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A SERMON Preach'd at The Election of the Governour, AT BOSTON IN New-England May 19th 1669.

John Davenport
First Church, Boston

Paul Royster , editor
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, proyster@unl.edu

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A

SERMON

Preach'd at
The Election of the GOVERNOUR,
AT

BOSTON

IN

New-England

May 19th 1669.

By JOHN DAVENPORT.

Printed in the Year, 1670.

2 Sam. 23. 3.
The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

THese words may be considered two wayes ; 1. As holding forth a Prophecy of the Kingdom of the Mesiah, who is the Mediator, Surety, and Head of the Covenant of Grace, for his People. In which Covenant *David* comforted himself whatever decayes should befall him, or his house in after-times. 2. As holding forth a Rule for the choice and ordering of Rulers over men. According to this consideration of the words, I purpose to handle them at this time, as best suiting with the present occasion. And so the words hold forth a Rule of Wisdom, whereunto the Lord teacheth his People to apply their hearts, in setling Civil Government according to God's Ordinance, so as they may expect the presence and blessing of God, through Jesus Christ with them, and upon the Commonwealth.

I shall sum up all in one Doctrinal Conclusion, which shall be this ;

That it is the Ordinance of God, in reference to Civil Government in Commonwealths, that some men orderly chosen should rule over other men : and in reference to the qualification of Rulers, that they be just, ruling in the fear of God.

Which is twofold. 1. Concerning the thing ; *that some men should rule over others.* 2. Concerning the qualification of the persons that are to rule ; *that they be just, ruling in the fear of God.* In this way of his Ordinance you see, in my Text, both these are joyned together, and noted as the Ordinance of God, in the Trinity of Persons, God the Father said it, who is called *the God of Israel,* by vertue of his gracious Covenant with them : and God the Son spake it, who is stiled, *the Rock of Israel,* for that title is ascribed to Christ the Mediator, and second Person : *For they drank of the Spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.* 1 *Cor.* 10. 4

And they both spake it to *David* by the third Person, the Holy Spirit, who spake by *David*, ver. 2. But I shall handle them severally.

1. The first, that in reference to Civil Order in the Commonweal, God hath ordained, That some men, orderly chosen, should rule over other men.

It is not my purpose to discourse of the several Forms of Government, *Monarchical, Aristocratical,* and *Democratical,* nor to trouble you with the divers readings of the words, according to the Original, being content to handle them as they are translated, and read in all your Bibles. From whence the Doctrine is collected. And the first thing to be proved, is,

That Power of Civil Rule, by men orderly chosen, is Gods Ordinance.

For,

1. It is from the Light and Law of Nature, and the Law of Nature is God's Law.

2. The orderly ruling of men over men, in general, is from God, in its root, though voluntary in the manner of coalescing : It being supposed that men be combined in Family-Society, it is necessary that they be joyned in a Civil-Society ; that union being made, the power of Civil-Government, and of making Laws, followeth naturally, though the manner of union, in a Political Body, is voluntary. That we defend our selves from violence and wrong, is a consequent of pure Nature : but that we do it by devolving our Power into the hands of Civil Rulers, this seems to be rather positively moral, than natural.

3. Because this special Form of Civil Government of Commonweales, by men orderly chosen, the Scripture ascribes unto God ; and also Civil Government, administred by Judges and Magistrates, as Christ spake concerning *Pilate*, Joh. 19. 11. *Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above* : and they are said to *judge not for man, but for the Lord,* 2 Chron. 19. 6. hence they are called *Gods,* Psal. 82. 6,7. as appointed by him, according to Christ's exposition of those words, *Joh.* 10. 35. *If he calleth them Gods, unto whom the Word of God was given.* See what the Wisdom of God, which is Jesus Christ, saith in *Prov.* 8. 15,16. *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree justice.*

Object. In 1 *Pet.* 2. 13,14. Civil Government by Civil Rulers is called a *humane Ordinance,* ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει.

Answ. Not to shew that it is a meer humane invention, and no Ordinance of God : for that is contradictory to *Rom.* 13. 1 *The Powers that be, are ordained of God.* ver. 2. and *he* that *resisteth, resisteth the Ordinance of*

God. But it is so called, 1. Because men are the subject recipient of this Power. So the Syriack expresseth it, *Leculbum benai aushe,* Obey all sons of men that are in Authority. 2. Because the Choice hereunto is from God by men, *Deut.* 1. 13. *Bring you men of Wisdom, and of Understanding, and known among your Tribes, and I will make them Rulers over you.* 3. Because humane Concernments are the proper objects of it. *If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them up which are least esteemed in the Churches.* 4. Because the good of humane Societies is the end of it. Therefore *Durandus*, in his Book, *De Origine Juris,* saith well, Civil Power, according to God's Institution is of God, and according to its acquisition and use, it is of man. And whereas *Peter* extends this subjection to two sorts of objects ; to the King as Supream, and to other Governors as sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well ; He therefore establisheth the Ruling Power over men in all sorts of Magistrates, who may be said to be sent by the King, either immediate (as some are sent by express designation of the Person to such an office) or mediately, by his Royal Charter given to Corporations, to choose from among themselves, such as they account fit for such a trust. This is our case, who have by Patent from the King, liberty and power to chuse a Governour, and Deputy-Governour, and a limitted Number of Assistants, invested with Magistratical Authority over the People. My Text saith, He that Ruleth over men, whether as Supream or Subordinate, as being sent by him upon the Peoples choice, must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord : Therefore we must distinguish between Family-Rulers, and Commonwealth-Rulers : Family-Rulers, *viz.* Husbands and Parents, are the Ordinance of God, without designation of the Persons thereunto, by Commission from the King, or Election of the People : but it is not so with Rulers of the Commonwealth : For the designation of these, or those, to be Civil Rulers, leaving out others, is from God, by the Peoples free Choice, at least by the Suffrages of the major part of them, wherein the rest must acquiesce : This Power of Rulers of the Common-wealth is derived from the Peoples free Choice (therefore it is said in the Doctrine, being orderly chosen) for the Power of Government, is originally in the People, and that Three Wayes :

