[Communion of Churches: Or, The Divine Management of Gospel-churches by the Ordinance of Councils, Constituted in Order According to the Scriptures, As Also, the Way of Bringing All Christian Parishes to be Particular Reforming Congregationall Churches: Humbly Proposed, as a Way which Hath So Much Light from the Scriptures of Truth, as that it May Lawfully be Submitted Unto by All; and May, by the Blessing of the Lord, be a Means of Uniting Those Two Holy and Eminent Parties, the Presbyterians and the Congregationals. As Also to Prepare for the Hoped-for Resurrection of the Churches; and to Propose a Way to Bring All Christian Nations Unto an Unity of the Faith and Order of the Gospel - Google Play](https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=0blCAQAAMAAJ&pg=GBS.PP1&hl=en)   
  
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*The text of this work was very illegible even the reprints were of little value reconstructing the text. "X" marks a letter than could not be made out.   
"…" means a word or phrase was not legible. My apologies. TAH*

*Communion of Churches:*   
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 C O U N C I L S,   
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 *S C R I P T U R E S.* AS ALSO,   
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 Christian Nations unto an Unity of the   
 Faith and Order of the Gospel.

Written by *John Eliot,* Teacher of   
 *Roxbury* in *N. E.*

Psal. 1.10 *That ye may try the things that are excellent.*  
 1 John 4 1. *Try the Spirits.*

*Cambridge:* Printed by *Marmaduke Johnson.* 1665.

**P R E F A C E.**

ALthough a few Copies of this small Script are   
Printed; yet it is not published, onely committed   
privately to some Godly and Able hands, to be Viewed,   
Corrected, Amended, or Rejected, as it shall be found to   
hold wright in the Sanctuary Ballance, or not. And it is   
the humble Request of the Author, That whatever Ob-  
jections; Rectification, or Emendations may occurrence, they   
may be conveyed unto him; who desireth nothing may be   
accepted in the Churches, but what is according to the   
Will and Minde of God, and tendeth to Holiness, Peace,   
and Promotion of the holy Kingdome of Jesus Christ.  
 The procuring of half so many Copies Written and   
Corrected, would be more difficult and chargeable, then   
the Printing of these few.  
 I beg the Prayers, as well as the Pains of the pre-  
cious Servants of the Lord, that I may never have the   
least singer in doing any thing that may be derogatory to   
the Holiness and Honour of Jesus Christ and his   
Churches. And to this I subscribe my self,

One of the least of the Labourers   
 in our Lords Vineyard,   
   
 JOHN ELIOT.

### ***CHAP. I. Prolegomena;* or, Things premised. [ 1 ]**

I. THere be two holy Publick Societies famous in the Gospel:

1. A Church of Believers.

2. A Council of Churches.

*A Church of Believers,* is a company of visible Sainte   
combined together, with one heart, to hold Communion in   
all the instituted Gospel-worship, Ordinances and Disci-  
pline, which Christ hath sitted for, and given unto a parti-  
cular Church. Such a Company are frequently called *A   
Church.* See a few places: *Acts* 2. 47, & 11. 26. & 14. 23, 27.   
1 *Cor.* 11. 18, 20, 22, &c.  
 *A Council,* is a Society of particular Churches in Com-  
munion, by their Representatives, for their well-being,   
and well-ordering all things among them, by mutual, Coun-  
sel, in Truth, Peace, and Holiness. Our Pattern is, that   
*Great Council,* Acts 15. which consisted of two Churches,   
in an ordinary way exprefly agreed, to *give* and *take counsel:*   
and it is left as a Standard and Pattern, how the great Or-  
 dinance

