their maintenance be by tenths and fifths, or how they freely please. 1. Only let it be their soul's choice and no enforcing sword, but what is spiritual in their spiritual causes. 2. I plead for impartiality and equal freedom, peace, and safety to other Consciences and Assemblies, unto which the people may as freely go, and this according to each conscience, what conscience soever this conscience be, {not transgressing against civilities,} whether of Jews or Gentile.

Objection. But would you have say some, Jews, Turks, and Papists live in Protestant countries? I answer, I judge it here only seasonable to say, that I humbly conceive, that this objection, and all that can be said {as to piety or policy} is satisfied in my late unwashing of Mr. Cotton's washing of the Bloody Tenent¹, for in that late

¹ "Bloody Tenent of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience, Discussed in a Conference between Truth and Peace, 1644, which is a book about government force written by Roger Williams. The book takes the form of a dialogue between

endeavour, I humbly hope, I have made it evident, that no opinion in the world is comparably so bloody or so blasphemous as that of punishing, and not permitting, in a civil way of cohabitation, the consciences and worships, both of Jews and Gentiles.

Ireland hath been an Aceldama, a field of blood; probable it is, that the guilt of all that blood, Protestant and Papist, will fall upon this Bloody Tenent, of which both Papist and Protestant are guilty; to wit, of not permitting the heretics, the blasphemers, &c., as the sword falls either into the hand of a Popish or a Protestant Victor.

What a voice from heaven is there, in the fore-past ages of our Fathers, now rotten under us! From Henry the Second's time, when England's first yoke was clapped on poor Irelands neck, I say from Henry the Second's time, unto Henry the Eight, while their consciences had freedom under popish Kings of England, how little blood was spilt, English or Irish, compared with the showers and rivers both of one and the other, spilt in the few years of our Protestant Princes, while the consciences of the Catholics have been restrained by the civil sword and penalties?

Eighthly, in the discourse it will appear, how greatly some mistake, which say I declare against all Ministries, all Churches, all Ordinances; for I professedly avow and maintain, that since the Apostasy, and the interrupting of the first ministry and order, God hath graciously and immediately stirred up and sent forth the ministry of his Prophets, who during all the reign of Antichrist, have prophesied in sackcloth, and the saints and people of God have more or less gathered to and assembled with them; they have prayed and fasted

Truth and Peace and is a response to correspondence by Boston minister John Cotton regarding Cotton's support for state enforcement of religious uniformity in Massachusetts Bay Colony.

together, and exhorted and comforted each other, and so do, notwithstanding that some are not persuaded and satisfied, {as others conceive themselves to be,} as touching the doctrines of baptisms, and laying on of hands.

Lastly, whatever be the issue of all their public agitations, my humble and hearty cry to the Father of mercies, is for every soul in the three Nations, that desire to fear him; whether of higher or lower rank, that we may more and more cry and endeavour for assurance of personal reconciliation in the blood of the Lamb, more and more for participation of the divine nature in the purity and holiness of the Spirit of God; more and more lament {with Jeremiah} the division and desolations of God's people and the holy ordinances and worship of God in Christ Jesus; more and more press after love and all possible communion with God's people in the midst of many differences; more and more abound in mercy and compassion to the souls and consciences; and woeful conditions of others, Jews or Gentiles, and more and more prepared with the golden shoes of the preparation of the Gospel of peace, ready for all the good pleasure of God in Christ Jesus; for prosperity, for adversity, for abundance, for want, for liberty, for imprisonment, for honour, for dishonour, for life and for death, as knowing that they that suffer with Christ Jesus, shall not only reign with him, but here also in the midst of outward sorrows, be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Being Desired by some Loving Friends to cast in my Mite as to that Heavenly Proposition of Propagating the Gospel of Christ Jesus, I am humbly bold to propose these conclusions, and their consecutaries following.

The two great Prophets of God's Revealed Council, Moses {the Servant} and Christ Jesus {the Lord} as they have both declared unto us a Creation, a Creator, the Shipwreck of Mankind, the Restoration, the Restorer, so have they both revealed unto us a visible company of holy worshippers of this one most glorious Creator and Redeemer, and that as for his own most glorious praise, so in opposition to all false gods, who also are attended with their visible worships and worshippers. In order to God's visible worship the Lord Jesus hath broken down the Wall of Division between the Jews and the rest of the Nations of the World, and sent forth his Ministers unto all Nations, to bring in {by the Gospel Proclamation} Proselytes, Converts, Disciples, and all such as should eternally be saved, to begin that heavenly and eternal communion in Heaven, here in an holy and visible worship on the Earth.

This going forth of the true Ministers of Christ Jesus is represented under the figure of the white troopers in the opening of the first seal where the Lord Jesus in his first Messengers rode forth upon the White Horse, or Horses of the word of truth and meekness, Psal.45:3-4, conquering and to conquer the souls of Men. Rev.6:2.

Thirdly, from the 6th chapter of the Book of Revelation to the 19th, we hear no more of those white-horsemen, that is {as I conceive} of the Apostles or Messengers of Jesus Christ, {the whole stream of the intervening prophecies, from the 6th to the 19th

insinuating a total routing of the Church and Ministry of Christ Jesus, put to flight, and retired into the Wilderness of Desolation.}

Fourthly, during this dreadful Apostasy and Desolation, the Lord hath not left the world without witnesses, but hath graciously and wonderfully stirred up his holy prophets and witnesses, such as were before the Waldenses more obscure, but more eminently the Waldenses, Wycliffites or Lollards, the Hussites, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, {so-called,} who have as Witnesses prophesied and mourned in sack-cloth 1260 days or years prophetically. I say mourned for the routing desolating of the Christian Church or Army, and panted and laboured after the most glorious rally thereof, and restoration.

This Testimony is probably near finished and the Saints by their late and yet following wars {I say probably} must enrage the Antichristian world, so far as to provoke the Nations, to their great and general slaughter, called the slaughter of the Witnesses. Rev.11:1-14. After which, and their shame three years and a half, followeth their most glorious and joyful rising.

These Witnesses, these Prophets, are probably those one hundred forty-four thousand virgins, mystical Israelites, twelve times twelve, which stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, against the Romish Beast, and are the same number sealed twelve times twelve. Rev.7:1-8.

But there is in the same seventh chapter, a numberless number, which no man can number, to wit, the converts of the Nations of the world, which must yet come flowing unto Christ Jesus, after this his famous second Conquest over the Devil, the Dragon in the Roman Popes having before triumphed over him in the Roman Emperors.

The World divided {say our ablest Cosmographers} into thirty parts, as yet but five of thirty

have heard of the sweet name of Jesus a Saviour; his Messengers must yet go forth into the other twenty five, after the downfall of the Papacy, when also at the fullness of the Gentiles, or Nations coming in, shall be the joyful raising us from the Dead of the {accursed, and yet Beloved Nation} of the Jews. Romans 11 & Revelation 18 & 19.