1 *Cor.* 6. 4

1. Radically and vertually, as in the first Subject. For these Reasons. 1. Because, if living Creatures have radically in them a power of self-preservation, to defend themselves from violence and wrongs ; men united in Societies, being reasonable Creatures, must have that power in a more reasonable and honourable way, to put this power into the hands of Civil Rulers ;

nor doth a Community, in chusing Civil Rulers, surrender so much their right and liberty to their Rulers, as their Power, both Active to do, and Passive to suffer unjust violence, so as the People shall not have Moral Power to do, or avenge injuries, *proprio marte,* without punishment. 2. Because, if men United in a Civil Society, may give Magistratical Power to such and such, leaving out others ; then this Power was in this united Society ; but it was not in them *formally* (for then all should be Rulers) therefore this Power was in them only *virtually* ; for *Nemo dat quod non habet,* None can give that which they have not either formally, or virtually in themselves.

2. Communicatively, By way of free Donation ; the People giving to this or that man, and not to others, the Ruling Power over them. For, 1. In regular actings of the creature, God is the first Agent ; there are not two several and distinct actings, one of God, another of the People : but in one and the same action, God, by the Peoples suffrages, makes such an one Governour, or Magistrate, and not another. 2. God regulateth his People exercising their Power, in chusing such and such, and not others, to Rule over them ; therefore they have Power from God's Ordinance to do it : for none can regulate a *Non Ens,* nor will God by his Word regulate unwarrantable actions, as he doth this. *Exod* 18. 21. *Moreover, provide thou among all the People men of courage, fearing God, men dealing truly, hating covetousness ; and appoint such over them, to be Rulers over thousands, Rulers over hundreds &c.* Deut. 1. 16,17. *And I charged your Judges, that same time, saying, Hear the Controversies between your Brethren, and judge righteously between every Man and his Brother, and the Stranger that is with him ; ye shall have no respect of persons in judgment, but shall hear the small as well as the great ; ye shall not fear the face of man, for the judgement is Gods, &c.*

3. Limitively ; For the People so give Magistratical Power unto some, as that still they retain in themselves these Three Acts, 1. That they may measure out so much Civil Power, as God in his Word alloweth to them, and no more, nor less. 2. That they may set bounds and banks to the exercise of that Power, so as it may not be exuberant, above the Laws, and due Rights and Liberties of the People. 3. That they give it out conditionally, upon this or that condition ; so as, if the condition be violated, they may resume their power of chusing another.

Thus you see the first part of God's Ordinance, concerning Civil Rule and Government in Commonwealths, by some orderly chosen thereunto. The second part of God's Ordinance in this matter, followeth, which is concerning the qualifications of such Rulers over men.

2. That, as to the qualifications of Rulers over other men, it is God's Ordinance, that they *be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.*

1. They *must be just.* They are to be termed just, in the sense of this Text, whose wills are sanctified and inclined by the Spirit of God, to perform to men whatsoever is due to them according to the Rules of the Word. 1. The principal and efficient hereof, is the sanctifying Spirit : *Eph. 5. 9* therefore it is said, the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness, and truth. 2. The proper subject recipient of this gift of Grace, is the sanctified will, into which it puts a bent and inclination unto righteousness. For the faculties of the Soul are not by nature bent to that which is good, but contrary ; *Gen.* 4. 5. *But unto* Cain *and his Offering he had no regard, wherefore* Cain *was exceeding wroth, and his countenance fell down.* There may be light in the understanding, shewing what is good, but that which inclineth to good must be in the will, *Rom.* 7. 18, 22. *For to will is present with me, but I find no means to perform that which is good : for I delight in the Law of God concerning the inner-man.* He is truly just, who acteth justly out of love to Righteousness ; unjust men may do just actions, upon other motives, as *Absolom* pretended, 2 *Sam.* 15. 4. *O that I were made Judge in the Land, that every man which hath any matter of Controversie might come to me, that I might do him right.* And the unjust Judge acted in *Luke* 18. 4,5. *Though I neither fear God, nor love man, yet because this Widow troubleth me, I will do her right.* 3. The effect of it is the performance of whatsoever is due to men. Hence Children doing their duties to their Parents, is said to be just, *Eph.* 6. 1. *Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right.* And of Servants to their Masters is said to be just and equal, *Col.* 4. 1. And all things due to men are performed by living righteously, *Tit.* 2. 12. Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. 4. The Rule is, not mans corrupt Reasons and Affections, but the Scripture. *Mich.* 6. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do Justice, and Judgment, and to walk humbly with thy God.* 2 Tim. 3. 16. *All Scripture is given by inspiration from God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.*

Thus Rulers over men must be just, 1. In their personal Conversation, else that may be applyed to them in *Rom.* 2. 1,3. *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that condemnest, for in that thou condemnest another thou condemnest thy self, for thou that condemnest dost the same things ; and thinkest thou this, O man, that condemnest them which do*

such things, and dost the same things, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 2. In their administration of Justice and Judgment towards all men impartially, and promised, *Psal.* 72. 2 *Then shall he judge thy People in righteousness, and thy Poor with equity.* This God required, *Exod.* 18. 21. *Moreover, provide thou among all the People, men of courage, fearing God, men dealing truly, hating covetousness &c.* And *Job* practised, Job 29. 14. and *Samuel* pleaded, when the People would alter the frame of Civil Government, 1 Sam. 12. 3. *Behold, here I am, bear record of me, before the Lord and before his Anointed; whose Ox have I taken? or whose Ass have I taken? or of whose hand have I received any bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith, &c.* to the 6th *vers.* Wherein he shewed, 1. His Integrity, in that he adjured them before the Lord. 2. His Modesty, 1, In that he speaks only negatively, that he hath done them no wrong, though he could have spoken positively of much good they had received by his Government. 2, In that he mentioned the lesser things, Oxen, and Asses, implying, that much less had he wronged them in greater things.

Deut. 1. 16,17.

