

A 2524

REJOINDER

To the Reverend Mr. *Robert Aber-*
crombie's late Remarks on a *fair*
Narrative of the Proceedings of the
Presbytery of *Boston*, against himself.

WHEREIN

His Mistakes are Detected, the most
material Grounds of his Argument consider'd,
the State of the Case open'd, and his evasive and
shuffling Conduct exposed.

By *J. Parsons* and *D. Mc Gregore.*

Ministers of the Gospel.

Published by Order of said Presbytery.

He that speaketh Truth sheweth Righteousness. SOLOMON

Telum imbelles sine ictu

Conjecit ————— *Vir.*

B O S T O N :

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RELINDER

To the Reverend Mr. Robert Adams
of the late Remains on a
Witness of the Proceedings of the
Presbytery of Boston, against himself.

WHEREIN

His Mistakes are Detected, the
several Grounds of his Argument considered,
the State of the Cause, and his private and
standing Conduct



By J. Parsons and A. McCreary

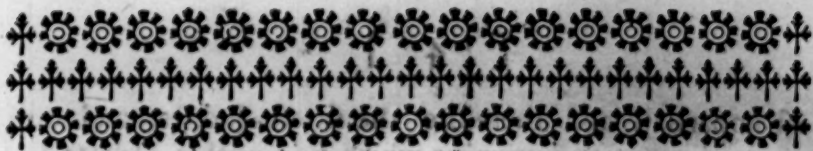
Members of the Gospel

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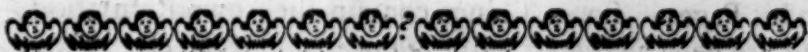
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Boston

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A Rejoinder, &c.



IT is an Observation which has been more than once made, that, of all Paper Wars, those among Divines are often prosecuted with most Bitterness and Ill-Nature—That Writers on *Astronomy*, on *natural Philosophy*, on *Politicks* and other Subjects, treat one another with Candor and Decency, while *Ecclesiasticks* appear, too frequently, to be under the baleful Influence of a Spirit of Rancour and Malice.--- And that this is apt to be the Case especially in Replies, and Duplies, that, in these, they are wont to leave the Argument and fall foul of one another with unmannerly, personal Reflections.

Whether or not there be ground for this Observation we shall not at present stay to enquire; but upon Supposition of the Fact, it is a Shame that it should be so; that the Disciples, the Ambassadors of the Prince of Peace, should pay so little Regard to the Example of Him who has said, *learn of me for I am meek and lowly in Heart*.--- That they have learned no better, that Divine Lesson of *overcoming evil with good*.

We shall not be so confident as Mr. *Abercrombie* seems to be in both his Pieces, especially the last, that we have always kept close to the Argument, or that we have constantly treated our Adversary with Decency and Politeness. Disinterested Persons are, in this Case, likely to be the
most

most impartial, and therefore the fittest Judges, and to them we leave it to determine which side of this Debate is managed with most closeness of Argument, and most of a Christian Spirit; or where there appears most Haughtiness and Self-sufficiency, or most of an unhallowed Fire, not kindled at the Altar of God.

We cannot persuade ourselves that it would be either treating our Readers well, or a profitable spending of our own Time, to follow Mr. *Abercrombie* with particular Remarks on every Thing, with which he has seen fit to fill up his Pages. Some Things contain their own Refutation, and are best answered with Silence and Neglect. What we propose in the following Pages is, *First*, to consider those Things on which Mr. *Abercrombie* places the main strels of the Argument. And then (after having taken Notice of a few particular Things he has advanced) to give our Readers a true Account of the present State of Matters between the Presbytery and him.

Mr. *Abercrombie* in summing up what he seems to think he had before sufficiently proven, says, * “ Nor is the least
 “ Regard to be pay’d either to my Suspension or Dismission,
 “ both being passed by a Judicature not duly constituted,
 “ upon our not being within their Jurisdiction; and who
 “ have proceeded by no Rule but their arbitrary Pleasure,
 “ who have founded their Acts upon Grounds not warranted
 “ by the Word of God, by Presbyterian Rules, or the
 “ genuine Principles of right Reason.” But if directly
 contrary to what he asserts it shall be made appear that the
 above Sentences were passed by a Judicature duly constituted,
 upon one within their Jurisdiction, and that, in them,
 the said Judicature proceeded not by arbitrary Pleasure, but
 upon Grounds warranted by the Word of God, and agreeable
 to Presbyterian Rules, and the genuine Principles of
 right Reason; it will then, we hope, be granted that the
 above Sentences are not to be esteemed a meer Nullity, but
 ought to be regarded as weighty and binding.

With Respect to the first Thing, viz. That we were never duly constituted; we shall here declare what our
 Senti-

* Remarks, Page 41, 42.

Sentiments are with Respect to the Constitution of a Presbytery, and what our Practice has been, and then let every one judge, as Matters appear to him. Who are understood by that Denomination of Christians, distinguished by the Name of Presbyterians is so generally known that any Explanation on this Head might be justly look't on as superfluous. Their Principles with respect to Ecclesiastical Polity, may easily be seen in several printed Pieces, among which is a small Tract, entitled a Directory for Church Government, Church Censures and Ordinances, of Ministers agreed on by the Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, This being premised we lay down the following Principles.

First, That when a Number of Congregations of the Presbyterian Persuasion live in such a Vicinity as renders their Associating practicable, they may, and ought, agreeable to their Principles, and by mutual Consent of Ministers and People to meet together as a classical Presbytery covenanting and engaging to each other to maintain and practice the above Principles: And that when they have done so, they are a Presbytery duly constituted.

Secondly, That if a Presbytery thus constituted, by Reason of their Distance from larger Body's of the same Persuasion, should not be able to join with, or put themselves under the Authority of a Synod, they may notwithstanding, and ought, to exercise Ecclesiastical Discipline and put Church Sentences in Execution.