The Civil State of the Nations being merely and essentially civil cannot {Scripturally} be called Christian States, after the pattern of that holy and typical land of Canaan, which I have proved at large in the Bloody Tenent, to be a non-such and an unparalleled figure of the spiritual state of the Church of Christ Jesus, dispersed, yet gathered to him in all Nations.

The Civil Sword therefore cannot {rightfully} act either in restraining the souls of the people from worship, &c., or in constraining them to worship, considering that there is not a warrant in the New Testament of Christ Jesus that commits the forming or reforming of his Spouse and Church to the civil and worldly powers.

Seventhly, no man ever did nor ever shall truly go forth to Convert the Nations, nor to Prophecy in the present state of Witness against Antichrist, but by the gracious inspiration and instigation of the Holy Spirit of God; according to I Corinthians, chapter 12, where the Holy Spirit discoursing of those three, {gifts, administrations, and operations,} tells us that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit," and, Revelation, chapter 11, which states that the Lord himself "will give power" to his two Witnesses, &c.

I prejudice not an external test and call, which was at first and shall be again in force at the Resurrection of the Churches, {as Mr. Cotton himself calls it in Revelation 20,} but in the present state of things, I cannot but be humbly bold to say, that I know no other true sender, but the most Holy Spirit. And when he sends, his Messengers

will go, his Prophets will Prophecy, though the entire World should forbid them.

From the former conclusions we may first see upon what a false 'sent' or 'word' our fathers and ourselves have run as to the true Ministry appointed by Christ Jesus. How many thousands of Pretenders have been and are {Protestants and Papists} gone forth to that Grand Commission, Matthew 28, "go into all Nations, Teach and Baptize, &c?"

In the poor small span of my life, I desired to have been a diligent and constant Observer, and have been myself many ways engaged, in City, in Country, in Court, in Schools, in Universities, in Churches, in Old and New-England, and yet cannot in the holy presence of God bring in the result of a satisfying discovery, that either the Begetting Ministry of the Apostles or Messengers to the Nations, or the Feeding and Nourishing Ministry of Pastors and Teachers, according to the first institution of the Lord Jesus Christ are yet restored and extant.

It may then be said, what is that ministry that hath been extant since Luther and Calvin's time, especially what is that Ministry that hath been instrumental in the hand of the Lord, to the conversion of thousands? I answer, that the Ministry of Prophets or Witnesses, standing with Christ Jesus, against his great enemy and rival Antichrist.

The whole Books of Martyrs {or Witnesses} is nothing else but a large Commentary or History of the Ministry of Witnesses, during all the Reign of the Beast to this day. Look upon Berengarius with the Saints enlightened by him; look upon Pierre Waldo with his Waldenses in France, Wickliffe in England, John Hus, and Jerome of Prague in Bohemia; Luther in Germany, Calvin in Geneva. What, were they but the only prophets of Christ Jesus in those Parts, and other Places, and

Countries? Now examine their witnesses in two particulars.

1. Negatively, wherein they witnessed against the False, against the Usurpations and Abominations of Antichrist; and therein they were the infallible Witnesses and Prophets of Christ Jesus, preaching and oft times suffering to the death for his Name's sake.

2. Next, view them in their positive Practice and Worships, as they have assumed and pretended to such and such Ministries, and Titles, and Churches, and Ministrations, and there is not one of them, no not Calvin himself, {the greatest Pretender to Church-Order,} but the Father of Lights, in our times of Light, hath been graciously pleased to discover their great mistakes, and wanderings from the first Pattern and Institutions of Christ Jesus.

I know the multitudes of interpretations given upon Revelation chapter eleven, as touching the two Witnesses, and that many, if not most, incline to believe, at least to hope and desire, that their slaughter may be past and over; unto which in all humble submission to the holy councils of God, for Zion's sake, I most heartily say as Jeremiah once said in another, something a like case, Amen. But all the interpretations extant, that ever I have yet heard or read of, they seem to me to look up the sun in a chamber, for they are too narrow and particular, and like some almanacks, calculated for one meridian and climate. For Antichristianism is a universal plague-sore spread over all the Empire that was Roman. The Roman Popes, as Vicars of Christ Jesus, pretend to a Roman Catholicism or Universality also. The Lord Jesus his cause therefore, and the cause of his saints, is of a more general and universal concernment, such hath the witness of his servants been in all Ages and Countries of Europe. Now notwithstanding many particular slaughters, {as the Book of Martyrs and other Catalogues of Christ's Witnesses

testify, } yet I see it not possible that that Scripture can be satisfied, but that after the universal finishing of the Witness, there must follow an universal persecution and slaughter unto which an universal provocation and exasperation by the Saints must probably precede and give occasion.

Wherein hath the former and latter Ministry been defective? I answer, in all these four, their Gifts, their Calling, their Work, their Wages.

First, in their Gifts, for notwithstanding they pretend to the Apostolic Commission, and to succeed them, Matthew 28, yet they have never pretended to the gifts and qualifications of such a Ministry, nor have they ever been able to clear up those two Foundations of the Christian Religion, Hebrews 6, the doctrine of baptism, and the laying on of hands.

Secondly, notwithstanding that some plead their succession from the Apostles or Messengers, yet are they forced to run into the tents of Antichrist, and to plead Succession from Rome, and neither such nor others which plead their calling from the People, can prove to my conscience, from the testimony of Christ Jesus, that either, Christ's succession did run in an Antichristian line, or that two or three godly persons might first make themselves a church, and then make their Ministers, without a preceding Ministry from Christ Jesus unto them, to gather, and to guide them in such their administrations.

Thirdly, the work of that Commission, Matthew 28, was exercised and administered to the Nations, as Nations, and the World, but all our professed Ministrations, former and latter have been carried on {in a grand and common mystery} for the converting of a converted people, for if we grant all Protestant Nations to be Christians, and so act with them in prayer as Christians, and the children of God; how can we pretend

to convert the converted, and to preach unto them to convert them? One or other must be denied, to wit, that they are converted, or if unconverted, that we may offer up Christian and Spiritual Sacrifices with them. No Herald, no Ambassador sent to a city or army of rebels did ever {constantly least of all} perform such actions of state with those rebels, which represents or renders them in a capacity of honest and faithful subjects. Oh, the patience and forbearance and long-suffering of the Most High, whose eyes yet are as a flame of fire.

Fourthly, in their Wages, whether by tithes or otherwise, they have always run in the way of an Hire, and rendered such workmen absolute Hirelings between whom and the true Shepherd, John 10, the Lord Jesus Christ puts so express and sharp a difference; so that in all humble submission, I am bold to maintain, that it is one of the grand designs of the Most High, to break down the Hireling Ministry, that trade, faculty, calling and living, by Preaching, and that if all the Princes, States, Parliaments and Armies in the world should join their Heads and Hearts and Arms and Shoulders to support it, yet being a part of Babel and Confusion, it shall sink as a mil-stone from an angelic hand into the depths forever.

Objection, but is not the Labourer worthy of his Reward? I answer, there is no reward {by infinite degrees} comparable to an hundred-fold {though with persecution} in this life, and in the world to come eternal life, to all that deny themselves in this Life, and do, and teach, and suffer for the name of the Son of God.