2. *They must Rule in the fear of God*; Which contains in it all matters of Religion contained in the first Table of the Law, whereof the filial, reverential, obediential fear of God is the summe and foundation and head-points; *Eccles.* 12. 13. *Let us hear the end of all: Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.* Prov. 1. 7. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:* The fear of God is a sanctifying gift of Grace, wrought by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the Elect, proceeding from a right knowledge of God, whence they exalt him above all, and are inclined to the obedience of his revealed will in all things. 1. The fountain hereof is sanctifying Grace; therefore I call it a gift of Grace; *Let us have grace, whereby we may so serve God, &c.* 2. The principal efficient hereof is the Holy Ghost, *Isa.* 11. 2. *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.* 3. The subject recipient of it is the heart of the Elect, *Jer.* 32. 40. *And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will never turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* 4. The rise of it is from a right knowledge of God, *Jer.* 22. 15,16. Did not thy Father eat, and drink, and prosper, when he executed Judgment and Justice, when he judged the cause of the afflicted, and Poor, he prospered: was not this because he knew me, saith the Lord. 1. In his Soveraignty, *Jer.* 10. 6. 2. In his Immensity, *Isa.* 40. 15, *&c. Behold the Nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the dust of the ballance, &c.* 3. In his Omnipresence, *Psal.* 130. 7. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or, whither shall I flee from thy presence?* 4. In

Heb. 12. 28.

his Justice ; *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,* Hos. 3. 5. 1 *Sam.* 12. 24. 5. The property of it is, 1. To exalt God above all, as the highest object of our submission. *Prov.* 22. 4. *By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, honour, and life.* 2. Affiance, *Psal.* 147. 11. *But the Lord delighteth in them that fear him.* 3. Love, *Deut.* 10. 12. *And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to serve him, and love him.*

Heb. 10. 31.

And God is thus exalted, 1. When his word prevaileth above all other words, *Isa.* 66. 2. *To him will I look, even to him that is of an humble and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* Acts 5. 28,29. *Did not we straitly command you, that you should not teach in this Name ? Then Peter and the Apostles answered and said, We ought rather to obey God than Men.* 2. When the Omnipresence of God, causeth us to approve our selves, and wayes, to him. *Gen.* 17. 1 *I am God alsufficient, walk before me, and be thou upright.* Job 1. 5. He sanctified his Sons, and offered burnt Offerings ; for *Job* thought, It may be my Sons have sinned, and blasphemed God in their hearts. *Eccles.* 8. 12. *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and God prolong his dayes, yet I know it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, &c.* 3. When the fear of God overcometh all carnal fears. *Dan.* 3. 16,17,18. *Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego, answered and said to the King, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter ; behold, the God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace & he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King : but if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy God, nor worship the golden Image which thou hast set up.* Heb. 11. 27.

Hence follows, 1. A firm cleaving to God, in the obedience of Faith, *Deut.* 10. 20. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, thou shalt serve him, and cleave to him.* Thus they must fear God in their persons.

2. In their Families, *Psal.* 101. 2. *I will do wisely in the perfect way till thou comest to me, I will walk in the uprightness of my heart, in the middest of mine house. Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in uprightness and in truth, and put away the Godds which your Fathers served beyond the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord.*

Josh. 24. 14.

3. They must exercise it in their Civil Government in the Commonwealth, *Psal.* 2. 10,11. *Be wise now therefore ye Kings, be learned ye Judges of the Earth ; serve the Lord in fear, and rejoyce in trembling, Psal.* 27. 5.

III. These two, Justice and the fear of God, must be conjoyned by Gods Ordinance in Rulers over men, if they would have his presence, assistance, and blessing with them in their publick Administrations.

Reas. 1. From the order of the conjunction of Justice with the fear of God, which is as of the Effect with the Cause ; therefore the fear of God is first to be exercised, and Justice is to be regulated by it. The Scripture plentifully shews what a strong and powerful influence and efficacy, the true fear of God exerteth in reference to all Moral duties among men ; Moderation in *Joseph,* who would not abuse his publick Authority unto private revenge, giving this for his Reason, *I fear God,* Gen. 50. 19, 20. Mercy with the Midwives preserving the Male-Infants, *Exod.* 1. 21. Justice in Judges against Usury and Oppression, *Neh.* 5. 9. and his different carriage from former Governours, in easing the People of burthensome Charges, what he could, *Psal.* 14. 15. against the prophaning of the Temple, and of the Sabbath, and neglect of the Priests and Levites, and the Marriages of strange Wives, *Chap.* 13.

2 *Chron.* 19. 6, 7.

Reas. 2. From the great Trust committed to Civil Rulers,

1. To do Justice, according to Scripture-Rules, 2 *Chron.* 19. 6,7.

2. To see that others do justly towards one another ; *for he is the Minister of God for thy good, &c.*

Rom. 13. 4.

3. To protect men in every good way. 1 *Tim.* 2. 2. *Pray for Kings, and for all that are in Authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.*

4. To uphold the Churches walking in the order of the Gospel. *Isa.* 49. 23. *Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers, &c.*

5. Their End should be to exalt Christ in dispensing his Government in *Textu,* Psal. 2. 10,11. & 72. 1. to 18.

Use. *Exhortation.* 1. To the Freemen, who are entrusted by the Community, to chuse Magistrates by their suffrages, to follow the counsel of *Jethro* to *Moses,* Exod. 18. 21. *Moreover, provide thou among all the People, men of courage, men fearing God, hating covetousness, &c.* as *Moses* did, *vers.* 25. which also *Moses* gave to the Tribes, *Deut.* 1. 13.