Thirdly, That a Presbytery constituted as above, is to be regarded by other Churches of the same Denomination, not as under their Authority, but as a Sister Church, altho' yet in an infant State.

Fourthly, That in the Exercise of Church Government and Discipline, the said Presbytery ought to proceed by such fixed Rules as they look on to be agreeable to the Word of God and Presbyterian Principles thereon founded; to the end Church Power may not degenerate into Tyranny, nor the Members of Society be Oppressed.

Fifthly, That by the great Charter of Christians the said Presbytery has an equal Right, with other Sister Churches,
either

either to make Rules for the Exercise of Church Government, or to adopt the Rules of other Churches, and that this Right is unalienable.

Sixthly, That in order that both Ministers and People may be the better acquainted with said Rules, it would be expedient that a Book containing them should be printed.

Seventhly, That until such a Book is prepared, the said Presbytery should in the Exercise of Church Government, proceed by such fixed Rules, either of their own, or of other Churches, as they are persuaded to be agreeable to Scripture and Reason, and as are likewise practicable in their Circumstances.

These are some of our Sentiments, and agreeable hereto has been our Practice.—Not to trace our Presbyterial Meetings higher than *A. D.* 1745, nor to enquire at present into that Series of Events by which said Meetings had been interrupted for some Years (which yet we do not decline, from any fear of having these Matters thoroughly Sifted, if Mr. *A.* or any other has a Mind to attack us on that Head, but because it would lead to an Affair foreign to the present Debate.) But supposing, though not granting, that we never had a constituted Presbytery till the above Date, if it appear that we had one then, it will, we hope, be sufficient.

Now, that according to our Right as Presbyterians we did with the Consent of our People, actually meet, and constitute ourselves into a Presbytery the 16th of *April*, 1745, in what we have asserted in our former Remarks, and what we offered to prove, if deny'd. But Mr. *A.* has not put us to the Proof on this Head, nay, himself owns our Constitution, mentions the Vote by which we were Constituted. *

Passing this therefore we go on to say, with Respect to our Practice that it is our Method at the licencing of Candidates for the Ministry to require their Subscription to the *W. Min.* Confession of Faith and Catechisms: This Mr. *A.* himself asserts †.

If it be enquired what fixed Rules we make use of in the Exercise of Church Government in our particular Congregations, and our Presbyterial Meetings. We answer, those contained

* Remarks, pag. 14, 15.

† Letter to a Friend, p. 6.

contained in the *W. Min. Directory*, and the Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*. The Books containing those Acts generally used in our Judicatures are *Dundassa's* Abridgment of the Acts of Assembly; and *Stewart's* Collections and Observations Methodiz'd. Nor do we know an Instance in which the Presbytery has refused to regulate their Conduct by these Rules in any Case which has come before them. If it should be enquired why the Presbytery have not bound themselves to these Rules by Subscription, as they have to the Confession of Faith and Catechisms; We answer, for this, among other Reasons, viz. because there are many Things in these Rules that are local, suited to the peculiar Circumstances of the Country for which they were made, and in our Circumstances impracticable.

It were easy to give many Instances of this kind, but these will readily cast up in the mind of every Person who is but tollerably acquainted with these Rules.—Nor can Mr. *A.* instance one Presbyterian Congregation in *America*, who practises in every Thing exactly according to the *W. Minster Directory*.

But perhaps Mr. *A.* will say, “whatever may be the Case with other Presbytery's, ours is not at Liberty on this Head: They have effectually tied their Hands, having in their first Constitution, by their own Vote, extant in their Records, contented themselves to act agreeable to the Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland* §.”

That we have thus expressed ourselves in our Vote, is what we willingly own; our meaning in which is, that we would make these Constitutions the ordinary Rule of our Conduct, in the Trial and Licencing of Candidates, in the Ordination of Ministers, in admission of Persons to special Ordinances, in dealing with the Scandalous, in a Word, in all Acts of ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Discipline. Also in the Exercise of the Key of Doctrine; but still in such a Latitude, as to make proper Allowance for their and our different Circumstances.

But Mr. *A.* would have it, that, by our covenanting to
act

act agreeable to the Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland*, we have obliged ourselves to receive, and that by Subscription, every Act of the General Assembly of *Scotland*; even although some of these Acts should be found contrary to others, some of them in our Circumstances utterly impracticable. That we have wholly debarred ourselves the Liberty of adopting a Rule from any other Presbyterian Church, how rational soever it may appear, and how well soever suited to our Circumstances. And also that we have forever tied our Hands from concurring with our People in making any Act for the Regulation of our Conduct in ecclesiastical Affairs. Whether his sense or ours of acting agreeable to the Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland* be most rational, we leave every judicious Person to determine; as also whether our Vote abovesaid, understood in his Sense, would not be a giving up our Birthright, as Christians, instead of standing fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free?

Indeed Mr. *A.* once proposed to the Presbytery "that if they judged it inexpedient to adopt all the Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland*, because all the Members could not have easy Access to be acquainted with them all, and therefore could not know what they subscribed to, that then they would adopt an excellent Summary, published by *Lumsden* and *Robertson*, entitled a Collection of Confessions *."

This Proposal, it must be confess'd, the Presbytery have not yet comply'd with; whether or not they are to blame for this Noncompliance, and if to blame, how far they are so, we leave the Reader to judge, after having inform'd him that the above Summary propos'd to be Subscribed, contains not only the *W. Min.* Confession of Faith and Catechisms, the *W. Min.* Directory for Church Government and for the publick Worship of God; but also the *Geneva* Confession, the *Scotch* Confession, Mr. *Craig's* Catechism, the Directory for Family Worship, the Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties, the Sum of Saving Knowledge, the Sum of the First Book

of

* Letter to a Friend, p. 9.

of Discipline, the second Book of Discipline, the national Covenant, the solemn League and Covenant.

