

takers of those promises of liberty and moderation to tender consciences, expressed in our gracious declarations, which, though some persons in this our Kingdom, of desperate, disloyal, and unchristian principles, have lately abused, to the public disturbance and their own destruction, yet we are confident our good subjects in New England will make a right use of it, to the glory of God, their own spiritual comfort and edification; and so we bid you farewell.

Given at our Court at Whitehall, the 15th [day<sup>1</sup>] of February, 1660, in the thirteenth year of our reign.

WILL: MORRICE.

#### CHAP. LXIV.<sup>a</sup>

*Ecclesiastical affairs in New England, from the year 1656 to the year 1661.*

THE affairs of the church in New England continued in the same state as before, and were hitherto ordered according to the Platform of Discipline, set forth in the year 1648; but in the beginning of this lustre some difficulties began to arise about the enlarging the subject of Baptism, which, unto this time, had been administered unto those children only, whose immediate parents were admitted into full communion in the churches where they live. But now the country came to be increased, and sundry families were found that had many children born in them, whose immediate parents had never attempted to join to any of the churches, to which they belonged, and yet were very much unsatisfied that they could not obtain Baptism for their children, although themselves made no way to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. The case was generally apprehended to be difficultly circumstanced, as things had hitherto been carried on amongst those churches, and did occasion many debates between the ministers of the country, many of which were willing to have Baptism enlarged to those in that capacity, but knew not well how to bring the matter about with the peace of their churches, where many of their people were very scrupulous about any innovation. Questions of this nature were first started in the Colony of Con-

<sup>1</sup> Supplied from Hutchinson's Coll. Papers, p. 333.—H.

<sup>a</sup> LXIII in the MS.—H.

necticut, the magistrates of which jurisdiction did, about the year 1656, send down several of them about this subject to the magistrates of the Massachusetts, and they mutually called together sundry of the ablest ministers of each Colony, and recommended to their search and consideration some inquiries (about twenty, or one and twenty in all,) concerning that business, stated and framed by themselves; and they met at Boston in New England, June 4th, 1657. The result of their disputation and debate about those matters, being agreed upon by all, or the greatest part of them, was presented to the magistrates of each jurisdiction, that so, according to the first intendments thereof, it might be improved for the service of the churches, that belonged to their respective jurisdictions. ||Those|| pious and careful nursing fathers of the churches, foreseeing many differences like to arise to the disquieting of them, took this prudent course for the clearing up the truth in controversy, unto universal satisfaction, lest otherwise differences in judgment should beget or occasion uncomfortable animosities, if not paroxysms of contention, that might more easily in this way be prevented than healed, if once they should break out, which the event made appear too evident afterwards. Some papers, that contained the product of those consultations and debates, being sent into England, were by him to whom they were committed afterwards made public, though not till the year 1659, finding that none had taken care for the printing of them in New England, as was by him and others at first expected. The sum and substance of that disputation, which was entitled

A Disputation concerning Church Members and their children, in answer to twenty-one questions,

is as followeth :

Question 1. Whether any children of confederate parents be under their parents' covenant, and members with them ?

But why the question was so limitedly expressed, 'whether any,' and not 'whether all children of confederate parents,' will not be hard to conceive, when the next questions are made; however, the answer given was in the same particular term.

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Answer. Some children of confederate parents are, by means of their parents' covenanting, in covenant also, and so members of the church by divine institution. This answer was confirmed by sundry arguments, viz. 1. Because they are in that covenant, for substance, which was made with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7, compared with Deut. xxix. 12, 13, etc. 2. Because such children are by Christ affirmed to have a place and portion in the Kingdom of Heaven, &c. Matth. xix. 14. Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16. 3. Else no children could be baptized, Baptism being a church ordinance, and a seal of the covenant of grace, &c., with many others.

Qu. 2. Whether all children, of whatever year or conditions, were so, as 1. Absent children never brought to the church. 2. Born before their parents' covenanting. 3. Incurable, or seven, ten, or twelve years old. 4. Such as desire not to be admitted with their parents of such an age?

Ans. Only such children, as are in their minority, covenant with their parents, for adult children are to covenant in their own persons. The whole household of Lydia, the jailer and others, were baptized, and a child at the ages mentioned is *infans in foro ecclesie*.