[ 2 ]  
dinance of Counsel is to be used and managed for the well-  
being of Churches, to the worlds end.  
 II. The Constitution of both these Buildings or Socie-  
ties, are eminent and observable in the Gospel.  
 The first of these, viz. *A Church of Believers,* is first   
instituted by Christ himself, and afterward put in practice   
by the Apostles; *Matth.* 16. 18. *Thou art Peter, and upon   
this Rock I will build my Church* The Rock confessed is   
*CHRIST:* Christ Confessed, is the Foundation of the   
Visible Church [∴](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A39224.0001.001?id=DLPS1;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=div2;view=trgt)*Peter* confessing, is an hewn stone, squared   
to the foundation[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A39224.0001.001?id=DLPS2;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=div2;view=trgt); a Believer made Ecclesiastically visible,   
sitted for Church-building and fellowship.  
 A company of such Confessors, or a company of these   
confessing Believers,  
 1. Have power to joyn together into a Gospel Church-  
state, as they did *Acts* 1. 13, 14. *Continued with one accord:*   
so *Acts* 2. 46.  
 2. They have power to call Officers, by whom they be-  
come an Organick Body, and sitted to administer and enjoy   
all instituted Worship: *Acts* 1. 15, 23. *Peter stood up in the   
midst of the Disciples; And they appointed two.* Acts 6. 3.   
*Brethren, look you out men.* Acts 14. 23. *By bolding up   
bands made Elders.*3. By the Ministry of these Officers, the Church doth   
actually enjoy such Ordinances as are instituted by Christ,   
for their Edification;  
 *Directive,* in Word, Sacraments, Prayer, Singing of   
 Psalms, and Collections: *Acts* 2. 42. *They con-  
 tinue stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fel-  
 lowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*   
 Col. 3. 16. *Teaching one another in Psalms and   
 Hymns,* &c.; 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. *Every first day lay   
Both by it self,* &c. for educat is the Neuter Gender,   
 as well as Masculine, and is so to be read, be-  
 cause they had two distinct Collections at that   
 time! The Collection for J*erusalem* was by it self,   
 a *publick,* not a *private Collection.  
 Corrective:* 1 Cor. 15. 4, 5. *When gathered together,   
 deliver to Satan.* III. The administration of, and participation in all these   
Ordinances, (while we are in this flesh, and state militant)   
are in full of variety of difficulties and temptations, espe-  
cially where Churches are numerous, that the work cannot   
long be carried on (a while it sometimes may, *viz.* while   
 the

[ 3 ]  
  
the Churches are under the eye of an adversary, and when   
there be Elders eminent in Piety, Humility and Ability)   
without stated help.  
 The help which the Lord hath instituted, is *Counsel.* When *Antioch* had trouble in some points of Doctrine,   
the Remedy which the holy Ghost applied, was *Counsel,*   
given them by a *formall Council,* Acts 15.  
 When *Corinth* wanted help in a point of Discipline, the   
Apostle doth help, by ministring *Counsel* unto them, 1 *Cor.*   
5. 3, 4, 5. and he counselleth the Church to Excommunicate   
the man, the sinner.  
 *Excommunication* is a sharp Rod, made up of seven most   
severe and terrible Twigs; or a strong Purgation, com-  
pounded of seven violent Ingredients; *viz.* 1. He is cut off from visible Communion with Christ in the Church.  
 2. He is cut off from familiar Communion with the Saints in Worship.  
 3. He is cast out of the usual walk of the Spirit.  
 4. He is cast out of the House of God, as unsavoury Salt,   
 or a loathsome thing that doth offend.  
 5. He is thrust out of the Paradise of God, from eating   
 the Tree of Life, *viz.* Christ in the Sacrament of the   
 Supper, where the Spirit sitteth as in his Sealing-office.  
 6. He is cut off from familiar Civil Communion with   
 the Saints; he may not be invited to eat with them.  
 7. He is delivered to Satan, and that by the Sentence of   
 Christ, through the hand of his Spouse the Church   
 and all this to be inflicted upon a Brother.  
 Ah! who trembles not to minister such a *Pill,* to lay on   
such a *Rod?* And therefore it had need to be managed and   
administred with all care, fear, and clearness. And all this   
sheweth, and much more might be produced to shew, what   
need there is of *Counsel;* which, after thirty or forty years   
experience in the way of *Congregational Churches,* in fulness   
of liberty, we finde more and more need to insist upon, and   
that in such a fixed and ordered way, as that thereby men   
may be tyed to attend unto Counsel.  
 IV. A *Council* is constituted *Acts.* 15. where the wisdome   
of the holy Ghost hath given us a Pattern of the *least,* and   
of the *greatest Councils,* as our *N. E.* Divines have well ob-  
served. There cannot be a *less Council* then that was, for   
there were but two Churches mentioned; and there cannot   
be a *greater,* and more compleat one, because there were