This Creed, large as it may seem, is yet far short of what the Presbytery bound themselves to at their first Constitution, if Mr. *A*'s Sense of that Constitution be just. It may here be enquired, who gave Mr. *A*. a dispensing Power to render it lawful for the Presbytery to cull the Acts of Assembly, adopting only those in *Lumesden* and *Robertson*; when, according to him, they had in their first Constitution, absolutely bound themselves to adopt them all? Farther, it may be proper to ask, if it's a good Argument against our Presbytery, "that they are no Presbytery, but "an irregular Company left intirely to their own Choice "and Caprice; a confused Chaos of dissenting Parts, not "having the least Pretence to a Constitution"; If all this is just, only because they do not subscribe to all the Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland*; or, at least, to all contained in *Lumesden* and *Robertson*, will not the same Argument conclude with equal Strength against any other Presbyterian Judicature on the Continent, or elsewhere, to whom it is applicable? What if it should be found upon Enquiry, that by this Argument the *Synod* of *New-York*, the *Synod* of *Philadelphia*, nay the *General Synod* of *Ireland*, are each of them as destitute of a Constitution as our Presbytery, and are to be regarded only as a confused Chaos of dissenting Parts, not having the least Pretence to a Constitution?

After all, it seems an odd Way of Reasoning, the Presbytery don't act agreeable to their Engagements at their Constitution, therefore they were never constituted. What is it he may not prove who can make such an Argument conclusive?

We hope that more than enough has been said to prove that we are presbyterially constituted. We proceed therefore,

Secondly, To prove that Mr. *A*. is a Person properly under the special Jurisdiction of the Presbytery. To find this deny'd would, we confess, be surprizing was it not from Mr. *A*. And in order to make it appear with a satisfying Evidence, we would inform our Reader that Mr. *A*.

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was

was presbyterially ordained. 'Tis to be hoped that he has not forgot that, when he received the Injunctions or Charge at his Ordination ; he did in a solemn Manner, in the Face of a large Assembly, acknowledge the *Westminster* Confession, as the Confession of his Faith. That he did also, among several other Articles relating to the Government of the Church profess these.---That our *Lord Jesus Christ* has committed the Government of his Church, not to the Church collective, but to the Officers.---That Church Judicatures should be made up of Elders ; Part of which do, and others do not labour in Word and Doctrine.---That in these Judicatures there should be a Subordination ; the congregational Session, or Eldership being subject to a Presbytery ; the Presbytery to Synods, or Councils, particular and general.----That this is the true Church Government, authorized in the Scripture.---And that in the Exercise of this Government, he promised to be subject to his Brethren in the Lord.---If Mr. *A.* should say all this is true, and proves that he was Presbyterially ordained ; but still it remains to be proved, that the Presbytery which suspended him are those Brethren to whom he promised to be subject in the Lord. To make this appear we would ask Mr. *A.* Did he not in a few Months after his Ordination, by the Advice and Concurrence of his People, meet with Messieurs *Moorhead* and *McGregore* two of his Ordainers ? Did they not, by a written Vote, extant in their Records, constitute themselves into a Presbytery ? Did he not set as a Member of that Judicature for the space of more than eight Years, sometimes as Moderator pronouncing her Sentences ; sometimes as Clerk, putting her Sentences on Record ; always as a Member reasoning and voting ? Sometimes obeying her Appointments, in supplying Vacancies, administering special Ordinances, assisting in the licencing and Ordination of Candidates, censuring of Offenders ? Nay has he not been known, (as can be well proved) on some Occasions, to argue for the Authority of the Presbytery with great Earnestness against some who seem'd to pay too little Regard to her Sentences ? And solemnly to warn People to take heed how they set light by a Judicature of *Jesus Christ*.
 Let

Let Mr. *A.* deny these Particulars, or any one of them, if he can; and if he cannot, as we are sure he cannot with Truth, then let the Reader impartially consider with what Face he can, after all this, plead that the Presbytery has no Authority over him, or any of her Members; but that every one is *sui Juris*?

What if his Subscription to our Standards cannot be produced, will nothing else subject a Person to the Authority of a Presbytery? Is not a publick solemn Declaration and voluntary Covenant equal to Subscription? What peculiar binding Power is in Subscription, above such a Declaration and Covenant?

Lest any should here suspect that the Presbytery is of the nonsubscribing Principle, we can assure them that the contrary is true, of every Member. Had there been the least Suspicion on this head, the Presbytery had without doubt required Mr. *A.* and every Member to have renewed their Subscriptions. We say, *renewed*, because the most of us have subscribed, both at the Time of our Licence and Ordination. And at our last Session in *Boston* *, all the Ministers and Probationers present, being required by the Presbytery, did readily subscribe. We look on it as one, among many good Expedients to preserve Soundness in the Faith, that every Minister and Probationer subscribe with his Hand. But if Mr. *A.* says that Subscription is *essential* to the being of a Presbytery; and that no Covenant, no verbal Declaration or Promise is sufficient to subject a Minister to the Authority of his Brethren, without he has subscribed, he must produce better Arguments than the has yet done before he will be believed. 'Tis said that Subscription to the *Westminster* Confession was not required by the general Synod of *Ireland*, by any *synodical* Law, 'till the Year 1705. But will Mr. *A.* be able hence to prove that they were, before that Time, no Synod, had no Authority over their own Members, but that each was *sui Juris*? Will he think fit to bestow on the said Synod, the polite Appellations of "an irregular *Juncto*, a confus'd Chaos of dissenting Parts;" Terms which he has pick'd up

* May 16, 1758.

up from some Writer he has met with, and in his great good Nature, so liberally bestowed on the Presbytery. From what has been said on this Head, we leave every one to judge, whither Mr. *A.* can plead Non-Jurisdiction with any good Ground.