More strictly and particularly I answer, first, he that makes a Trade of Preaching, that makes the cure of souls, and the charge of men's eternal welfare, a trade, a maintenance, and living, and that explicitly makes a covenant or bargain, {and therefore no longer penny, no longer paternoster; no long pay, no longer pray, no longer preach, no longer fast, &c.,} I am humbly confident to

maintain, that the Son of God never sent such a one to be a Labourer in his Vineyard. Such motions spring not from the living and voluntary spring of the Holy Spirit of God, but from the artificial and worldly respects of Money, Maintenance, &c.

Wherein consists the making of the hirelings, explicit and implicit bargain? I answer, tis explicit, express and plain, when there is a mutual declaring and agreeing, for so much or so much, in one kind or another, as the Levite agreed with Micah in the Judges. Of this sort of explicit and plain bargains by way of tithes, stipend, &c. How is our own and other nations full, and how many thousands are there of the instances of moving and removing from leaner to fatter Benefices, like the former Levite, from the poor Chaplain-ship of Micah's family, to the more rich and eminent devotion of a Tribe of Dan, just like servants hired by the year {more or less} stay not when they hear of proffers of more ease and better wages.

Secondly, an implicit or implied bargain or compact is when there passeth no express agreement for so much or so much, but having been brought up {as we say} to that only Trade, they must make their living of it, and therefore being something convinced of the grosser way, they are content as water-men, porters, and the like, with some kind of intimations by word of mouth, or in course which shall amount to such a promise as this express, I know your fare, your due, I will content you, &c., trust to my courtesy. The trial of this is plain, for without such an implication or implicit promise, the hireling will not, indeed he cannot {having no other way to live on} move his lip or tongue, no more than a waterman or porter, his hand or foot.

Secondly, as to the labourer worthy of his reward, I answer, that we find no other pattern in the Testament of Christ Jesus, but that both the Converting, {or

Apostolical Ministry,} and the Feeding, {or Pastoral Ministry,} did freely serve or minister, and yet were freely supported by the Saints and Churches, and that not in stinted Wages, Tithes, Stipends, Salaries, &c., but with larger or lesser supplies, as the hand of the Lord was more or less extended in his weekly blessings on them.

Thirdly, when either through poverty or neglect, support and maintenance failed, yet still they eyed {as sea men and soldiers say} the good of the Voyage and the Battle {the common Cause of the Lord Jesus} and their own hands day and night, supplied their own and others necessities. And this was and will be the only way of the Labourers of the Son of God.

Objection, the Priests and Levites under the Law had settled and constant Maintenance. I answer, blessed be the Father of Lights who hath shown his people of late times, the great difference between the stated and settled National Church, the Ministry, and maintenance thereof, and the ordinary, afflicted, tested & tried state of the Church, and Churches of Christ Jesus all the world over.

Objection, although it be granted that the Hireling Ministry, both explicit and implicit, is none of Christ's, yet this is wonderful, what should be the reason why so much good hath been wrought thereby, as the conversion of thousands? I answer, all the wisdom, mercy, goodness, and piety that is in us, is but a drop to the ocean of that which is in the Father of mercies, who with infinite pity and patience passeth by the ignorance and weaknesses of his Children. Hence Luther and other Monks, Cranmer and other Bishops, Calvin and other Presbyterians, God hath graciously covered their failings, and accepted {in Christ} his own Grace of sincere Desires, good Affections and Endeavours, though many ways defiled with sin.

Thus, was his infinite Goodness pleased to overlook the sin of Polygamy, or many Wives, in which so many of the Fathers or Patriarchs of Israel, were brought

forth. Thus, was he pleased to pass by the sins of the High Places, where Solomon himself offered Sacrifice. And yet as to this great point of good being done, we may with truth assert two things.

First, where, {and if,} God hath been pleased to bring nigh one soul to Himself by the Hireling Ministry, many more have been brought near by the voluntary and more single preachings of some, whether public or private; by the endeavour of private Christians, by the reading of the Holy Scriptures, by godly examples, by afflictions, &c.

Hence, woeful experience hath made it evident, that many excellent men, {in their own persons,} have laboured a score of years and more, in an hireling way, without the birth of one child to God; while others singly out of Love to Christ Jesus, have despised Bargains and Hire, and been more abundantly blest with merciful success and fruitfulness. Hence, sure it is that there have been and are many excellent Prophets and Witnesses of Christ Jesus, who never entered {as they say} into the Ministry, to wit, Lawyers, Physicians, Soldiers, Tradesmen, and others of higher and lower rank, who by God's Holy Spirit {breathing on their meditations of the Holy Scriptures, and other private helps} have attained and much improved, an excellent spirit of knowledge, and utterance in the holy things of Jesus Christ, which spirit they ought to cherish, and further to improve, to the praise of Christ.

Amongst so many instances {dead and living} to the everlasting praise of Christ Jesus, and of his Holy Spirit, breathing and blessing where he listeth, I cannot but with honourable Testimony remember that Eminent Christian, Witness, & Prophet of Christ, even that

despised and yet beloved Samuel How², who being by calling a Cobbler, and without human learning, {which yet in its sphere and place he honoured,} who yet I say, by searching the Holy Scriptures grew so excellently into the truths of the Gospel of Christ, that few of those high Rabbis that scorn to mend or make a shoe, could aptly and readily from the Holy Scripture outgo him. And however {through the oppressions upon some men's Consciences, even in Life and Death, and after death in respect of burying, as yet unthought and unremedied,} I say, however he was forced to seek a grave or bed in the very highway, yet was his life, death and burial, being attended with many hundreds of God's people, honourable, and how much more his rising again, glorious.

But secondly, true and right prophesying and preaching, at first was, and shall be {because after God's own way and ordinance} beyond all compare with present times, gloriously and wonderfully successful. Thus, in Acts 2 & 5, &c., poor Sinners came mourning after a Saviour by thousands.

The Church and people of God since the Apostasy, is an Army routed, and can hardly preserve and secure itself, much less subdue and conquer others, like a vessel becalmed at Sea, which though it make some way by rowing and towing, yet not comparable to what it doth when the mighty gales of God's Holy Spirit breathe, {as in former days,} in the ways of his own most holy appointments.

Thirdly, we may see a grave mistake as touching that great point of Conversion. There is a great breathing in the souls of God's people after the Conversion of the

² Samuel How, author of "The sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching without human learning; a treatise tending to prove human learning to be no help to the spiritual understanding of the word of God." 1639.

English, Irish, Jews, Indians, and blessed be God for those breathings; yet doubtless, the first great work is the bringing of the Saints out of Babel, or confused worships, and the downfall of the Papacy, after the witnesses slaughtered. Hence it is probably conceived by some, {upon the testimony of Revelation, chapter 15,} that until the vials be poured forth upon Antichrist, the smoke so filleth the Temple, that no man, that is {few of the Jews or Gentiles} shall by conversion enter in.