Motive. 1. The choice of good Rulers will be a sign and pledge of Gods intendment to bless their Government and his People thereby. For when God gives Rulers, whom he intends to make a blessing to his People, they shall be such as are blessed of him in Christ for the good of that People, *Isa.* 1. 25,26. *Then I will turn mine hand upon thee, and burn out thy dross, till it be pure, and take away all thy tinn ; and I will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Counsellors as at the beginning.* If this be neglected, the Government will not be blessed, and the welfare of the People will be ruined. But if Christ bless the Governours, he shall be our peace, whatsoever Enemies come against us, or rise up among us : And he shall be our peace ; when

Ashur shall come into our Land, &c. he will raise seven Shepherds, and eight principal Men, that shall be our Relief. But you have no Instance in Scripture, that ever God was with a People to bless them, in a course of special Providence, when they that feared not God, were their Rulers, by their own consent and choice : Let Christ therefore have the preheminence in all things, and in your choice of Rulers for the Commonwealth ; and in order thereunto, see that they whom you choose to be Rulers, be men interressed personally in Christ : For when they that are called to Ruling Power, cease to exert it in subserviency to the Kingdom of Christ, there will be an end of *New-England*'s Glory, and Happiness, and Safety. *Mic.* 5. 5,6.

Mot. 2. You must submit to their Authority, and perform all duties to them, whom you have chosen to be your Rulers, whether they be good or bad, by vertue of the Relation between them and you ; So Wives to their Husbands, though Unbelievers, 1 *Cor.* 7. 13. And Servants to their Masters though froward, 1 *Pet.* 2. 18. Therefore as this should Caution Women and Youngmen to beware of chusing bad Husbands, and Masters ; so, and much more, it should Caution you in your choosing publick Rulers, if you mind the publick or private good of yours.

Mot. 3. If men unjust, and that fear not God, be chosen Rulers of the Common-wealth, all the People are in danger of being punished by the wrath of God for the sins of their Rulers ; Bad men being in publick place, will give bad counsel to corrupt Religion, *Ezek.* 11. 1,2. *Jaazaniah* and *Palatiah,* Princes of the People, are said to be the men *that imagine mischief, and devise wicked counsel in the City* ; the end will be ruine. See when the men of *Shechem* chose a bramble, *Abimelech,* to be their Ruler, see *Judg.* 9. 2,14,15,23,52,53. The sins of *Jeroboam,* and of those that succeded him, their corrupting Religion, ruined not only their own Families, but also all *Israel,* which was threatned, 1 *King.* 14. 15. *For the Lord shall smite* Israel *as when a Reed is shaken in the Water, and he shall weed* Israel *out of this good Land, which he gave to their Fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the River, because they have made groves, provoking the Lord to anger.* The same befel *Judah* for the sins of *Manasseh,* Jer. 15. 4. And for the sins of other Rulers, by corrupting Religion, and unrighteous dealings, whereof the Prophets complained.

Exhort. 2. To those, who by the consent of the Freemen, are according to Gods Ordinance, to be invested with the Magistratical Power and Authority, to observe *Moses* his Charge to the Judges, *Deut.* 1. 16,17. *And I charged your Judges that same time, saying, Hear the Controversies between your Brethren, and judge righteously, &c.* and *Jehoshaphats,* *Use.*

2 Chron. 19. 9,10. Be wise therefore ye Rulers, and consider that your Life, and all our Good, your Prosperity and Protection lies, not in this or that Politick design, or whatsoever else under the Sun, but alone in Gods gracious Presence with you, *Psal.* 4. 6,7. Oh! provoke him not to depart from us, but seek the continuance of his presence with us, and fix your thoughts on the things which tend to assure Gods special providential Presence with us. The things incumbent on you, in order hereunto, are such as respect either Persons or Things ; my desire is to speak in love to the Truth and Peace.

1. *For Persons :* Provide for the Protection, Encouragement, and Liberty of all those whom God owneth to be his People, that fear him ; take care that they be not trodden under foot, nor swallowed up, nor exposed to the rage and contempt of men ; only for those that walk orderly, and peaceably, not offensively to one or other, or to the Church of God ; though they differ from others in their Apprehensions and Perswasions, though misguided ; yet are willing to receive Light in Gods way and time : These are to God as the Apple of his Eye, and let their Safety be also to you. Be not ready to receive ill reports against them. *Jer.* 20. 10. *Report say they, and we will report, &c. Psal.* 15. 3. nor receiveth a false report against his neighbour, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19.

2. *For Things* : They are either the things of God, or the things of Men : 1. *For the things of God* ; the publick Profession and Practice of Religion, which is in great danger by two extreams ; misguided Zeal, and Formallity : Let the Honourable Court therefore approve themselves to Rule in the fear of God, by their personal knowing, imbracing, and obeying the Gospel of Christ ; and by their protecting the Churches that are orderly gathered, and walk according to Gospel-Rules, from the violence and injuries of their opposers, remembring that dreadful threatning, *Isa.* 60. 12. *For the Nation and the Kingdom, that will not serve thee, shall perish, &c.*

I shall add a few Caveats. 1. Take heed of a various management of matters of Religion, to the advantage of the present postures and condition of your Civil Affairs. The things of Christ should be as *Josephs* Sheaf, to which all other should bow. When they are made to cringe and bend to mens Policies, they are no longer the things of Christ : All Gods Truths are Eternal and Unchangeable by men : Give them all at once the soveraignty of your Souls, and have not the least thought of making them bend to serve your worldly ends, but cleave to the Truth of the Precepts, and live by the Truth of the Promises ; for performance whereof, the God