Having shewed that Mr. *A.* is under the Authority of the Presbytery, and that therefore they had a Right to censure him, we proceed

Thirdly, to make it appear that the Presbytery in their Sentences of Suspension and Dismission, did not proceed against Mr. *A.* by arbitrary Pleasure, but upon Grounds warranted by the Word of God, agreeable to Presbyterian Rules, and the genuine Principles of right Reason. Here we think the Task is not difficult.

To begin with his Suspension, this is to be esteemed a meer Nullity and not to be regarded, “ because, in it, the Presbytery have not proceeded according to Law; nor, if it had, is the Sentence founded on Crimes sufficient in Law to warrant the same.

First, the Presbytery have not acted constitutionally, they have not proceeded according to Law.—The Law requires that, in an ecclesiastical Process, the Person be served with a Libel. This, we apprehend, was fully answered in our former Remarks. In Mr. *A.*'s Case there was no need of a Libel, the moral Reason of it ceasing, as was made plain in said Remarks *, no need of giving him a List of the Witnesses to be used against him; for this plain Reason, *viz.* because no Witnesses were to be used in the Case.—If we are not greatly mistaken, even a Child may see that Mr. *A.* either wilfully, or by a strange Inattention to the Subject he was upon, utterly misrepresents the Committee's Reasoning in the Place referred to in the Margin, when he makes them say, “ If one has committed a Crime he doubtless may know it, and consequently be at no Loss to prepare his Defences.” Had he instead of this said, “ If one is called to an Account for Things he has given under his Hand in Writing, and the said Writing is referred to in his Citation, he need then be at no Loss as to the
“ Things

* Narr. Page 18.

“ Things to which he is to make answer, since his Paper
 “ to which his Citation refers, will inform him,” this had
 been representing the Committee’s Reasoning fairly, and
 doing them Justice : but then it would not have an-
 swered Mr. *A*’s End, which was to paint the Presbytery as
 illegal and arbitrary in their Proceedings. This would have
 shewed his Quotation, from an accurate Writer in *Scotland*,
 instead of being “ much to the Purpose” to be quite im-
 pertinent.

But Mr. *A*. still insists, that “ A Judicature may be for-
 mal in their Proceedings, and yet their Sentence may be
 “ a Nullity, because it stands not upon Crimes declared
 “ sufficient in Law to warrant said Sentence.” He tells his
 Reader that “ the reformed Churches have in their Forms
 “ of Discipline, from the Word of God, declared what Sins
 “ shall have such and such Censures inflicted on the Of-
 “ fenders ; and provided, that nothing shall be received by
 “ any Judicature as a Ground of Process, far less proceeded
 “ against as a Ground of Censure, but what is in their
 “ standing Rules declared censurable by the Word of
 “ God.” * That the reformed Churches have, agreeable to
 plain Scriptures, declared that scandalous Outbreakings are
 censurable—That they have likewise mentioned several
 particular Crimes and fixed the Censures due to them, are
 Things which most Persons know as well as Mr. *A*. But
 that they have descended to all the endless variety of Crimes
 as attended with these and those Circumstances, we deny.
 This is what neither they, nor any other Legislature have
 done ; and we may add, nor can do. He must either be
 very weak, or take his Readers to be so, who adventures to
 assert such a Thing.—If Mr. *A*. is acquainted with the
 Forms of Discipline used in reformed Churches, he will
 find Slander and trampling on lawful Authority, to be,
 both of them, among the Crimes that are declared censure-
 able. In particular, he will find, “ that those who are
 “ guilty of raising Scandals and Prejudices against Minis-
 “ ters, by slandering and reproaching them, be diligently
 “ proceeded against by the Censures of the Kirk to the
 “ highest,

* Rem. P. 25.

“ highest, according to the Degree and Quality of the “ Scandal ”. * Now that Mr. *A.* has been guilty of slandering and reproaching, not a single Minister, but a Judicature of Christ, is what every impartial Person must own till he make good his Charges.—That he disown’d the Authority of the Presbytery, a Judicature to which he had solemnly covenanted to be subject, and to which he had profess’d Subjection for more than eight Years ; and this before they had come to any Determination in his Case, is what he cannot pretend to deny.—Whether the former of these Crimes did not deserve an Admonition ; and the latter, added to the former, a Suspension, let the Reader judge.

With Respect to the Presbytery’s Sentence, dismissing Mr. *A.* from his pastoral Relation to the Congregation of *Pelham* ; we desire it may be considered, that the People brought several weighty Articles against Mr. *A.* supported by sufficient Proof—That if Mr. *A.* could have exculpated himself on any or all of these Articles, or, at least, have produced any extenuating Circumstances, which would have made his Conduct to have appeared in a more favourable Light, he should have done it. Whereas, by refusing to appear before the Presbytery, to confront his Accusers, he has himself only to blame, if any of the mentioned Articles were received in a wrong Light. The Presbytery being obliged to judge of them according to the Light in which they appeared.—Perhaps after all he has said in his own Vindication upon the above Articles, the People of *Pelham* may one Day make it appear, that the said Articles deserve the Name of Crimes.

But what fully vindicates the Presbytery in dismissing him is, that they can produce his own earnest Request to be dismissed, seconded with that very Reason that weigh’d with them to dismiss him, *viz.* that his Usefulness seem’d to be at an End, and his Ministry not succeeded. But Mr. *A.* argues that this does not at all vindicate the Presbytery ; “ for (says he) one Year, far more a number of Years “ might alter the Case.” But will he, dare he say, that the Case was altered for the better, and that there was a greater

* Stewart’s Col.

greater Prospect of his Usefulness at the Time the Presbytery dismissed him, then when he first requested to be dismissed ?