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the greatest Counsellors, a most compleat Pattern, even the   
Apostles of Jesus Christ; teaching, That if there be but   
two Churches, they may enjoy the Ordinance of *mutuall   
Counsel,* though more incompleatly. But if there he many   
Churches, then they are to be ordered according to the Pat-  
tern of Combining Churches into compleat Councils. *Of   
which in the next Chapter.* V. Christ, who hath *all power,* Mat. 28. 20. hath derived   
all Ecclesiastical Power first unto the Apostles, that they by   
Institution might distribute the same unto several Offices in   
the Church. Hence,  
 As all Church-Officers, especially Elders, and more espe-  
cially *Teaching Elders,* are ordinary Successors of the Apo-  
stles, in their several branches of Church power: So *Coun-  
cils of Churches* are their eminent ordinary Successors, in   
point of Counsel, and that in several respects.  
 *First,* Because in Councils there is *most light,* and nearest   
to infallibility: and the more compleat, the better; though   
the most compleat Council may erre, because they have not   
a promise of infallible assistance.  
 *Secondly,* Because when the Apostles themselves had con-  
stituted Churches, they did guide and counsel them how to   
use their power; as *Paul* did the Church of *Corinth,* 1 *Cor.  
7*, 4. the Apostle did not act the Censure himself: and so is   
that of *Paul* to be interpreted, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. *I have deli-  
vered to Satan;* viz. as I did the incestuous *Corinthian,*   
by giving such counsel to the Church, whereof they were   
Members. In thus doing, Councils succeed the Apostles.  
 VI. Inasmuch as Councils are *Publick Assemblies,* and that   
not onely Ecclesiastically publick, but Civilly also, when   
they are held with openness and boldness. Hence, *Civill   
Authority* hath influence, by Law and Command, to give al-  
lowance unto such Assemblies; and so they have an *Ex-  
trinsecall Efficiency* in calling Councils: but the *Intrinsecall*   
and *proper Efficients* of a Council, are *the Churches,* who   
elect and send Messengers to that end.  
 VII. The Members constituent of a Council, are *Church-  
Messengers.* The persons sent ought to be *Elders,* of *both Orders,   
Teaching* and *Ruling,* to represent the whole Church; or   
in defect of *Ruling Elders* to represent the people, *Faithful   
Brethren,* eminent in holiness and wisdome, who are as El-  
ders: *Acts* 15. 2. *Certain other of them* Ver. 22. *Chosen   
men, chief men among, the Brethren.* Ver. 32. *Being Prophets also  
 themselves*