of Truth hath engaged his Alsufficiency. 2. Take heed and beware that you deprive not any Instituted Christian Church, walking according to Gospel Rules, of the Power and Priviledges which Christ hath purchased for them by his precious blood, and given unto them, *Mat.* 16. 19. God calls Civil Rulers to protect and preserve such Churches ; if he hath given them liberty, and you subject them to bondage ; if he hath given them power in their proper concernments within themselves, and you countenance and uphold others to exercise power over the Churches, in such things to whom Christ never gave such power ; you will have a sad reckoning. Remember *Jeptah's Argument,* against the encroachments of the *Amonites* upon the Rights of *Israel,* Judg. 11. 14. 3. Avoid carefully imposing upon the Churches any thing that Christ hath not put upon them, *viz.* 1. Mens Opinions, especially when they are such as prevailed in an hour of Temptation, though consented to by the major part of a Topical Synod, yet disliked by some of themselves, and by other godly Ministers, both in this Countrey, and in other Countries, so that they are things Controverted and under Dispute. Impose not such things upon Churches, lest Contentions arise in the Churches about Opinions, which are no part of the Faith once given to the Saints, for which we are called to contend earnestly, *Jude* 3. 2. A standing Council, for which we find no warrant in the New-Testament, nor Example in the Primitive Churches, nor in Succeeding Ages, for some hundred years after Christ. Nor is it safe for the Churches, which are thereby subjected under an undue Power out of the Church, which under a pretence — of helping the Church with their Light, bereave them of their Power ; *in re propriâ,* binding them to rest in their Decisions, and to practise accordingly. As for occasional Councils, two extreams must be avoided. 1. A total rejecting Councils : For, when the need of any Church requireth such helps, through want of Light, or of consent within itself, in weighty and difficult questions, it is their Liberty, and Prudence, and Duty, voluntarily to seek help from others chosen by that Church, being approved for their Orthodoxy, and Faithfulness to Christ, and to his Cause, and Interest ; And when their Counsel is given, it is the Duty of the said Church to try it by the Scripture ; and if it be found to agree with the Oracles of God, to acquiesce in it, else not ; according to that Rule, 1 *Thes.* 5. 21. 2. A preferring the Judgment of a Council when it suits with mens own minds, wills, and ends, above any Light for the contrary, though it be held forth from the Word of God, so as to rest in what the Council saith, without considering whether it be according to the holy Mind and Will of God, declared in the Scriptures.

This is an abuse of Councils, which hath sharpned the Pens of Godly Learned men in their Writings against it, not only against Popish Councils, which bind People to receive their Superstitious Devices and Impositions, as matters of Faith ; but against other Councils, which have too peremptorily and absolutely obtruded their own Determinations without Scripture-proof. Hence *Luther* affirmed of the first general Council at *Nice* (which was accounted the best) That he understood not that the Holy Ghost speak in it ; and that the Canons and Articles thereof, were but Hay, and Straw, and Stubble. And *Beza* (in his Preface to the New-Testament) saith, That such was the folly, ignorance, and ambition of many Bishops, in the best times, that you would have supposed the Devil to have been President in their Assemblies. And, long before these, *Nazianzen* complained, That he never saw good end of any, and resolved never to come at them more ; yet he lived under the good Emperour *Theodosius.* When Councils seek to please themselves and other men, more then to serve Christ, their Conclusions will be answerable to their scope. Hence the German Interim was agreed upon by sundry Ministers to please the Emperour, but other Orthodox Ministers dissented, and wrote against it. The Synod in *England,* under the Prelacy, published Superstitious Ceremonies ; against which many godly learned Ministers wrote, and were silenced ; who are, to this day, called, *The good Old Nonconformists :* The late Reverend Teacher, to re-establish a Church, published a Catechism for the Children of it, wherein he taught them concerning the Power of Councils ; that the Question is carried to the Council, but the Cause still remaineth in and with the Church. This shall suffice, for the present, to have been spoken to the Care that the Honourable Court is to Exercise about the *things of God.* The next things to be spoken to briefly, are the things of men ; they are righteous Administrations of Justice in matters of this Life. These wheels also you are to set going. 1. If upon revisal of your Body of Laws any one be found to be unjust and oppressing, let it be expunged, and altered ; And for those that are good, provide for good execution. 2. Let the soveraign Dictates of Nature, be constantly attended by you, which Christ notes to be the sum of all Moral Duties, in the two Tables, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne fæceris,* Mat. 7. 12. Would you enjoy peace and liberty in Professing and Practising according to the Rules of the Word, as you are perswaded ; let others also that fear God, and walk orderly and justly, and peaceably with them, enjoy the like Peace and Civil Liberties, lest other Rulers be encouraged by your Example, to measure to us again, with what measure we mete unto others, they accounting, as we

do them. This is threatned in *Mat.* 7. 2. I shall conclude with a brief reminding you of the first beginning of this Colony of the *Massachusets,* which I have the better advantage, and more special engagement to do ; being one of them, by whom the Patent, which you enjoy, was procured ; and to whom it was committed, by King *Charles* the first, and His Majesties most Honourable Privy Council. My Name was not mentioned in the Patent, because I desired it might be left out, lest the then Bishop of *London,* who was of the Privy Council, should have an ill eye upon me for my appearing so far in that work, whereunto he was opposit : but in expences for any Helps to promove the Work, in the first beginnings of it, I bore my part, meerly for the service of Christ, and for the help of his People, I not knowing that ever I should remove unto these parts, by vertue of that Patent. When it was obtained, and committed to us, we were made a Corporation for *New-England,* and accordingly acted, in sundry Meetings, and chose Mr *Endicot* to be the first Governour, and sent him hither ; and for his encouragement, we gave him an House at *Salem,* which was built for the use of the Corporation in *London ;* and he carried with him two Ministers. The next year the Corporation in *London,* understanding that honourable Mr *Winthrope*, inclined to remove himself and Family to *New-England,* chose him to be Governour, who came to *Boston,* and with him we sent the Patent, to prevent future inconveniencies ; and God blessed it to that end, as it appeared soon afterward. In the first General Court, after his Arrival, the Civil Order was settled in a Select Company of Free Planters, such as were accounted most fit to manage publick Trust, to Christ's Ends ; these choose a Governour, and Deputy-Governour, and a limited number of Assistants, invested with Magistratical Power, and Deputies from the respective Plantations, according to the Patent, which gave liberty to order Civil Affairs, as they found best. Churches also were gathered in a Congregational way, and walked therein, according to the Rules of the Gospel, with much peace and content among themselves, which that now blessed Servant of Christ, Mr *John Cotton,* the first Teacher to this Church, so approved, that he wrote unto me, being then in *Holland,* to encourage my coming to *New-England,* that the Order of the Churches and of the Commonwealth was so settled, by common Consent ; that it brought to his mind, the New Heaven and New Earth, wherein dwells Righteousness, advising me to come hither free from Engagements to others. But Satan, in a short time, stir'd up Strifes and Dissentions, to the great disturbance of the Churches and of the Countrey, which God at last mercifully quieted ; nor hath the Gospel come unto you empty handed, but hath