Some will say, have there not been great and mighty conversions of whole Nations; England, Scotland, French, Dutch, &c., from Popery to be good Protestants? I answer, if the Holy Scripture, the first pattern, and doleful experience may be judge as to the point of true Conversion and Regeneration by God's Spirit, who can deny but that the body of this and of all other Protestant Nations {as well as Popish} are unconverted, and {as formerly} ready to be converted and turned forward and backward, as the weather-cock, according as the powerful wind of a prevailing, {antichrist spirit,} sword and authority, shall blow from the various points and quarters of it.

By the merciful assistance of the Most High, I have desired to labour in Europe, in America, with English, with Barbarians, yea, and also I have longed after some trading with the Jews themselves, {for whose hard measure I fear the Nations and England, hath yet a score to pay,} but yet {as before} I cannot see but that the first and present great design of the Lord Jesus is to destroy the Papacy in order to which, two great works are first to be effected.

First, his calling of his people more and more out of the Babel of confused Worships, Ministries, &c., and the finishing of their Testimony against the Beast. Secondly, the great sufferings and slaughters of the Saints, upon occasion of which Christ Jesus in his holy wrath and

jealousy, will burn and tear the bloody whore of Rome in pieces. After which effected, the numberless number, Revelation 7, the fullness of the Gentiles or Nations, Romans 9, together with the Jews, shall flow to Jesus Christ. Thirdly, we may hence see our great mistakes, both of our selves & our fore-fathers, as to the pretended seed-plots and seminaries for the Ministry, the Universities of Europe, and the Universities of this Nation, for although I heartily acknowledge that among all the outward gifts of God, human learning and the knowledge of languages and good arts are excellent and excel other outward gifts, as far as light excels darkness, and therefore that schools of human learning, ought to be maintained, in a due way and cherished; yet notwithstanding, in ministerial ordinations, as to the ministry of Christ Jesus, {any one of those ministries, Eph.4. & I Cor.12,} upon a due survey of their institutions and continual practices compared with the last will and testament of Christ Jesus, they will be found to be none of Christ's, and that in many respects.

First, as to the name Scholar, although as to human learning, many ways lawful, yet as it is appropriated to such as practice the Ministry, and have been at the Universities, {as they say,} it is a sacrilegious and thievish title, robbing all believers and saints, who are frequently in the Testament of Christ, styled disciples or scholars of Christ Jesus, and only they as Believers, and this title is so much theirs, that both men and women believing were called Scholars. There was a certain Disciple or Scholar, Acts 9, called Dorcas.

Secondly, as to their monkish and idle course of life, partly so gentile and stately, partly so vain and superstitious, that to wet a finger in any pains or labour is a disgraceful and an unworthy act; but consider that the Church is built upon the Foundation of the Apostles & Prophets, who were Labourers, Fishermen, Tent-makers,

&c., and I cannot but conceive, that although it should not please the most holy and jealous God to stir up this renowned State, and their renowned Cromwell³, to deal with our refined Monasteries, as that blessed Cromwell the first⁴, did with the more gross and palpably superstitious in the days of Henry the Eighth; yet in his time the Lord Jesus whose is all power in Heaven and Earth will spew out these Seminaries of Hirelings, and mystical Merchants out of his mouth, as he hath done their Fathers the superstitious and bloody Bishops before them.

Thirdly, as to their popish and vaunting titles, so strange from the New Testament and language of Christ Jesus, or any word of title that came forth of his blessed mouth, Bachelors of Divinity, Doctor of Divinity, so clearly and expressly opposite to the command of the Lord Jesus, "call no man Father, Doctor, &c.," that is, by way of eminency in spiritual and heavenly regards, Rabbi, Rabbi, Doctor, Doctor, &c., I omit {because possibly for shame left off in these days} their childish ceremonies {used even by the most 'holy' and conscientious} in their superstitious inaugurations, &c., their holy gowns, holy vestments, holy caps, holy scarfs, holy rings; yea, and holy boots also, &c., all as far from the purity and simplicity of the Son of God, as far as the honest attire of some sober and chaste matron, from the wanton and flaunting vanities of some painted harlot.

³ Oliver Cromwell, 1599 – 1658, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

⁴ Thomas Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex, 1485-1540. In 1538 Cromwell spearheaded an extensive campaign against Popish Idolatry & Superstition. In 1539 he was instrumental in the publication of the 'Great Bible,' the first authoritative version in English. Soon thereafter he was condemned to death, for treason and heresy, without trial, and beheaded on Tower Hill on 28 July 1540; after the execution, his head was set on a spike on London Bridge.

Fourthly, as to their {pretended} spiritual and holy exercises proper only to the Churches and Assemblies of the Saints, the only Schools of the Prophets appointed by Christ Jesus. How have they been by Courts imposed upon every natural and unspiritual man, who {in Truth} perceives not the things that be of God; how have they been prostituted to every profane and unclean lip; unto whom saith God, "what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" Psal.50:16.

Fifthly, as to their being prepared and fitted by these means, as in a way of apprenticeship, to set up the Trade and way of Preaching, the science or faculty of Spiritual merchandizing, {Revelation, chapter 18 in a deep Mystery,} of all sorts of spices and precious things, the precious sweet truths and promises of Holy Scripture; yea, {which we may with holy trembling add,} a trade of selling God himself, Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Heaven and Hell, and {all too often} their own souls, and the souls of thousands.

Objection, but have there not come excellent men from thence, famous for learning, holiness, labours, success in the souls of thousands? Answer; I say, that there have been excellent men, {some say, even Popes and Cardinals, and we are sure, Lord Bishops and Monks in their personal holiness, gifts, learning, labours, success, &c.,} and therein famous prophets and witnesses of Christ Jesus; yea, they have sealed the holy Truths of God, which they have learned from the Holy Scriptures, and which they have declared to others, I say they have sealed them with their heart blood, but that is no justification of their evil standings, institutions, administrations, &c., which {as by degrees it hath pleased the Father of Lights to discover unto them} they have come out of such bondage with shame and sorrow, and laboured after the purity and simplicity of the Son of God.

Question, but since extraordinary gifts be ceased, how shall now the people of this Nation be supplied with Ministers, but from such Seminaries of Learning, which fit men both with learning to know and eloquence to utter the heavenly Mysteries; or would you have the people be of no Religion at all, mere Atheists, without God, without his Word, without a Ministry? I answer, it is true, that those glorious first ministerial gifts are ceased, and that is, or should be the lamentation of all Saints, to wit, the desolation and widow-hood of Zion; yet I humbly conceive that without those gifts, it is no ground of imitation, and of going forth to teach and baptize the Nations, for the Apostles themselves did not attempt that mighty enterprise, but waited at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit descended on them, and enabled them for that mighty work; least of all is that a ground of counterfeiting, and of suborning a liveliness picture of that first Ministry, {like Jeroboams Institutions, I Kings 13:33 &c.,} when everyone that hath friends may be preferred to Fellowships in Colleges, to the superstitious Degrees and Titles of Divinity, {as they call it,} and by these stairs ascend up the Gospel preferments of rich and honourable benefices.