[ 5 ] *themselves.* And the reason hereof is, Because, as the tem-  
ptation of Learned men, is to affect a Prelacy over the peo-  
ple: So the temptation of the Fraternity, is to affect a   
Morellian Democracy. And therefore the wisdome of   
God hath by institution ballanced all Ecclesiastical Coun-  
cils with Members of *both sorts,* that may ballance each   
other, by *Number* at least, though not in *Weight,* yet enough   
to prevent any prevalency of a temptation, either to sub-  
jugate the Churches under any Prelatical Usurpation of the   
Learned; or to elevate and intoxicate the Fraternity, to   
affect any inordinate power: which rather, and more effe-  
ctually tends to enervate and evacuate Government, then to   
preserve any Lawful and just Liberty of the Brotherhood.  
 The end of the Churches sending these Messengers, is to   
manage the Ordinance of *Counsel* in due order.  
 VIII. The Organick parts of a Council, whereby they are   
enabled to manage their affairs in Prudence and Order, are   
*Moderators, a*nd *Notaries:* the choice of whom is the first   
act they do, to compleat themselves to be fit for action.  
 It may sometimes edifie, to *change Moderators* every   
new Session, partly to train up each other unto that special work   
of Christ, in the management of the Affairs, and in caring for   
the publick welfare of all the Churches; and also to take trial of mens   
Gifts, Spirit and Abilities unto that high service; that so, when there   
may be special need, they may know who is most fit to manage the Council   
at such a time, for the glory of God, and for the most effectual Edi-  
fication, and publick well being of the Churches.  
 Though Moderators may be often changed, it is not fit:   
that the Notaries should be so often changed.  
 IX. The Power of Ecclesiastical Councils is onely Dogma-  
tical, or Doctrinal: Power of *Censure* is by the Lord fixed   
in the *Church;* and hence, when any appeal unto a Council,   
it is for further and more clear light from the Scripture,   
and for conviction thereby, but not for the Exercise of any   
Juridical Power.

### *CHAP. II.* Of the Gospel-Measuring-Reed by the Number *Twelve.*

[ 6 ]  
 C H A P. II.   
 Of the Gospel-Measuring-Reed by the  
 Number Twelve.  
I. SEeing particular Congregations in Gospel-Order, are   
*Churches;* and these Churches, for their well-being,   
need to hold and exercise *Communion by Councils:* and one   
Church (as *Antioch*) may need the greatest and highest   
Counsel.  
 Hence in such places where, through the riches of the   
Grace of Christ, Churches are numerous, it will be neces-  
sary, that the management of these Councils should be in   
Order, according to the Pattern of *Compleat Councils,   
Acts* 15. For multitude unordered, by how much the   
greater they are, the greater is their cumber, and unapt-  
ness to operate in Order unto their end. Lesser Bodies are   
more readily ordered, and have a greater aptitude to be   
active in their Order unto their end. *Ordo anima rerum.* II. *Order* is one of the *Beauties of Heaven,* and so it is of   
the Churches. *Let all things be done in Order,* 1 Cor. 14. 40.   
*Jerusalem is a City compacted,* Psal. 122. 3. and the more   
orderly Bodies are, the better are they compacted. Bodies   
that are compacted, are so ordered by *Number* and *Measure:*   
The *New Jerusalem* is the most glorious City that ever shall   
be on Earth; and we see that it shall be compacted by   
*Number* and *Measure,* Rev. 21. 12, *to* 18. and the Founda-  
tion Number is *Twelve,* as appeareth *ver.* 14. *The wall of   
the City had twelve Foundations.* And this Number *Twelve*   
is multiplied by *Twelve,* as appeareth *ver.* 16, 17. it is square,   
*Twelve* every way, which amounteth to One hundred forty   
and four.  
 III. The *Twelve Tribes* in the Old Testament, and the   
*Twelve Apostles* in the New, do make that Number famous   
in the Churches, and fundamental in ordering and com-  
pacting of Churches into Ecclesiasticall Combinations of   
Councils.  
 The *Twelve Tribes* compacted in order, was the most   
beautiful, and heart-ravishing Camp, that ever the worlds   
Eye did look upon, *Numb.* 24. 2, 5, 6. The *Twelve Loaves   
of Shew-bread,* did represent the whole Visible Church  
 before