brought unto you in its right hand, Spiritual Good Things, through Jesus Christ, with Eternal Salvation to those that believe in him ; And in its left hand, Riches, and Honour, with Protection and Deliverances from Enemies of all sorts. Now therefore take heed and beware, that the Lord may not have just cause to complain of us, as he did of those in *Jer.* 2. 21. & *Rev.* 2. 4. lest you lose by Gods punishing Justice, what you received from his free Mercy, lest he remove the golden Candlesticks, and the burning and shining Lights in them, as he hath already done many eminent Lights ; and wo to them from whom the Gospel is removed, for their abusing it, and the Messengers of it. Would you yet see good dayes, and enjoy good things as in times past? Obey the counsel that the Spirit gave to the Church at *Ephesus,* Rev. 2. 5. And to the Angel of the Church in *Sardis,* Rev. 3. 2,3. And take the course that *Jehoshaphat* took, and was blessed therein, and all *Judah* with him, 2 *Chron.* 17. 3. The Lord was with *Jehoshaphat,* because he walked in the first wayes of his Father *David* : And see that your fruitfulness in good, answereth the cost & pains that God hath been at with you in his Vineyard, lest the Lord be provoked to deal with us, as he did with his ancient Vineyard, *Isa.* 5. from the first to the eight verse.

F I N I S.

Notes

Numbers refer to page and line of the present work. Bible passages and translations given in the text are not noted unless additional clarification seems required.

1.4 The Election of the Governour,] Richard Bellingham (1592–1672) was re-elected for a fifth consecutive term as governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony on this occasion. Francis Willoughby was elected deputy-governor.

4.2 spake by *David*, ver. 2.] 2 Samuel 23. 2: The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

4.30 Psal. 82. 6,7.] [6] I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. [7] But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

4.34 1 *Pet.* 2. 13,14.] [13] Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; [14] Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

5.2 Syriack ... *Leculbum benai aushe,*] The Syriac or Aramaic texts of the New Testament are referenced as early as the 2nd century, though many authorities believe they were translated from Greek originals. Davenport apparently refers here to a transliteration of the Syriac version of Romans 13.1.

5.9 *Durandus*, in his Book, *De Origine Juris,*] Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (c. 1275–c. 1334) was a Dominican philosopher, theologian, and bishop. His *De origine jurisdictionum* was published at Paris in 1506.

6.4 *proprio marte,*] by their own personal war

6.19 a *Non Ens,*] non-being

7.26 *Col.* 4. 1.] Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

8.1–2 *margin* *Deut.* 1. 16,17.] [16] And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. [17] Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.

8.6 Job 29. 14.] I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

8.10–11 to the 6th *vers.*] 1 Samuel 12. 4–5: [4] And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. [5] And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed

is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.

8.18 first Table of the Law] The first four of the Ten Commandments, which refer to man's relations to God.

9.1–2 Hos. 3. 5.] Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

9.2 1 *Sam.* 12. 24.] Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

9.25 Heb. 11. 27.] By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

9.3–4 *margin* *Josh.* 24. 14.] This is the second passage quoted in the paragraph opposite: *Now therefore ... the Lord.*

9.36 *Psal.* 27. 5.] For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

10.1–2 *margin* 2 *Chron.* 19. 6,7.] 6 And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment. 7 Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

10.7–8 Gen. 50. 19,20.] 19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

10.8 *Exod.* 1. 21.] 16 And he [Pharoah] said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. 17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. 18 And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? 19 And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. 20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. 21 And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.

10.9 *Neh.* 5. 9.] Nehemiah 5. 7–10: 7 Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. 8 And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. 9 Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the

fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? [10] I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.

10.11 *Psal.* 14. 15.] Psalm 14 does not have a 15th verse; apparently this is a transcription error for [Nehemiah] "*verses* 14,15": [14]Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. [15] But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.

10.13 *Chap.* 13.] Nehemiah 13. 27: Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?

10.24 Psal. 2. 10,11. & 72. 1. to 18.] *Psalms 2.10–11:* [10] Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. [11] Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. *Psalms 72.1–18:* [1]Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. [2] He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. [3] The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. [4] He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. [5] They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. [6] He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. [7] In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. [8] He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. [9] They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. [10] The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. [11] Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. [12] For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. [13] He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. [14] He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight. [15] And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. [16] There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. [17] His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. [18] Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

10.29 *Deut.* 1. 13.] Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.

11.1–2 *Ashur* shall come ... Men,] Micah 5. 5–6. Ashur is more commonly rendered as "the Assyrian."

11.14 1 *Cor.* 7. 13.] And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

11.25–26 *Shechem* ... *Abimelech,* ... *Judg.* 9. 2,14,15,23,52,53.] [2] Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. ... [14] Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. [15] And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon. ... [23] Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech: ... [52] And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. [53] And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull.

11.32 *Manassah,* Jer. 15. 4.] Manassah's sins (idolatry, sorcery, etc.) are detailed in 2 Kings 21. 1–16.

12.1 2 Chron. 19. 9,10.] [9] And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. [10] And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in your cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass.

12.4 *Psal.* 4. 6,7.] [6] There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. [7] Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

12.20 1 *Tim.* 1. 19.] Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

12.33 *Josephs* Sheaf,] Gen. 37. 5–8: [5] And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. [6] And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: [7] For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. [8] And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

13.4 *Mat.* 16. 19.] And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

13.10–11 *Jeptah's Argument, ... Judg.* 11. 14.] 12 And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? 13 And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably. 14 And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon: 15 And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: 16 But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh; 17 Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not consent: and Israel abode in Kadesh. 18 Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was the border of Moab. 19 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place. 20 But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 21 And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. 22 And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. 23 So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? 24 Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. 25 And now art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, 26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? 27 Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the Lord the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.