Secondly, far be it from me to derogate from that honourable civility of training up of youth in Languages, and other human Learning, whether in the City of London, or other Towns and Cities, &c., all that I bear witness against, is the counterfeiting and sacrilegious arrogating of the titles and rights of God's Saints and Churches {as before} which are the only Schools of the Prophets; as also against their sacrilegious and superstitious Degrees {as they call them} in the profession of Divinity, as if they only knew Divinity, Godliness, Holiness, and by such skill in godliness, and by such degrees might succeed the ancient Scribes and Pharisees in the uppermost seats in Synagogues and Feasts, in Reverend titles and

salutations, as the only Masters and Teachers of religion and godliness, and all this in the way of the Hireling, dividing, Daniel 11, the whole land for gain, so that there hath not been room, {without some special and extraordinary privilege and license,} for the poorest cottager to live in England, out of the Bishops Diocese and the Priests Parish, and Payments.

Therefore, thirdly, in all humble reverence and due submission to the Higher Powers, I affirm, there was never merely Civil State in the World {for that of the Jews was mixed and Ceremonial} that ever did or ever shall make good work of it, with a civil sword in spiritual matters, and therefore have but built and pluckt down, planted and pluckt up, Churches, Ministries, Disciplines, &c. I furthermore acknowledge with thankfulness, that many heavenly spirits, in King Edwards, and Queen Elizabeth's days, and since that, have been forming and reforming the States and Nations, Religion, Worship, Ministry, &c. Doubtless their intentions were holy, {as David's,} labours great, and God's mercy, pity and patience infinite; yet experience long and ever hath told us that there was never a Nation yet born in a day to God; that the bodies of all Nations is a part of the world, and although the Holy Spirit of God, in every Nation where the Word comes, washes white some of a darkened complexion, and changeth some Leopards spots, yet the bodies and bulks of Nations cannot by all the Acts and Statutes under heaven, put off the Ethiopian skin, or the Leopard spots, &c. Jer.13:23. Oh, why then should the wisdom of so many ages, still each after other, be preached {by the prevailing Hirelings of each time, again and again} into the self-same delusion of changing the Ethiopian's skin or removing the Leopard's spots?

There is not a Town, nor a Parish, nor a person in England, but judge themselves Christian, and to that end challenge the right and use of a Minister, in sacris some

{as in all Religions in the world it is} to serve the Deity they worship, ex officio, as Sacerdotal, or holy persons for and with them, in prayers and holy rites.

This mine eyes have often seen among thousands of the wild, yet wise Americans, who yet {alas} as all the Nations of Europe, and the world are utterly incapable of Forms and Ministers {or Officers} of Christian worship, while yet in their natural and worldly capacities, not born again, made spiritual and heavenly, by the Holy Spirit of God.

Yet, fifthly, I desire uprightly to be far from divers weights and measures in the things of God, {especially,} and therefore I desire not that liberty to myself, which I would not freely and impartially weigh out to all the consciences of the world beside; and therefore I do humbly conceive, that it is the will of the Most High, and the express and absolute duty of the civil powers to proclaim an absolute freedom in all the Three Nations, yea in all the world {were their power so large} that each Town, and Division of people, yea, and person, may freely enjoy what worship, what ministry, what maintenance to afford them, whatsoever their soul desireth.

To this end I am humbly bold to offer, that it is not the will of the Father of Spirits, that all the consciences and spirits of this Nation should violently {via arms, &c.,} be forced into one way of worship, or that any Town or Parish {so called} in England, Scotland, or Ireland, be disturbed in their worship, {what worship soever it be,} by the civil sword. If the people freely choose that way of worship, and ministry, and maintenance they walk in; yea, if they will freely pay them the tenths or fifths, I shall not envy their Ministers maintenance, nor disturb either minister or peoples conscience by any other sword, but with that spiritual sword of two edges, the sword of God's Spirit, the holy Word of God.

Objection, grant the bodies of the Nations to be but natural, but civil, and therefore cannot without the changings of God's Spirit be possibly fit as spiritual flocks of sheep, for spiritual pastors or shepherds to feed and build them up with the spiritual Ordinance of Christ Jesus? Yet, need they not a converting or begetting ministry of Christ Jesus, to preach Repentance to them, to spiritualize and change them? And if so, where shall ten thousand Ministers be had to go to {about} that number of Parishes in England, without the constant supplies of the seed-plots of Seminaries, the Universities of the Nation?

I answer; first, there are great disputes among God's people whether Apostles or Messengers sent out to teach and baptize, that is, to Convert the Nations, be yet an Ordinance of Christ Jesus continued, or being extraordinary ceased? There is a great dispute whether the Ministry of the twelve, Matthew 10, or of the seventy, Luke 10, be continued since they both had an immediate call from Christ. And secondly, such excellent gifts, abilities, and furniture from Christ, which now we find none are furnished with, as healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils, &c. Further, whether all these gifts and administrations, Ephesians 4 & I Corinthians 12, are to be expected?

For myself I am sure of two things. First, it is but little of the World yet that hath heard of the lost estate of mankind, and of a Saviour, Christ Jesus, and as yet the fullness of the Gentiles is not yet come, and probably shall not, until the downfall of the Papacy. Secondly, yet the Ministry or Service of Prophets, and Witnesses, mourning and prophesying in Sack-cloth, God hath immediately stirred up and continued all along the reign of the Beast and Antichrist of Rome.

This Witness is {probably} near finished, and the bloody storm of the slaughter of the Witnesses is yet to

be expected and prepared for; but this, and the time, and many passages of Revelation chapter eleven are controversial, and something like that of Christ's expected personal presence, the state of the New Jerusalem, the New Heavens and Earth, &c.

However, this is clear, that all that are endued with spiritual or temporal talents, must lay them out for their Lord and Master, for his Glory and Advantage alone. That, all {of what rank soever} that have knowledge and utterance of heavenly Mysteries, and therein are the Lord's Prophets and Witnesses against Antichrist, must Prophecy against false Christ's, false Faith, false Love, false Joy, false Worship, and Ministrations, false Hope, and false Heaven, which poor souls in a golden dream expect and look for.

This Prophecy ought to be {chiefly} exercised among the Saints in the companies, meetings, and assemblies of the fellow-mourners, and witnesses against the falsehoods of Antichrist. If any come in, {as in I Corinthians 14,} yea if they come to catch, God will graciously more or less vouchsafe to catch them if he intends to save them.

But for the going out to the Nations, Cities, Towns as to the Nations, Cities, and Towns of the World, unconverted, until the downfall of the Papacy, Revelation 18, and so the mounting of the Lord Jesus, and his white Troopers again, Revelation 19, &c. For the going out of any to preach upon hire, for the going out to convert sinners, and yet to hold communion with them as saints in prayer. For the going out without such a powerful call from Christ, as the twelve and the seventy had, or without such suitable gifts as the first Ministry was furnished with, and this especially without a due knowledge of the period of the Prophecies to be fulfilled, I have no Faith to act, nor in the actings and ministrings of others.