Qu. 3. Till what age shall they enter into covenant with their parents, whether sixteen, twenty-one, &c.?

Ans. As long as in respect of age or capacity they cannot, according to ordinary account, be supposed able to act for themselves, so long they shall enter in by means of their parents' covenant; because, whilst they are children, and in their minority, they are not otherwise capable of covenanting. Ishmael was admitted to the seal by his father's covenant, at thirteen years of age. Gen. xvii. 25.

Qu. 4. What discipline a child is subject to, from seven to sixteen years old?

Reply 1. Church discipline is taken either more largely, for the act of a church member, dispensed to a church member as such by way of rebuke, &c., Luke xvii. 3, 4, Matth. xviii. 15, or more strictly for the act of the whole church, dispensed to a member thereof, as in case of pub-

lic rebuke, &c. Matth. xviii. 17. 2 Cor. ii. 3. 1 Tim. i. 20. In the first sense, children in their minority are subject to church discipline immediately, but not in the second.

2. It is the duty of the elders and church to call upon parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Ephe. vi. 4.

3. Besides their subjection to ecclesiastical discipline, they are also subject to civil discipline, whether domestical, scholastical, or magistratical.

Qu. 5. Whether a father may twice covenant for his children in minority in several churches?

Rep. 1. When a parent is called to remove from one church to another, he is also called to enter into covenant in that church to which he removes.

2. When the parent, thus removing, entereth into covenant, his children then in minority covenant in him; the child, and the power of government over him, must go together.

Qu. 6. Whether the end of a deputy covenant be not to supply personal incapacity, or whether children, ripe for personal covenanting in respect of age, should covenant by a deputy, as others that are unable thereunto?

Ans. 1. Children in minority, whose immediate parents are in church covenant, do covenant in their parents, as in answer to quest. 1.

2. Children adult ought to covenant in their own persons, as may be gathered from Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 19, and xxix. 10, and Joshua xxiv. 18, 27, Nehem. ix. ult., and x. 28.

Qu. 7. Whether as large qualifications be not required of a member's child to the participation of the Lord's Supper and other privileges, as were requirable of his parents at their first entrance?

Rep. The holding forth of faith and repentance with an ability to examine themselves by way of confession to the judgment of charity, were all requirable in the parent for admission into the church to full communion, and the same is requisite to the regular admission of the pa-

rents' child, being grown adult, unto his full communion with the church. The sum of the answer amounts to thus much; 1. That they are to have faith and repentance; 2. That this faith and repentance must appear to others.

Qu. 8. Whether by covenant seed is meant the seed of immediate parents only, or of remote also?

Ans. The Gospel by covenant seed intends only the seed of immediate parents in church covenant, as appears from 1 Cor. vii. 14. It can no where else expediently be bounded. *Depinge ubi scitam.*

Qu. 9. Whether adopted children and ||bondservants|| be covenant seed?

Ans. Adopted children and infant servants, regularly and absolutely subjected to the government and dispose of such heads of families as are in church covenant, though they cannot be said to be their natural seed, yet in regard the Scriptures (according to the judgment of many godly learned,) extend to them the same covenant privileges with their natural seed, we judge not any churches who are like minded with them for their practice herein. All which notwithstanding, yet we desire at present to leave this question without all prejudice on our parts to after free disquisition.

Qu. 10. Whether the child, admitted by his father's covenant, be also a deputy for his seed, without or before personal covenanting; or without or before like personal qualifications in kind, as his father was to enjoy when he became a deputy?

Rep. It is the duty of infants who confederate in their parents, (as in answer to quest. 1,) when grown up to years of discretion, though not yet fit for the Lord's Supper, to own the covenant they made with their parents, by entering thereinto in their own persons; and it is the duty of the church to call upon them for the performance thereof; and if, being called upon, they shall refuse the performance of this great duty, or otherwise continue scandalous, they are liable to be censured for the same by the church. And in case they understand the grounds of religion, are not scandalous, and solemnly

|| bound servants ||

own the covenant in their own persons, wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire Baptism for them, we (with due reverence to any godly learned, that may dissent,) see not sufficient cause to deny Baptism unto their children.