13.20 *Jude* 3.] Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

13.25 *in re propriâ,*] in a matter of their own

13.35 1 *Thes.* 5. 21.] Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

14.6 *Luther*] Martin Luther (1483–1546) is credited with initiating the Protestant Reformation.

14.6–7 first general Council at *Nice*] The First Council of Nicea was convened in 325 by Constantine I.

14.9 *Beza*] Theodore Beza (1519–1605), French Reformed Protestant and successor to John Calvin in Geneva. His edition of the New Testament appeared in 1556, with subsequent editions in 1565 and 1582. He also published *De jure magistratuum* in 1574.

14.12 *Nazianzen*] Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329–390), Archbishop of Constantinople; he was an opponent of Arianism and a formulator of Trinitarian theology.

14.14 *Theodosius*] Flavius Theodosius, or Theodosius I, or Theodosius the Great (347–395) was the last emperor to rule both Eastern and Western Roman Empires. He made Christianity the official state creed and ended support for traditional Roman religion.

14.17 German Interim] The Augsburg Interim, a provisional doctrinal agreement between Protestants and Catholics, was made imperial law in 1548 by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

14.19 Synod in *England,* under the Prelacy,] It is not clear what specific event is referred to, but "Prelacy" was generally used by Puritans to describe the system of church government by bishops, such as the Church of England, headed by the monarch and archbishop. In 1563, the Convocation drew up and adopted the "Thirty-nine Articles" that were acceptable doctrinally to the Puritan party, but it also allowed to stand the requirements of vestments and ceremonies that were offensive to the reformers. Davenport may also wish to suggest the episcopal administration of William Laud (1573–1645), who as Bishop of London (1628-1633) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1633–1645) worked strenuously to persecute Puritan and non-conforming clergymen, although this was generally accomplished without resort to synods.

14.19–20 published Superstitious Ceremonies] Referring to *The Book of Common Prayer,* first issued in 1549. It's use was mandated under Elizabeth I by the Act of Uniformity (1559).

14.22 late Reverend Teacher,] Probably William Hooke (1601-1678), Teacher of the Church at New Haven 1644-1656. He had been educated at Trinity College, Oxford, and was pastor at Taunton, Massachusetts 1640–1644. He left New Haven in 1656 and returned to England to become Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell. He and Davenport were co-authors of *A Catechisme Containing the Chief Heads of the Christain Religion* (London, 1659), which includes the following (p. 46):

> Q. What use then is there of the Consociation of Churches and Synods?
> A. Much, by way of Brotherly helpfulness with light held forth from Scripture in difficult cases. But, not by way of Authority and powr, as having Ecclesiastical jurisdiction over particular Churches, that

nothing may be concluded and executed by them, in elections & depositions of ministers and excommunications, &c : without the consent and allowance of the Classis or Synods, under which they stand : or as having a powr of binding the churches to obey their decrees, whether politically, or formally. These are usurpations not warranted by the word : and therfore not to be submitted unto by particular Churches. [with marginal references to Acts 15.6; Galatians 5.1; 1 Corinthians 7.23; and Acts 4.19.]

14.34 *Quod tibi* ... Mat. 7. 12.] Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

15.1 threatned in *Mat.* 7. 2.] For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

15.7 Bishop of *London*] William Laud, who had frustrated Davenport's efforts to buy lay-impropriations for support of the rural clergy and had opposed his election as vicar of St. Stephen's.

15.10 promove] (*Obs.*) promote, move forward

15.15 Mr *Endicot*] John Endecott (c. 1588–1665)

15.19 Mr *Winthrope*,] John Winthrop (1588–1649)

15.31 Mr *John Cotton,*] (1585–1652) Teacher of the First Church in Boston, 1633–1652.

15.37 Strifes and Dissentions,] Anne Hutchinson, a member of the First Church in Boston, was tried, excommunicated, and banished for blasphemy in 1637–38.

16.5 *Jer.* 2. 21.] Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?

16.6 *Rev.* 2. 4.] Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

16.7 golden Candlesticks] Revelations 1.12, 20: [12] And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; ... [20] The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

16.12 *Ephesus,* Rev. 2. 5.] [1] Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; ... [5] Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

16.12–13 *Sardis,* Rev. 3. 2,3.] [1] And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. [2] Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. [3] Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

16.18–19 *Isa.* 5. ... verse.] [1] Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: [2] And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. [3] And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. [4] What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? [5] And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: [6] And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. [7] For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry. [8] Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

Editorial Note

John Davenport's *A Sermon Preach'd at the Election* is a notable and fascinating document on numerous counts. As a statement of Puritan political theory, it outlines the rights of the governed to self-preservation from abusive authority—a subject that would be more extensively explored in the years leading up to the Revolution. But as a document of its specific place and time—Boston in 1669—it bore a large part in the politico-theological controversies that followed the Synod of 1662 that recommended the adoption of the so-called Half-Way Covenant. Davenport's long digression on the proper role of the state in convening "Councils" on religious matters, and on the proper relation of those Councils' authority over individual church congregations, provoked a reaction that ultimately led to the defeat of his conservative Anti-Synodist party.

Davenport was born in England in 1597, the fifth son of the mayor of Coventry, and attended Merton and Magdalen colleges, Oxford from 1611 to about 1616. He was ordained in the Church of England, and in 1619 became curate of St Lawrence Jewry in London. In 1624 he was chosen vicar of St. Stephen's Church, in Coleman Street, where he met Theophilus Eaton. He returned to Oxford in 1625 and earned the M.A. and Bachelor of Divinity degrees. He was appointed by John Preston of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, a leading Puritan teacher and author, to become his editor and literary executor upon Preston's death in 1628. Davenport's activities for the financial aid of rural clergy and relief of exiled German Calvinists brought him under suspicion for his Puritan leanings, and he was disciplined by Bishop William Laud. He left England for Holland in 1633, where he served for a time as assistant pastor to the English congregation under John Paget in Amsterdam, but he left that post over his disagreement with the policy of "indiscriminate" baptizing infants of non-members. In 1637, at the invitation of John Cotton, he came to Boston in New England, and the following year, with Theophilus Eaton and a party of settlers, removed to a site at the mouth of the Quinnipiac River in Connecticut, where they purchased land from the Natives and established the independent colony of New Haven. Davenport served there as minister for thirty years, and contributed to the founding of the Hopkins School. Following the Restoration of the English monarchy, Davenport assisted in

the escape of the regicide judges Edward Whalley and William Goffe, hiding them in his home for several weeks and in the "Judges Cave" on West Rock for several months, and encouraging his congregation to frustrate the royal agents sent to find and arrest them. In 1662, over his objections, the New Haven Colony was incorporated into the reorganized Connecticut Colony under a royal charter.