For, there is but one God, Lord and Spirit, from whom those Gifts, Administrations and Operations proceed, I Corinthians 12, without whose holy and heavenly concurrence in all those three, both Gifts and Administrations and Operations, instead of Glorifying the name of Christ, and saving Souls, we may Blaspheme his Name, and grieve his Spirit, and hinder and harden poor souls against Repentance, when by fellowship in prayer with them as with Saints, we persuade them of their {already} blessed state of Christianity, and that they are newborn, the saints, and sons, and daughters of the living God.

Therefore, lastly, if it shall please our most noble Governors to search into the institution and constitution {as they have done of the Diocesan so also} of the National and Parish Churches concerning which I shall humbly subjoin some queries in the close of all.

If they please to take off the yokes, the soul yokes of binding all persons to such parochial or parish forms, permitting them to enjoy their own belief, whether within or without such Parish worships, Parish maintenance, Parish marryings, Parish buryings, by which the souls and consciences of so many have been enbondaged in life and death, and {their bodies, in respect of buryings} after death.

If they shall please so far {if not to countenance yet} to permit impartially all consciences, and especially the consciences, the meetings and assembling of faithful and conscionable people, {the volunteers in preaching Christ Jesus,} so as that what people and persons please, may peaceably frequent and repair to such spiritual meetings and assemblies, as they do the Parish Churches; for I am humbly confident, that as to the point of converting souls to God {so far as the present state of Christianity can be so promoted} the souls of thousands will bless God more than if millions of hirelings were sent

abroad from all the Universities, both of Popish and Protestant Countries.

Fourthly, upon the grounds first laid, I observe the great and wonderful mistake both our own and our Fathers, as to the civil powers of this world, acting in spiritual matters. I have read {as blessed Latimer once said} the last Will and Testament of the Lord Jesus over many times, and yet I cannot find by one tittle of that Testament, that if he had been pleased to have accepted of a temporal Crown and Government, that ever he would have put forth the least finger of temporal civil power, in the matters of his spiritual affairs and Kingdom.

Hence must it lamentably be against the Testimony of Christ Jesus, for the Civil state to impose upon the souls of the People, a Religion, a Worship, a Ministry, Oaths, {in Religious and Civil affairs,} Tithes, Times, Days, Marryings and Buryings in holy ground, yet in force, as I have {I hope} by the help of God, fully debated that great question with Master Cotton, and washed off all his late washings of that bloody Tenent of Persecution, &c.

Question, what is then the express duty of the Civil Magistrate, as to Christ Jesus his Gospel and Kingdom? I answer, I know how woefully that Scripture, Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, &c., Isa.49:23, hath been abused, and elsewhere I have at large discussed that, and other such objections. At present, I humbly conceive, that the great duty of the Magistrate, as to spirituals, will turn upon these two Hinges. First, in removing the Civil Bars, Obstructions, Hinderances, in taking of those yokes that pinch the very souls and consciences of men, such as yet are the payments of Tithes, and the Maintenance of Ministers, they have no faith in. Such are the enforced oaths, and some ceremonies therein, in all the Courts of Justice, such are the holy marryings, holy buryings, &c. Secondly, in a free and absolute permission of the

consciences of all men, in what is merely spiritual, not the very consciences of the Jews, nor the consciences of the Turks or Papists, or Pagans themselves excepted.

Question, but how will this Propagate the Gospel of Christ Jesus? I answer thus, that the first grand design of Christ Jesus is to destroy and consume his mortal enemy Antichrist. This must be done by the breath of his Mouth in his Prophets and Witnesses. Now the Nations of the World have impiously stopped this heavenly breath, and stifled the Lord Jesus in his servants. Now if it shall please the Civil State to remove the state bars, set up to resist the Holy Spirit of God in his servants, {whom yet finally to resist, is not in all the powers of the world,} I humbly conceive that the civil state hath made a fair progress in promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Question, this mercy and freedom are due to the {merely} religious consciences of all men in the world. Is there no more due from the Magistrate to Christ Jesus, his Saints and Kingdom? I answer, while I plead for the Conscience of all men to be at Liberty, doubtless I must plead the Liberty of the Magistrates conscience also, and therefore were his bounties and donations to his Bishops and Ministers, as large as those of Constantine; who, but the Holy Spirit of God in the mouths of his Prophets can restrain him? Only let not Caesar, {as Constantine in his settled prosperity did,} rob the God of Heaven of his Rights, the consciences of his subjects their heavenly Rights and Liberties.

Objection, but under the pretence of propagating the Gospel of Christ Jesus {it may be said} what horrible opinions and spirits will be vented, as woeful experience hath manifested. I answer, that opinions offensive are of two sorts, some savouring of impiety and some of incivility.

Against the first, Christ Jesus never called for the Sword of Steel to help the Sword of the Spirit, being that

two-edged sword that comes out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus; and therefore if a world of Arians deny the Deity of Christ Jesus; if a Manniche his human nature; if the Jews deny both, and blasphemously call our Christ a Deceiver; nay, if the Mahometans, the Turks, {the greater number by far of one Religion in the World,} if they I say, prefer their cheating Mahomet before our true and faithful Redeemer, what now? Must we rail, revile, &c., and cry out Blasphemers, Heretics? Must we run to the Cutlers shop, the Armories and Magazines of the Cities and Nations? Must we run to the Cities or Nations, and Senates, and cry, help you men of Ephesus, help oh inhabitants of Jerusalem, &c., or must we fly up to Heaven by Prayers and Curses, to fetch down Fire upon the persecuting Captains and their fifties? This do the Nations, this do false Christs and Christians, but this did not, this will not do the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah's Tribe, who with his Word and Spirit alone, {which the Father hath promised to put into his Mouth, and the Mouth of his Seed, and the Mouth of his Seeds Seed, Isaiah 59,} will either kill or save the gain-saying opposite.

The second sort, to wit, opinions of Incivility, doubtless the opinions as well as practices are the proper Object of the Civil Sword, according to that Magna Charta for the civil Magistrate, Romans 13, and that true apothegm or saying, *ex malis moribus bonae leges*, good laws are occasioned by evil manners, or out of bad practices good laws are born.

Question, but ought not the Civil Magistrate to repeal their ordinance for Tithes, and also to appoint some course for the maintenance of the Ministry? I answer, upon that ground of removing soul yokes, and not restraining, nor constraining conscience, I humbly conceive, that the Civil State cannot by any rule from Christ Jesus, either forbid the payment of tithes to such

whose conscience is to pay them, or enjoin them where the conscience is not so persuaded. For the further clearing of which assertion, I distinguish of the People of this Nation into two sorts.

First, such as have a Freedom in their mind to frequent the Public Parish Assemblies of the Nation, and they are also of two sorts. First, such as conscientiously frequent such places, either out of a conscientious zeal of worshipping of God, or out of a superstitious and traditional awe. Secondly, such as can go or not go, and care not what religion themselves and the State be of.