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before God in the Temple. The *Twelve Precious Stars in   
the Breast-plate of the High Priest,* shew, That is such a   
Number Christ is pleased to order and represent the whole   
Militant Church before his Father in Heaven. And ac-  
cording to this Type, *Rev.* 7. 4. the whole Visible Church is   
ordered, multiplied, and sealed in this Number. And Rev.   
21. 12, 14. the *Twelve Tribes* are the *Twelve Gates,* and the   
*Twelve Apostles* are the *Twelve Foundations* of the New   
*Jerusalem.* That glorious visible Gospel-Church, *Ezek 8.*   
which is called *Jehovah-Shamniah,* is ordered by the Num-  
ber *Twelve,* according to the Twelve Tribes of Israel, as   
the Typicall and of *Canaan* was.  
 IV. In the *perfect Pattern* (for the Word is a *perfect   
Rule*) which the holy Ghost, hath left us, *Acts* 15. as there   
is a ground work for the least of Councils, in the *Two   
Churches;* so of compleat Councils, in the *Twelve Apo-  
stles.* For, though *Herod* had killed *James* with the sword,   
*Acts* his Martyrdome did not remove him out of the   
*Foundation,* but rather six him in it: And the Apostles were   
most of them killed for *the Testimony of Jesus,* before *John*   
had his *Revelation,* and yet we finde them all written in the   
Foundation of the *New Jerusalem.* And therefore what should hinder, but that in the or-  
dering of *Compleat Councils,* we should lay our foundation   
in the Number *Twelve?* and all the Orders of Councils   
should be raised and compacted by that Number, even from   
the bottom to the top.  
 V. And unto this *Order* and *Number* we may the wonder   
be induced, because here will be the *Twenty four Elders,*   
who do wait upon, and worship the holy Majesty of God in   
all the Churches upon earth, as he hath pleased to reveal   
himself, *Rev.* 4. where the presence of God among the   
Churches is revealed: First, with his glorious Angels next   
him, represented by the *four living Creatures,* according to   
*Ezek.* 1. *&* 10. And secondly, with the Communion of   
Churches about him, represented by the *Twenty four El-  
ders,* who do represent all the Churches on earth, in Com-  
munion: as will anon appear.  
 VI. For when *Twelve Churches* are combined to hold   
Communion together, the least Number that one Church   
must (by Institution) send forth to that first Council, must   
be *one Teaching Elder,* and *one Ruling Elder;* and then,   
this Society of Churches is represented by *twenty four Elders*   
strictly. And

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And when *Twelve* of these *first Councils* shall, with con-  
sent of the particular Churches, elect and send forth *one   
Teaching,* and *one Ruling Elder,* the ablest and fittest among   
them, to constitute a *Provincial Council;* that Council will   
be strictly the *Twenty four Elders,* representing all the   
Churches in that Province, concurring in the Election.  
 And when *Twelve Provincial Councils* shall, with like con-  
sent, send forth from each of them *one Teaching,* and *one   
Ruling Elder,* the most holy and able among them, to con-  
stitute a *National Council,* they will still be strictly the   
*Twenty four Elders,* representing the whole Nation, in their   
Ecclesiastical state, before the Lord.  
 And when *Twelve National Councils* shall send forth, in   
like manner, from each of them, *one Teaching,* and *one   
Ruling Elder,* the most holy and fit among them, to consti-  
tute an *Oecumenical Council* (or by what other less term it   
may be thought meet to call it) they will still be strictly the   
*Twenty four Elders,* representing before the Lord all the   
Churches in all those Nations, concurring in the Election.  
 And why may not this ascent, and representation of all   
before the Lord, be part of the meaning of that Text, *Rev.*   
5. 8, 9, 11, 12, 14?  
 VII. And this point is the more to be heeded, because   
God's visible respect unto, and acceptation of any people, is   
according to the good aspect and condition of their *Repre-  
sentatives.* There may be much drosse in a Parish, a Pro-  
vince, a Nation, and in the world; yet if they have good Re-  
presentatives before the Lord, and if they carry the Lords   
matters well, in his sight, that doth obtain, through Christ,   
a favourable acceptation of, and dispensation towards all   
that are so represented. And he hath instituted Represen-  
tatives of the Church on earth: *Aaron* represented *all Is-  
rael on his breast before the Lord,* Exod. 28. 29. And a Coun-  
cil consisting of *Messengers of Churches,* the glory of Christ,   
do represent the Churches who send and constitute that   
Council, *Acts* 15. Oh! how happy were it for any people,   
to be in such visible instituted Order on earth, as that they   
may be (through Christ) acceptably represented before the   
Lord!  
 For God is so well pleased to see his people in Order, as   
that he will dwell in that place, and call it by his own   
Name. *Jehovah-Shamniah;* especially when they are Civilly,   
as well as Ecclesiastically in good order represented before   
Him. VIII.