This proposition was consented unto by a Synod called to meet at Boston, not long after, viz. §Anno§ 1662. They add, that the same may be said concerning the children of such persons who being dead, or necessarily absent, either did or do give the church cause, in judgment of charity, to look at them as thus qualified, or, had they been called thereunto, would have thus acted.

Qu. 11. Whether children, begotten by an excommunicate person, he so remaining, are to be baptized ?

Ans. We cannot, for the present, answer the arguments for the negative, for the promise made to the seed belongs only to the seed of immediate parents in covenant now under the Gospel ; and such as are excommunicate are to be looked upon as heathen and publicans.

Qu. 12. Whether a child born of a person justly censurable, yet not actually excommunicate, be to be baptized ?

Ans. We answer affirmatively, for divine institution, which is the foundation of the covenant membership of the child, imputes only the covenant, and not any other act of the parents, to the child.

Qu. 13. Whether a member's child's unfitness for seals disableth not his seed for membership or baptism ?

Ans. This question is answered in the 10th, agreeing in scope therewith.

Qu. 14. Whether a member's child be censurable for any thing but scandalous actions, and not also for ignorance and inexperience ?

Ans. A member's child (like as it is with all other members,) is censurable only for scandalous sins, consequently for ignorance and inexperience, when scandalous. Matth. xviii. 15, 18. 1 Cor. v. 11.

Qu. 15. Whether a member's child must only ex-

amine himself, and may not be examined by others of his fitness for seals?

Ans. It is a duty of a member's child to examine himself, and yet he is also subject to the examination of others, because the elders are to give an account, Heb. xiii. ||17,||; and therefore must take an account; and it appertaineth to them to see that the holy things be not defiled by the access of any unclean or unworthy person.

Qu. 16. Whether any officers must examine in private, or else in public before the church?

Ans. Concerning their examination in private before the elders, the former reasons conclude affirmatively. It is spiritual wisdom, by preparing the stones before hand, to prevent after noise in the building, 1 Kings, vii. 6.

Qu. 17. Whether the same grown member's child must not be examined of his charitable experience before Baptism, as well as before the Lord's Supper?

Ans. We think the elders do well to take an account of children concerning the principles of religion, according to their capacity, before they be baptized. But if children be yet in minority, their right unto Baptism being founded upon the covenant made in their parents, this examination is to be looked [at] as conducing to the better application, but not to the being, of their Baptism.

Qu. 18. Whether baptized children, sent away for settlement, and not intending to return, are continually to be accounted members?

Ans. Baptized children, though locally removed from the church unto which they do belong, are to be accounted members, until dismissal, death, or censure, dissolve the relation.

Qu. 19. Whether historical faith and a blameless life fit a member's child for all ordinances and privileges, and he must be examined only about them?

Ans. Not only historical faith and a blameless life, but also such an holding forth of faith and repentance as, unto judgment of charity, sheweth an ability to examine themselves and discern the Lord's Body, is requisite to fit a member's child for all ordinances and privileges,

and his blameless life notwithstanding, a member's child is to be examined concerning the other qualifications.

Qu. 20. Whether if a church member barely say, it repents me, though seventy times seven times following, he relapses into the same gross evils, as lying, slander, oppression, &c., he be to be forgiven, and not censured?

Ans. Notwithstanding a brother offends seventy times seven times, i. e. many times, a definite number being put for an indefinite, yet whilst God enables him to repent, it is our duty to forgive. But to say in words, I repent, and to gainsay it in deeds, is, according to Scripture, not to repent; yet an ingenuous and solemn profession of repentance, nothing appearing to the contrary, is to be accepted as true repentance in the judgment of charity. 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

Qu. 21. Whether a member under offence, and not censured, or not with the highest censure, can authoritatively be denied the Lord's Supper, or other church privileges?