When Mr. *A.* enquires why the Presbytery judged that a sufficient Reason for dismissing him which at first themselves judged insufficient, the Answer we think is quite easy. It might not, at first, appear to them to be as Mr. *A.* had asserted, *viz.* that his Usefulness was at an end ; they might hope, that by the Divine Blessing on their pacifick Endeavours, subsisting Difficulties might be removed, and that he might still be useful as a Minister in that Place. This not only might be, but we know that it *actually* was the Reason, why the Presbytery did not at first dismiss him, in Compliance with his own Petition. But finding on several Years longer Trial, that Things instead of growing better, were sensibly tending from bad to worse ; that the whole Town (a very few excepted) dreaded his Continuance as a heavy Judgment.---That there did not appear the least rational Ground to hope for his Usefulness as a Minister there, they then saw their Way clear for dismissing him, altho' it was not so when he first requested it.

When Mr. *A.* asks " Where will the Presbytery find a Warrant for dismissing a Minister from one Place without fixing him in another, or without an Invitation elsewhere ? " We answer, good Precedents of both may be easily produced, when the Dismission has been in Consequence of the Minister's own Request.---We say farther, that when Mr. *A.* talks of the Presbytery's fixing him in another Place, he seems to have forgotten that he is lying under a Censure of Suspension.

But Mr. *A.* has one Thing more which deserves some Consideration, " A Judicature (says he) may be duly constituted, deal with one within their Power, proceed exactly by approved Rules, ground their Sentences on a legal Foundation ; and yet one may lawfully refuse to rest in their Sentences, because they are not the dernier Resort, the final Judges in the Affair.*" That a Subordination of Judicatures is a presbyterian Principle, we willingly

willingly own ; and consequently, that Appeals cannot be deny'd from the lowest to the highest Judicature, if practicable, and if duly entered.---But does it thence follow, that in Case all the Judicatures are not accessible, that then no Sentence can be put in Execution ? For instance, shall a single Congregation of Presbyterians living too remote from a Presbytery to admit of Appeals, have therefore no Exercise of Discipline ? Shall a Presbytery, in a like weak Situation with Respect to a Synod, be incapable of putting any Sentence in Execution ? If this is good Reasoning with respect to the single Congregation and the Presbytery, then who sees not that the same Argument will hold good with respect to a provincial Synod, and even a national Assembly ? Presbyterian Principles still allowing of a higher Judicature than any of these.

Mr. *A.* requires what is not reasonable, when he demands of the Presbytery to produce an explicit Agreement, wherein they have bound themselves to submit to, and rest in the Determinations of said Presbytery. There is no need of producing any such Agreement. Our not being joined to any superior Judicature is a sufficient Proof that, until such Junction, the Members are obliged to rest in the Determinations of their Presbytery. We please ourselves indeed with the Thought, that we shall be able to join ourselves to some Synod on the Continent, ere long, or at least to settle a Correspondence with them ; so as that we may have Recourse to them, and receive Help from them in difficult Cases : But even in our present State, and before this is effected, we think we have a right to exercise Discipline, and put Sentences in Execution.

But though Mr. *A.* could prove that a Presbytery, living remote from and not joined to any Synod, are yet bound to grant Appeals, which we think he cannot, yet this will not be sufficient in his Case ; he must also prove, that he demanded an Appeal from the Sentences of our Presbytery, seasonably and in due Form, and was denied it. The General Assembly of *Scotland* orders, " That if an Appeal be " not ready to be given in, immediately after Sentence, the " Party shall protest for Liberty to appeal, and according
ing

“ingly within ten Days give in his written Appeal to the
 “Judicatory or Moderator thereof, *otherwise it falls.*” Can
 Mr. *A.* shew that he has done this? If he ~~cannot~~, as we are
 sure he cannot, then he has cut himself short of the Liberty of
 an Appeal, even upon the Supposition that our Presbytery
 were under the Jurisdiction of a superior Judicature,
 which we have proved they are not.

And thus we hope we have to the Satisfaction of the ju-
 dicious and impartial proven on Mr. *A.*s own Terms, by
 making those very Things appear which he required should
 be made plain. And should now proceed to give the
 Reader an Account of the present State of Matters be-
 tween the Presbytery and Him. But we shall take leave
 first to notice a few Things briefly.

Mr. *A.* charges the Committee with Falseness for saying
 that the Presbytery proceeded in the Name of the *Lord*
Jesus Christ to suspend him from the Exercise of his Office.
 In these Words, “I appeal to the Copy delivered to me if
 “there be one Word of Truth in this.†” We answer,
 however the Copy may have been defective in expressing
 the Thing, yet that the Sentence was pronounced in that
 sacred Name, those present can well remember, nor can
 we believe that Mr. *A.* has forgot it. How then could he
 impute Falseness to the Committee for asserting that which
 he knew to be true? With what Face could he introduce
 those grave Words, “Gentlemen, remember, that God’s
 “People are Children that will not lie.”

With Respect to what Mr. *A.* says concerning Mr. *Moor-*
head’s Suspension; the Manner of his and Mr. *Mac Gregore*’s
 leaving the old Presbytery; and Mr. *Parsons* his leaving
Lyme. We would ask Mr. *A.* does he look on the Conduct
 of his Brethren in the mentioned Instances, to be justifiable
 or not; if he answers justifiable, then we enquire why
 does he mention these Things with the Air, and in the
 Manner he does? Why does he endeavour to defame,
 where his Judgment acquits? If he says, not justifi-
 able; then we ask him, why, after he had an Op-
 portunity to be acquainted with, and was no stranger to
 these Matters, did he choose Messrs. *Moorhead* and *Mac Gre-*
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* Assembly 1648. Sess. 30.