In September 1667, Davenport was invited by the First Church in Boston to assume the ministry left vacant by the deaths of John Cotton (in 1652), John Norton (in 1663), and John Wilson (in 1667). This was the preeminent ministerial post in New England, and despite the fact that he was 70 years old and that his New Haven congregation was reluctant to let him leave, Davenport accepted the invitation. A sizable faction in the Boston First Church opposed his appointment and would ultimately withdraw to form the Third (or "Old South") Church.

Davenport was one of New England's most ardent "conservatives"; but, as Perry Miller remarks (p. 101), "The term may stand if we comprehend that they clung to what had been extreme radicalism in 1630, the principle of regenerate membership." Davenport (and the radicals of 1630) believed in the restriction of church membership to those who could testify to a valid conversion experience—only these were admitted to full membership ("visible sainthood") with access to the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and the baptism of their infant children. (This position placed the Puritans midway between the Baptists—who did not practice baptism of infants—and the Presbyterians—who baptized infants without regard to the membership status of their parents.) The problem arose among the Puritans in New England that many of these children, attaining adulthood while not exhibiting or professing a conversion experience and thus not being admitted to full church membership, nevertheless desired their children in turn to receive infant baptism in the church. The General Court of Massachusetts convened a synod in 1662 to address the issue. The Synod of 1662 met in three sessions (March, June, and September) and was seriously divided over whether the children in question (i.e., the grandchildren of the "elect," or full members) were appropriate subjects for baptism. In favor were Richard Mather, John Allin, Jonathan Mitchell, John Higginson, and the majority of delegates; those opposed included Charles Chauncy, Increase Mather, and (from afar) John Davenport. In October 1662, the General Court accepted the recommendations of the majority and had them published, though the ultimate decision on whom to accept for baptism still lay with each individual congregation. The controversy, far from being settled by the synod, persisted for ten years more, carried on theologically in pamphlets and treatises and practically in dozens of church congregations. Ultimately the leaders of the "conservatives" passed away,

and Increase Mather went over to the other side; and the practice of baptizing the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the "elect" became the norm, so long as their parents were willing to publicly affirm their allegiance to the church covenant (though not required to testify to an experience of grace).

So, the "Half-Way" Synod of 1662 was one of the "Councils" of which Davenport warned the electors in 1669 to "beware," but by no means the only council whose motives and acts he disapproved. He had opposed an earlier assembly of Massachusetts and Connecticut divines that met in 1657 to discuss the issue of baptism, and also, ten years later, the appointment by the Connecticut General Court of a committee of ministers to address the same baptism-membership question—a convocation that served rather to inflame the issue than to resolve it. When the First Church invited Davenport to be its pastor, a faction (disagreeing with his stand against the Half-Way covenant, and suspicious of his "release" from his New Haven congregation) desired to withdraw and form a new congregation, and in August 1668 a local council of churches recommended that they be allowed to depart. Then, after Davenport was installed in December 1668, this group called a second council of fifteen Bay-area churches, which met in April 1669 and concluded to validate their withdrawal and endorse the organization of the Third Church, which was accordingly "gathered" in Charlestown on May 12. Davenport regarded these councils as inappropriate interference in the affairs of the First Church, and he refused to acknowledge their legitimacy or authority.

Governor Richard Bellingham, a First Church member, had been instrumental in inviting and installing Davenport as minister, and during this contentious spring of 1669 Davenport was invited by the Deputies (the lower house of the Massachusetts Bay General Court) to give the next election sermon. Emboldened by his message (as printed above), the Deputies subsequently published charges against the Third Church and its supporters for promoting schisms and subversions. But this was the extent of their temporary triumph. The Assistants (the upper house) blocked any action, even the printing of Davenport's sermon at public expense. Davenport died in March 1670, and in the elections the following year all the anti-Synod Deputies were defeated; as Miller remarks: "This seems to have been the first organized campaign in America to elect an entire ticket."

John Davenport was the last of the first generation of (English-born and -educated) divines to play a major role in New England's evolution. His death, and the withering away of the opposition to the Half-Way Covenant, marked a changing of the tenor of Puritan culture. This *Sermon Preach'd at the Election* marked a "last hurrah" for the "conservatives," or, as he calls them, "*The good Old Nonconformists.*"

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Note on the Text

This edition of *A Sermon Preach'd at the Election of the Governour, at Boston in New-England, May 19th 1669* is based on a surviving copy of the first edition published in 1670 at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and held in the Boston Public Library. It was transcribed from digital page images accessed in the Early English Books Online series.

The typeface is IM Fell DW Pica—except for the title page, which is IM Fell Great Primer—digitized and distributed by Igino Marini, available at http://www.iginomarini.com. The page design and layout conform to those of the first edition. Ornaments and initials are reconstructions of those found in the original. For the sake of more accurate searching, the long "s" (ſ) and available ligatures have not been used.

Spelling, punctuation, and orthography of the original have not been altered, except for the correction of a few typographical errors, listed below:

Page.line	*1670 reading*	*emended to*
6.6	(then	then
8.20	1 Prov. 7.	Prov. 1. 7.
10.1–2 margin	2 Chron. 6,7.	2 Chron. 19. 6,7
13.8	puwer	power
13.34	suits?with	suits with

One apparent transcription error (*Psal.* for *vers.*; see note 10.11) has been allowed to stand.

Paul Royster
University of Nebraska–Lincoln
January 27, 2011