Ans. None but the church can authoritatively deny to the member his access unto the Lord's Supper, because the power thereof is only delegated to that subject. Mat. xviii. 17. Neither can the church deny unto a member his access to the Lord's Supper, until she hath regularly judged him to be an offender; and the first act whereby he is judicially declared so to be, is admonition, whereby he is made judicially unclean, Levit. xxii. 3, 4, 5, 6, and is thereby authoritatively denied to come unto the Lord's Supper. All which notwithstanding, there are cases wherein a brother, apparently discerned to be in a condition rendering him an unworthy communicant, should he proceed to the Lord's Supper, may and ought regularly to be advised to forbear, and it is his duty to hearken thereunto; yet none should forbear to come worthily, which is their duty, because, to their private apprehension, another is supposed (at least) to come unworthily, which is his sin.

The answer to these questions was drawn up at Boston, June 19, 1657, and presented according as is mentioned before, and was generally accepted by all those



that rested satisfied in the determination of the following Synod about the question concerning the subject of Baptism, although the practice thereof was but gradually introduced into the churches of New England. And it is well known that some of the ablest ministers of the country, that were most forward and ready to promote these resolves, never durst adventure upon the practice thereof, for fear of making a breach in their respective churches. And some that were at that time otherwise persuaded, have, since then, altered their minds upon mature consideration, and have also strongly engaged on the other hand, and written judiciously in the defence thereof, and cleared it up to all, that it is no other than<sup>1</sup> what was consonant not only to Scripture, reason and antiquity, but to the apprehension and judgment of the first fathers of the churches of New England, as may be seen in Mr. Increase Mather's learned treatise on that subject, published not long since.

And as this disputation had its first rise in the Colony of Connecticut, so was there much difference and contention raised at Hartford, where was the principal church of the jurisdiction, between Mr. Samuel Stone, their teacher, and the rest of the church, occasioned at the first on some such account; insomuch that sundry members of that church, having rent themselves off from that church, removed themselves to another place<sup>2</sup> higher up that river, where they seated themselves and gathered into a distinct church in way of schism, as the rest of the church accounted. So that it came at the last to an open breach, which could not be healed or made up amongst themselves, which put them upon a necessity of calling a convention of the messengers of sundry churches in the Massachusetts, who met together at Boston,<sup>3</sup> in the year 1659; and upon a full hearing of all the matters in controversy therein, they made a reconciliation between them, and those that irregularly departed away in that manner, being convinced of their mistake, freely acknowledged it, which made the closure of that breach the more cordial and real; many paroxysms of contention

<sup>1</sup> That in the MS.—H.   <sup>2</sup> Hadley. See page 316; Holmes, i. 316.—H.

<sup>3</sup> At Hartford, June 3d, and Aug. 19th, says Trumbull, i. 307.—H.

in those churches having had the like comfortable issue, by the blessed influences of the Prince of Peace upon the use of the same means.

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

*The Plantations of New England troubled with the Quakers—Laws made against them by the General Court of the Massachusetts within the space of this lustre, from 1655 to 1660.*

ABOUT this time the people called Quakers had sent their emissaries to preach the Gospel (doubtless not the everlasting Gospel which the Apostle was sent to preach,) amongst the Colonies of New England. Those of the Massachusetts considering what the Apostle Paul speaking,\* of holding him accursed that preacheth any other Gospel, made very sharp laws against them, if it might have been to have prevented their troubling of the place with their strange and perverse doctrines. But the event succeeded not according to expectation, for divers of that sort repaired thither, as if they intended to have braved authority, which occasioned the apprehending of several of them, who were prosecuted according to the laws lately enacted; which, after such and such steps and degrees mentioned therein, doth proscribe them, upon pain of death. June the 1st, in the year 1660, Mary Dyer, rebelliously returning after that sentence passed upon her, was sentenced to suffer death at the place of execution, yet had liberty to pass for England at the next session of the Court; the which she (as was hoped and desired,) attended not, as Joseph Nicholson and Jane his wife did, that by returning after the like sentence passed upon them had brought themselves into the same premunire, which some that wished them well persuaded unto, or to remove elsewhere; by which means the execution of that fatal sentence was prevented on them. But Mary Dyer wilfully returning, the authority of the place knew not how to deliver her from the severity of the law, which was the portion of two others of that sort of people, much about that time, viz. William Robinson and Marmaduke Steven-

\* Speaketh. ED.

<sup>1</sup> LXIV in the MS.—R.