There is a second sort of people in this Nation, which out of conscience dare not frequent such places, and they are such. First, such as indeed fear God, and are in their consciences persuaded of an indelible Character of Holiness upon such Temples, as Temples dedicated to a Parish worship. Secondly, such as out of an utter dislike of all Protestant Worship, and an high esteem of their own Catholic Faith, are as far from love to such places as the former sort.

Now all these Consciences {yea the very conscience of the Papists, Jews, &c., as I have proved at large in my Answer to Master Cotton's washings} ought freely and impartially to be permitted their several respective worships, their ministers of worships, and what way of maintaining them they freely choose.

Objection, but if the civil state enjoin not the maintenance of the Ministry; if they quite let loose the Golden Reins of Discipline, {as the Parliament expressed, and the Scots objected,} what will become of the Ministry of the Gospel, and the souls of men? For if each man's conscience be at Liberty to come to Church or not, to Pay to the Minister or not, the profane and loose will neither pay nor pray, but turn atheistical and irreligious; the Ministers of Worship will be discouraged and destitute, and parents will have little mind to expend their monies

to make their children scholars, when the hope of their preferment is cut off.

I answer first, that the Supreme Court in their Declaration never declared to bar up all the doors and windows of that Honourable House, so that no further light from Heaven should break into their souls and councils from the most glorious Sun of all Righteousness the Lord Jesus.

Although the loose will be more loose {yet} possibly being at more liberty they may be put upon consideration and choice of ways of life and peace, yet however it is infinitely better that the profane and loose be unmasked than to be muffled up under the veil and hood of traditional hypocrisy, which turns and dulls the very edge of all conscience either toward God or Man.

Thirdly, it is not to be doubted, but that each conscience, the Papists and the Protestants, both Presbyterians and Independents, will emulously strive for {their not only conscience but} credit sake, to excel and win the garland in the fruits of bounty, &c. Thus, a Jesuit once in Newgate Prison boasted of the Papists charity to a Protestant {put in also for his conscience by the Bishops} for, pulling out his hand full of gold, look here {said he} are the fruits of our Religion.

Fourthly, such parents or children as aim at the gain and preferment of Religion, do often mistake gain and gold for godliness, god-belly for the true God, and some false for the true Lord Jesus. I add, such Priests or Ministers as can force a maintenance of tithes or otherwise, by the Sword, or else cease preaching for want of such or such a maintenance, or can remove from Bishoprics or Benefices {as Calves and Bulls of Bashan} for fatter and ranker pastures, or wanting spiritual work and maintenance, are too fine to work with their hands, as the first Patterns, Christ's first ministers did, how can

they say as Peter to Christ Jesus, "Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest I love thee?" &c.

Therefore lastly, may the Father of all spirits graciously be pleased to preserve the spirits of our higher powers from laying on of hay and stubble, though upon the golden foundation Christ Jesus, for all such work in matters spiritual, which our Forefathers either Popish or Protestant in their several changes in this Nation have made, they have been consumed and burnt {like hay and stubble} and come to nothing.

The sum totals of all the former particulars is this, first, since the people of this Nation have been forced into a national way of Worship, both Popish and Protestant, {as the wheels of times revolutions, by God's Mighty Providence have turned about,} the civil state is bound before God to take of that bond and yoke of soul-oppression, and to proclaim free and impartial liberty to all the people of the three Nations, to choose and maintain what worship and ministry their souls and consciences are persuaded of; which act, as it will prove an act of mercy and righteousness to the enslaved Nations, so is it of a binding force to engage the whole and every interest and conscience, to preserve the common freedom and peace. However, an act most suiting with the Piety and Christianity of the Holy Testament of Christ Jesus.

Secondly, the civil state is humbly to be implored, to provide in their high wisdom for the security of all the respective consciences, in their respective meetings, assemblings, worshippings, preachings, disputings, &c., and that civil peace, and the beauty of civility and humanity be maintained among the chief opposers and dissenters.

Thirdly, it is the duty of all that are in Authority, and of all that are able, to countenance, encourage, and supply such true volunteers as give and devote

themselves to the service and Ministry of Christ Jesus in any kind, although it be also the duty, and will be the practice of all such whom the Spirit of God sends upon any work of the Lord Jesus Christ, rather to work as Paul did, among the Corinthians and Thessalonians, than the work and service of their Lord and Master, should be neglected.

Such true Christian worthies {whether endowed with human learning, or without it} will alone be found to be that despised model which the God of Heaven will only bless; that poor handful and three hundred out of Israel's thirty-two thousand by whom the work of the God of Israel must be effected. And if this course be effected in the three Nations, the bodies and souls of the three Nations will be more and more at peace, and in a fairer way than ever, to that peace which is eternal when this world is gone.

A Few Queries Subjoined as to the Former High Question, of Propagating the Gospel or Glad News of a Saviour.

First, whether the yet remaining Division of the whole Land, into National and Parish Churches, and the centering and assembling of people into a Parish Church, be suitable to the true Religion and Testament of Christ Jesus; or rather an invention of Satan and Antichrist, to divide the Land for gain, into National, Provincial, Diocesan, Parochial, so that there is not a foot of land left in the whole Nation, for the holiest or the highest {without some extraordinary privilege} where to find a resting place out of such a Church compass. And whether is not such a profession of Christ Jesus, a denial of Christ Jesus, whether is it not to make a State-Religion and the ministry thereof {like the Dutch} state Ministers, as it was

truly said of late, that the Bishops were the King's Bishops; and if so, since the Head of the National Church, or Parishes is civil, the body be not so likewise, and consequently the whole frame of worship but civil and political, and consequently the grand idol of jealousy, before the flaming eyes of the Son of God.

2. Whether this national and partitional form of worship be a State Act, and so removeable at their pleasure. Or, is it the act and choice of the people, and not removeable without their free consent. To which end, can the Nation give, or the Parliament take a power of framing and imposing a religion upon the people, any more {if not comparably so much} than of choosing and imposing husbands and wives {in way of marriage} to all the people of this Nation; and whether therefore to enforce an Uniformity of a Nation to one Religion or Worship {after the Jewish pattern} be not a soul oppression and usurpation, not after Moses, much less after Christ Jesus the Son of God.

3. If such an holy division of the Land be a State Act, and removeable at pleasure, whether the not removing of such a form will not be set upon the Parliament's score, and be a controversy from the God of Heaven against them; for sure it is, being a plant which neither God nor the Son of God ever planted, it must irresistibly be plucked up and cast into the Fire.

4. If the State be found the Founders and Owners of the Parish Churches {the meeting places} whether ought they not to demolish them as Jehu did, or at least slight the holiness and form of them by reducing them to a civil form and use, as the Army of late dealt with some such holy places. And whether is it possible for all the men in the World, or Angels in Heaven, to wash off that Popish character of holiness while still only reserved for holy use, which both Papists and Protestants {successively and interchangeably} have made of them, as the Temple for

the Parish worship, and so consequently the High Places and Idol Temples.

