

another way, viz. to attack the French forts about St. John's River, which was obtained without any great resistance, and those places were thereby reduced into the power of the English, and enjoyed by them, till his Majesty now reigning was happily restored to the exercise of his regal power in England. It is said to be carried on without any other Commission, than a verbal one, from some of Oliver Cromwell's commanders at sea, which possibly was one reason why it was so easily returned into the hands of them from whom it was taken not long before; nor had it any better success than designs of that nature were usually attended with, that were built upon such a like foundation.

When they attacked those French places, the soldiers occasionally met with a paper of maxims, with which the friars were to be governed in their administration, which may sufficiently satisfy the world with what spirit and principles those of the Catholic religion are acted.

#### CHAP. LXI.<sup>1</sup>

*Ecclesiastical affairs in New England, from 1651 to 1656.*

THE Platform of Discipline, drawn up in 1647 and 1648, was at this time under debate, and at the last it passed the test of the whole General Court, both magistrates and deputies, and the practice of it was commended to all the churches of the jurisdiction.

In the year 1651 the General Court taking it for granted that the civil power is *custos utriusque tabulæ*, interposed their authority in a matter of an ecclesiastical concernment, sc. the choice of a minister<sup>2</sup> by the church of Malden, and passed an handsome fine or mulct upon all of the church that were actors therein, for calling the said minister to his pastoral office, without the consent and approbation of neighboring churches, and allowance of the magistrates, (if not against the same,) contrary to the approved practice of the country, provided in that case. But upon after thoughts, which usually are more mature than the sudden and first conceptions of men's minds, the people of Malden themselves came to see,

<sup>1</sup> LX in the MS.—H.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Marmaduke Mathews. See Johnson, pp. 211-12; Sav. Win. i. 273, ii. 175.—H.

and also were willing to acknowledge, their miscarriage, and thereby gave occasion for others to acknowledge the power of the civil authority in matters of religion, as well as in the affairs of righteousness and honesty, according to the judgment of all sober divines.

And indeed let the experience of all Reformed Churches be consulted withal, and it will appear that disorder and confusion of the church will not be avoided by all the determinations, advice, and counsel of Synods, or other messengers of churches, unless they be a little actuated by the civil authority. All men are naturally so wedded to their own apprehensions, that unless there be a coercive power to restrain, the order and rule of the Gospel will not be attended.

For the preventing of the like inconveniences in the country it was soon after made into an order by the General Court, that no minister should be called unto office in any of the churches, within their jurisdiction, without the approbation of some of the magistrates, as well as of the neighboring churches; on which ground, in the year 1653, the Court would not allow the north church of Boston to call Mr. Powell,<sup>1</sup> a well gifted, though illiterate person, to the stated office of a public preacher or minister, wherefore the people of the town contented themselves with his being called to the place of ruling elder, that so no occasion might be given thereby for illiterate persons, that were not able to instruct all, and convince gainsayers, to intrude themselves into the sacred function of the ministry of the Gospel.

And whereas the Plantations of New England had never as yet been acquainted with the way of paying tithes, (which none of the Reformed Churches ever yet condemned as unlawful, although it was not looked upon as the most convenient for the towns and Plantations of New England,) for the support of the ministry in the several towns, it was now left to the power of every County Court throughout the whole jurisdiction, to make sufficient provision for the maintenance of the ministry in the respective towns of the Colony, and to rectify any defect, upon complaint of any such, for want of means whereby comfortably to subsist.

<sup>1</sup> Of Michael Powell see page 511; Sav. Win. ii. 323.—E.