† Page 49.

gore to be his Ordainers? Why did he choose to associate himself with them in a Presbytery, in Preference to all others of the same Persuasion in the Country? Why did he not oppose Mr. *Parsons* his Admission into the Presbytery? In fine, why did he mention these Things, since, whatever his Judgment concerning them is, he must own they have no Relation to the present Debate? Behold the Man who scorns Recrimination, and is above the little base Practices of Scurrility and Defamation!

With Regard to Mr. *A.*'s introducing Persons of common Sense with a deriding Smile at the Presbytery's Weakness, in these Words, "How does he make it appear that he brought no Charge against the Presbytery." * We say, that we own it is the Presbytery's Business to prove that he brought Matters of high Charge, and we leave the impartial to judge whether they have not sufficiently done it in their former Remarks. And altho' to require Mr. *A.* to prove a Negative would be unreasonable, yet there is nothing unreasonable or foolish in requiring him to make it appear that his Paper was what he term'd it, *viz.* a humble Representation; and not a Bundle of groundless calumniating Charges. If a Person brings into a Society of which he is a Member, and to which he is to be accountable for his Conduct, a *Quadrupede*, in Size, in Shape, in Colour and Qualities, exactly resembling a Monkey, and yet he is very sanguine in affirming it to be a Dove, would not the Society think they had a right to require of the Person that he should prove his Assertion, *i. e.* that the above Creature was a Dove, and consequently not a Monkey?

But to follow Mr. *A.* with particular Remarks would, we think, be a mispending of Time, and contrary to our Resolution above expressed. Let the unprejudiced, who have read his Pamphlet, judge whether what he says be true, *viz.* "That he has advanced such Proofs of the Things contained in his Representation as the Nature of them required §;" Has he offered a shadow of Proof to several Things there asserted? for Instance, that the Presbytery have in the Affair of one *P*—been guilty of a Proceedure which

* Rem. P. 49.

§ P. 48.

which tends directly to overthrow all Discipline, “ That
 “ their Conduct therein will be found contrary to the Ap-
 “ prehensions which even the Heathen had of that Mat-
 “ ter, and which is still worse, he is certain it is directly
 “ contrary to that Account which the sacred Scriptures
 “ give of that Matter.” * Whether the Proof of this, with
 several other Things he has asserted, be not a Debt he still
 owes the Publick ; And till it is paid whether he has not
 Reason to expect he shall be esteemed a false Accuser ?
 Whether in order to shew the Instance brought by the
 Committee, viz. of the House of Commons †, being in-
 pertinent as Mr. *A.* says it is, he has not two Things
 to prove ? *First*, that our Presbytery is under the Juris-
 diction of some superior Judicature ; and *Secondly*, that
 though a supream Court may chastize the Misconduct of
 her Members, yet a subordinate may not.—Whether if
 the Instance of a congregational Church, brought by the
 Committee in the Place last quoted, be yet less to the Pur-
 pose, as Mr. *A.* affirms, it does not thence follow, that a
 congregational Church may lawfully exercise an ecclesiastic
 Discipline to which a Presbytery must not pretend ?—
 Whether he has said any Thing sufficient to convince a
 careful Enquirer that he has not wronged the Truth in
 the two Instances pointed to in the Margin § ? Whether
 he is not living in the Omission of a plain moral Duty, till
 he make it appear that Mr. *Mac Gregore* is a Receiver of
 Bribes, or else acknowledge his Baseness ?—Whether be-
 cause (according to his pompous Quotation) “ Truth is
 bold and open, and Error mean and sneaking §§,” it thence
 follows that Mr. *Mac Gregore* might not write a private
 Letter to the People of *Pelham*, asking Advice ?—Whether
 these Words of the Committee concerning the Ministers of
 the Presbytery “ we trust they have obtained Mercy to be
 “ faithful **,” are the Language of Boasting, especially
 considering the Occasion on which they were used ? Whe-
 ther they gave Mr. *A.* any Ground for that solemn Petiti-
 on, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do ;*
 and

* Letter to a Friend, p. 6. † Narr. p. 19.

§ Narr. p. 30, 31. §§ P. 51. ** Narr. P. 35.

and for filling up a great part of a Page with such tragick Exclamations? Whether in Case that modern Author, whom he quotes *, gives a just Character of the general Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*; and this Character so exactly suits our Presbytery, that he imagines he sees them blush to hear their Conduct so exposed by a Stranger. Whether, (we say) if these Things be so, it was wise in him to propose leaving the Affair between him and the Presbytery, to the said Assembly? Would not this arbitrary, despotick, tyrannical Assembly, have been apt, upon such a Reference, to have vindicated a Presbytery of the same Completion and Conduct with themselves? And at the same Time to have crushed a brave Patriot, who was making heroic Efforts for the Constitution, and against the Presbytery's Usurpation? Whether by comparing the Presbytery to the *Scribes and Pharisees* :---To that Court that condemn'd the Apostles; representing them as practising on the hellish Policy of two infamous Jesuites; giving the Preference to *Domitian, Dioclesian and Nero*, in point of Lenity and Humanity, he has done any Honor to himself or Service to his Cause?-----But it is Time we pass on to the last Thing we proposed, *i. e.* to give our Reader a true Account of the present State of Matters, between the Presbytery and him.

Mr. *A.* having § declared himself quite weary of raking in the Dirt, and having emitted a terrible Threatning against the Presbytery, viz. that, if they proceed for the future in the same Manner they have done in Time past, it is highly probable they may have the Mortification of being treated by *him* with a contemptuous Silence --he then proceeds to assure the Presbytery "that nothing would be more agreeable to him than, upon a fair Trial, before impartial Judges, to find his Fears concerning the State of our Presbyterial Affairs groundless, and his gloomy Apprehensions "only imaginary," *i. e.* in short that nothing in the World would please him better than to find the Presbytery in the right and himself in the wrong. He therefore proposes "to let the whole Case, both of his Suspension and Dismission, be laid before impartial Judges, for them finally

" to

“ to determine thereon, according to the Word of God,
 “ and the Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland*,” ad-
 ding, “ that he shall only insist on such Advantages as
 “ are allowed to every Appellant, who conceives himself
 “ injur’d by the Sentence of an inferior Judicatory,” and
 proposing for Judges, either “ the associated Ministers of
 “ *Boston*, or “ the Synod of *New-York*, at their next
 “ Meeting.”