5. Is it not more conducive a thousand fold to the peoples eternal welfare, that each town and division of people in the Land, be impartially permitted to make a stand, to examine and choose their way of worship, ministry, and maintenance; yet whether or no is it not absolutely better that they did freely choose rather a false Religion {Jewish, Popish, Turkish, &c.,} than without their own free choice, to be nuzzled up in a way of Traditional and Customary Religion, or else in an enforced hypocrisy against persuasion and conscience?

6. Whether that policy that refuses to search into these things, pretending danger of discomposing the present Government and Peace of the Nation, the dismounting of the present Governors, and the failure of State-Ministers in every town to keep the people in Obedience by publishing their acts unto them; I say, is not such policy, ungodly, irreligious, unchristian, and the next way to provoke the jealousy of the Most High, against both State and Statesmen, and to cause from Heaven, some other turn upon this Power and Commonwealth.

7. Whatever the duty of the Civil State be found to be, as touching the Parish Forms and Churches, yet is not the unquestionable duty of the State to take off the soul yokes from the necks of all that do or may inhabit this Nation, Jews or Gentiles; and as to civil things {the proper object of the civil state} to cast the nation into a civil form, and to appoint civil officers, throw out the nation; to record the birth of children; to take order as to marriages and buryings of all people impartially in a civil way; the want of which civil Ordinance, as to the latter, hath been a second death in this Nation to multitudes of yoke-fellows, parents, &c., who being not able to walk in the Parish ways of burying in holy ground, and by the

Parish Officers, they have been forced {not without danger also} to the high-ways for succor to their own consciences, and to their dead beloveds.

8. Whether, since the Most High hath made bare and naked his holy arm from heaven for this Nation, this Parliament, this Army, in most wonderful and singular deliverances, preservations, victories; and since this Nation is set in the midst of the Nations of the world, wearing a crown of advantage to be exemplary and presidential to the whole world about us; whether hath not the Most High reserved some wonderful and singular acts for the trial of their singular love and gratitude; and since he rewarded Jehu with temporal honour to many generations, and will not forget to pay richly for a cup of cold water, &c., since he hath promised an hundred fold in this life, to such as loose for his sake, and in the world to come life everlasting; is it not the best policy, wisdom and reason under Heaven to search out only what is his only and acceptable pleasure in Christ Jesus, and to trust his infinite power, wisdom and goodness, whatever be the present success or consequents.

An Appendix as Touching Oaths, Queries, &c.

Although it be lawful {in case} for Christians to invoke the name of the Most High in swearing; yet since it is a part of his holy worship, and sometimes put for his whole worship, and therefore proper unto such as are his true worshippers in spirit and truth; and as persons may as well be forced unto any part of the worship of God as unto this, since it ought not to be used, but most solemnly, and in most solemn and weighty cases, and {ordinarily} in such as are not otherwise determinable; since it is the voice of the two great Law-givers from God, Moses and Christ Jesus, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses {not swearing} every word shall stand. Whether the

enforcing of oaths and spiritual covenants upon a Nation promiscuously, and the constant enforcing of all persons to practice this worship in the most trivial and common cases in all Courts, {together with the Ceremonies of Book, and holding up the hand &c.,} be not a prostituting of the Holy Name of the Most High to every unclean lip, and that on slight occasions, and a taking of it by millions, and so many millions of times in vain, and whether it be not a provoking of the eyes of his jealousy who hath said it, that he will not hold him {what him or them soever} guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

A Humble and Christian proffer of Disputation.

Whereas in the epistle I intimated my readiness to debate the Particulars of this Discourse, &c., I am here humbly bold to profess, as in the holy presence of the Most High, that I am not conscious to the least design or aim, but that of a conscionable and peaceable presenting *verbum opportunum* {an Apple of Gold in a Picture of Silver} into those honourable hands whom it so highly concerns. 'Tis true, my long exile into and in America, have rendered me now a stranger, and, {after the dispatch of some civil affairs,} I should unspeakably rejoice to be gone tomorrow; but while the Most High is pleased to force my stay, he hath also {as I believe} enforced my spirit, again to proffer, in all Christian meekness and humility to agitate with whom or before whom soever, these following proposals.

First, since the remolding of this Nation into the Model of Protestantism, the Clergy or Ministry {so called} of this Nation, both Prelatical, Presbyterian and Independent, and {however in their persons many of them precious and excellent, yet} as to their Functions and Offices, as to procuring the Magistrates acting in spiritual cases, as to the Worships and Consciences of this

Nation, they have been bewildered, if not wholly blinded; for as the Hireling Way of Ministry is none of Christ's, so for this Hire, have not only the Popish, but the Protestant Clergy, tossed up and down {even like tennis balls} the Magistrates and Laws, the Consciences and Worships, the Peace and War, the weal and woe of this Nation.

Secondly, in all ages since Constantine, the Hireling Ministry have most woefully mislead the Consciences of the civil state by preaching them out of their civil sphere and line, sometimes into a head-ship, sometimes into a foot-ship, {now over and above, and again as the Revolutions have been,} inferior to, and under the Church. Out of this civil line or sphere as this present age is forced to confess, that the Civil Magistrates our Fathers before us never made true Christian Work of it, so I am humbly bold to maintain they never shall, and therefore.

Thirdly, as the civil permission of all the consciences and worships of all men in things merely spiritual is no ways inconsistent with true Christianity and true Civility, so is it the duty of the Civil Magistrate to suppress all violencies to the bodies and goods of men for their souls belief, and to provide, that not one person in the Land be restrained from, or constrained to any Worship, Ministry or Maintenance, but peaceably maintained in his Soul, as well as Corporal Freedom, to which end I add, that the violent putting in, and putting out of the several sorts of the Ministers of Worship in this Nation {if against the free choice and desire of the people} hath ever and will be yet, while so practiced, a grand oppression, and a powerful occasion, both of civil insurrections, and soul mischiefs.

Fourthly, the Lord Jesus Christ, hath not forgotten to be infinitely faithful, and infinitely wise and tender to the souls of his chosen, but hath in all Ages, and in all Conditions and Changes of his Spouse, stirred up by his

Holy Spirit, and sent such voluntary labourers into his vine-yard, and so will, as have been, and shall be abundantly sufficient for this Nation and all Nations, as may best suit the holy ends and periods of his time and kingdom.

Fifthly, as he never appointed, so he never needed the casting of whole Nations into Ecumenical, National, Provincial, Parochial or Parish forms and classes, to feed which Churches and the Ministries thereof, he never appointed nor needed, the Divinity {or Godliness} Degrees of Universities and Colleges, nor the enforcing of all the People of a Nation to come to Church, {as they call it,} nor the distinction between enforcing to some Ordinances, but not to others, as to the Word and Prayer, and Singing and Paying, but not to the Lord's Supper. All which are plants which God the Father never planted, and therefore {as all such like, though fairer plants and inventions} must all in his holy season be plucked up and cast into the Fire.

FINIS.