The Presbytery taking into Consideration the above
 Proposal, voted to send Mr. *A.* the following Letter, and
 appointed two of their Number to defend their Sentences
 before the Synod.

Rev'd Sir,

THE Presbytery now sitting at *Newbury*, having con-
 sidered the Proposal you make, in your late Remarks,
 &c. *viz.* of referring the whole Case both of your Suspension
 and Dismission to the Synod of *New-York* at their next
 Meeting, they chearfully voted to accept of said Proposal.

And also, that in order to your being prepared for said
 Reference, you shall have (upon your making a proper
 Demand) all those Advantages which a Party in a Reference
 so circumstanced has a Right to claim.

Your speedy Answer we expect, which you are to send
 to the Moderator or Clerk, within a Month after your
 Receipt of this. Subscribed at *Newbury* this 24th Day
 of *May*, 1758.

By JOHN MOORHEAD, *Mod'r.*

DAVID MACGREGORE, *Prsb. Cl.*

To this Letter the Presbytery received the following
 Answer.

Rev'd Gentlemen,

YOUR Vote of *May* the 24th is now before me, in An-
 swer to which I would inform you, I do not tho-
 roughly understand said Vote, so as to be able positively to
 say I agree to, or refuse to comply with it. When you
 please to express your Minds with greater Plainness 'tis pro-
 bable

bable I will be able to give you a direct Answer. At present it is not evident to me, nor do I think, on mature Reflection will it appear plain to yourselves, you have "cheerfully voted to accept of my Proposal," but of something very different from, or at least restricted, and far short of what I proposed: And which, if I mistake not, may be construed in such a Sense, as is inconsistent with a full, free, and impartial Inquiry into the Merits of the Cause, and which will involve us in endless Disputes foreign to the main purpose, when we come before the Synod. However, it is pleasing to me, you seem at last satisfied, the Matter must be heard and determined by some others; may I not hope, on further serious Reflection you will be likewise convinced it must come before them in the free Gospel Way.---That nothing consistent with Truth, a full, a free, and candid Inquiry into the Merits of the Cause, may be wanting upon my Part, I am still ready to comply with what I proposed, upon being satisfied you have fully agreed to said Proposal: And further let me inform you, if you be averse from an Appeal, when you come to explain your Minds on a Reference, and propose such an one as is harmonious with the Principles wherein I once did suppose we were agreed, and from which I would always be understood never to recede, 'tis highly probable it will not be disagreeable to,

Rev'd Gen'lemen,

Pelham,

Your humble Servant,

June 21st. 1758.

R. ABERCROMBIE.

To the Rev'd Messrs. JOHN MOORHEAD, or DAVID MAC GREGORE, to be communicated to the Presbytery.

WE have chosen to give these Things at large, that from his Proposal, the Presbytery's Vote thereupon, with his Answer, they, who are disposed to give themselves the Trouble to look into the Affair, may have an undisguised View of how it stands at present.

The Reader will please to observe, that in his Answer
to

to the Presbytery's Vote, Mr. *A.* says, that the Presbytery instead of voting to accept of his Proposal, have voted to accept of "something very different from, or at least restricted and far short of what he proposed." Upon Supposition that this is true, ought not he in his Answer, to have shewed wherein the said Difference, or Restriction lies? But has he done it? not a Word of this kind; herein he has left us to guess wherein he places the said Difference. Certainly his Proposal and the Presbytery's Vote agree herein, *viz.* That the whole Case both of his Suspension and Dismission was to be left to the Synod of *New-York* at their next Meeting, for them finally to determine the same. Perhaps (for we can but guess) Mr. *A.* may say, that though herein they agree, yet they differ in this, that he meant carrying the Case to the Synod by Way of Appeal: Whereas the Presbytery's Vote speaks of doing it by Way of Reference. But if this was his meaning in his Proposal, why did he not express it? As he took Care not to express his Mind on this Head, so we had several Reasons to induce us to believe, that he did not intend an Appeal. (1st.) We could not think he could be so weak as to imagine that a formal Appeal could be prosecuted before a Synod to whom the Presbytery was not joined: That either the Presbytery would admit of transferring, or the Synod of receiving the Case in this Form. (2dly.) He proposed leaving it to the Ministers of *Boston*; and surely he will not say, that he intended it should come before them by Way of a formal Appeal. (3dly.) Himself had formerly proposed laying the Case before the general Assembly of *Scotland* by Way of Reference. These are some of the Reasons why we could not think that he intended an Appeal. Perhaps he meant that the Case should be laid before the Synod, both in the Way of Reference and Appeal: We are the rather inclined to think that this was his Meaning, because he once gave in to the Presbytery a long Paper, the Title whereof is, the Representation, Declination, Reference and Appeal of *R. Abercrombie*. Or did he not designedly (in his Proposal) leave the Matter ambiguous, that in Case the Presbytery should understand him of a Reference, he might have room to say he meant

an Appeal ; if of an Appeal, that he might then say he intended a Reference ? If he should now at last speak plain and say he intended an Appeal, it may be proper to ask him, why does he prefer an Appeal to a Reference ? did not himself formerly propose a Reference ? Has he not as much Advantage to maintain his Cause in a Reference, as in an Appeal ? Is there not the same Room for a free, full and candid Enquiry into the Merits of the Cause in the one as in the other ? There is but one Thing more we can think of which he can mean when he says the Presbytery's Vote " is restricted and far short of what he proposed ", *i. e.* that said Vote does not oblige the *Synod* to judge the Cause " by the Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland*". To which we say, we doubt not but the *Synod* will pay a due Regard to these Rules or Constitutions, and we heartily desire they should : But we apprehend that to bind a worthy Presbyterian *Synod*, by such a limiting Clause, might be taken in ill Part and esteemed a just Cause of Affront. Does Mr. *A.* think that the *Synod* need to be thus bound ? Cannot he confide in them, that they will judge according to Scripture, Reason and Presbyterian Principles ? And will not that content him ?

From this particular and fair view of the Cause, we leave the candid Reader to judge, whether the Presbytery have shewn an arbitrary and cruel, or a pacifick and humane Spirit toward their offending Brother ? Whether their Vote is not a Compliance with Mr. *A.*'s Proposal ? Whether, in Case it were not, he ought not in his Answer to have shewn wherein it was different or restricted ? Whether his Answer, instead of being plain and open, is not evasive and shuffling, and favours of a design'd Ambiguity and Obscurity ?

We crave the Readers farther Patience, while in the Name of our Presbytery we say ; That altho' Mr. *A.* has laid many and grievous Complaints against us which he cannot prove ; has endeavoured to represent us as Disturbers of the Peace of other Churches ; as Polluters of holy Ordinances, by a promiscuous Admission of all, even those whom not only the Word of God expressly excludes, but whom

whom the Light of Nature teaches even the Heathen to reject ; as Time-Servers, Men of venal Dispositions ; as given to Bribery ; as influenced by the most base and fordid Motives ; has compar'd us, nay has given the Preference to Characters the most abandoned that History affords. In a Word, has spared no Pains to paint us in the most odious Colours. Yet we will not allow ourselves to say in return, *What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, false Tongue ?* On the contrary, we would exercise towards him, that Charity which *thinketh no evil, which hopeth all Things.*—Some of us, at least, would still hope that his Conduct towards his Brethren is the Effect of a Day of strong Temptation. With great Truth we can say, that we heartily pity his Circumstances, and would be unfeignedly glad to have an Opportunity of restoring him in the Spirit of Meekness, in any Gospel Way. In the mean Time, we would desire often to recommend him to that great Being, who is able *even to subdue all Things to himself*, that he may see his Duty and be disposed to comply with it.

With respect to ourselves, permit us to say (not by Way of Self-Adulation, but in just Defence of our publick Characters, upon which in a great Measure our Usefulness depends) that we can with a humble Confidence look to him whose Eye is upon the Truth and say, that we deny the above odious Imputations. We would humbly acknowledge, that we are weak both in a natural and moral Sense ; and have need, great need of Recourse daily to the Fountain of Grace for Wisdom and Forgiveness.

We willingly own also, that we are weak in many Parts of our Conduct as a Presbytery, so far are we from making any Pretences to Infallibility. Our small Number, distant in local Situation, being able to meet but seldom, occasions several Inconveniencies and Difficulties : But designed Wickedness we must deny. If we are not greatly deceived, imperfect as our Conduct is, our Aims are sincere. Let us not be deem'd boasting, if we adopt the Language of him who said, *We trust we have a good Conscience in all Things, willing to live honestly* *.

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* Heb. xiii. 18.

The Reason why we keep up a Church Government and Administrations, in some Things different from our fellow Christians in the Country where we live, is not from any fond Desire of Singularity, but because we are conscienciously persuaded that these are most conform to the Scripture Platform, and have the most effectual Tendency to promote Purity of Faith and Practice. But though, in some circumstantial and lesser Things, we find ourselves Conscience bound to differ from others, yet we desire to maintain this Difference with all the meekness of Wisdom, all that Moderation and Charity, which our holy Religion does so plainly inculcate. We trust we shall never be so far left, as to use our Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness or an Occasion to the Flesh; or to have our Zeal for Religion degenerate into Zeal for a Sect. We can say for ourselves and our Brethren (as far as we know them) that we abhor the Thoughts of building Presbytery upon the Ruins of Christianity. Although we dare not practically drop the Importance of the Fundamentals of Religion, by giving the right Hand of Fellowship to *Pelagians, Socinians, Arians* and even *Deists*, because this we apprehend would be saying a *Confederacy* with the Enemies of God, and instead of reclaiming Errorists, seems to have a greater moral Tendency to harden them; yet we are willing, nay desirous, to maintain occasional Communion both Ministerial and Christian with our Brethren who agree with us in the main Things, notwithstanding some circumstantial Difference. We are sensible, that the Kingdom of Heaven is not *Meats and Drinks, but Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*

And if any, who seem to love Presbyterianism, on the other side the Atlantick, and who address the Members of the Church of *Scotland* as their most united Brethren, should, through the Influence of Mr. *A.*, or by any other Means, instead of an affectionate and friendly Disposition, shew a considerable degree of Shyness and Unfriendliness; yet, we hope, that even in this Case we shall never allow ourselves to resent such a Conduct, in a Manner inconsistent with the christian Temper, or unbecoming the Disciples of the Lamb of God; but shall always be willing to lend them

them a friendly Hand (if it is required) in any Thing that tends to the advancement of our common Christianity. Whereunto we have already attained, walking after the same Rule, and speaking the same Thing.

F I N I S.

The Authors Distance from the Prefs has occasioned the following Errata.

PAGE 4, l. 8. r. nor, l. 23, r. on one not within. P. 5, l. 10, r. Ordination. P. 6, l. 12 from bot. for in, r. is. P. 7, l. 4, r. *Dundasi's*. l. 13 from bot. r. bound. P. 14, l. 9, blot out weak.

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tends to the advancement of our common Christianity.
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F I N I S

E R R A T A

PAGE 4. l. 23, r. upon one not within. P. 6. l. 12
from Bottom, for in, r. is. P. 7. l. 4; r. Dunlop's.