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 VIII. Furthermore, this is to be considered, that though   
the *Twenty four Elders* are so called, by the least Number   
that they can be, by this Constitution; yet, according as   
the riches of Gods grace is more abundantly poured out,   
they may be more in Number, though under this constituting   
denomination. For, one Church may send forth ruling-  
ing *Elders,* as *Antioch* sent forth *Paul* and *Barnabas,* and   
*Ruling Elders,* or *Brethren* proportionably. So likewise   
upon the same ground, when there be more *Eminent Lights*   
in any of the Councils (as through grace it is like often to   
be) they may send more then one to the *Provincial,* or *Na-  
tional,* or *Oecumenical Councils,* but still they are the   
*Twenty four Elders,* because that is the *Foundation Num-  
ber.* IX. What if I should illustrate this Point by that of   
the Apostles? who are often in Scripture called *the Twelve   
Apostles,* and yet there were more Apostles then *Twelve:*   
for who doubteth but that *Paul,* who was none of the   
*Twelve* yet he was *an Apostle,* and *a chief Apostle,* a great   
Foundation; and *Barnabas* was an *Apostle* also, *Acts* 14. 14.   
and 1 *Cor.1*. 9. But *Twelve* is the *Foundation Number,* and   
therefore they are so denominated.  
 X. Again, though *Twelve Churches* be the lowest Num-  
ber of the *first Combination,* yet they may be more then   
*Twelve,* when the pourings out of Gods grace shall be in\_  
larged; yea, they may be any Number under *Twenty four   
Churches.* If then *Twenty three Churches* should be in a Combina-  
tion, their Messengers sent to the *first Council* will be a   
great Number; but still they are the *Twenty four Elders*   
before the Lord, by their fundamental Constitution.  
 So a like Number of *Provincial Councils,* and a like Num-  
ber of *National Councils,* though their Messengers are many,   
yet they are still the *Twenty four Elders,* growing up, through   
grace, and increasing unto more *Orders of Councils,* for the   
greater glory of Christ.  
 And when (through grace) there shall be *Twenty four   
Churches,* or *first Councils,* or *Provincial,* or *National Coun-  
cils,* then they must be compacted into *two Orders* of those   
Councils, because *Twelve* is the Foundation Number, by   
which they are multiplied, and compacted. And when this   
is done, they are reduced to be *Twenty four Elders* strictly;   
the *Foundation Number.* As in the Order of that *Civill Government* set up by *Mo-  
 ses;*

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ses; the Orders of *Ten,* and of *fifty,* &c. are denominated   
by the least and constituting Number: though those Orders   
may consist (when they are full of people and blessing) of   
many more, even any number under *Twenty* and *an hun-  
dred, &c.* But when *Ten* are become *Twenty,* and when   
*Fifty* are become *an hundred,* then they must be multiplied   
into *more Orders,* because these Numbers are *Foundation   
Numbers,* by which the *Orders* of the Government are mul-  
tiplied and compacted; and when that is transacted, they   
are reduced unto their *Foundation Numbers.* So it is here in the Ecclesiastical Orders of Government,   
the least Number of a compleat stated *first Council,* is   
*Twelve Churches,* whose least Number of Messengers are   
*Twenty four;* and by these Numbers they are denominated,   
though they may be more Churches in a Combination, and   
more Messengers from some of the Churches: and so it is   
in all the other *Orders of Councils.* For a little further illustration of this point, I shall   
propose and answer *Six Questions,* which may let in a little   
further light into this Frame, and remove some Obje-  
ctions.  
 Quest. 1. *May a Church perform any Ecclesiastical Acts   
by Messengers, or Representatives in their Name?  
Answ.* Yea. doubtless they may; they may *Consult,* and   
*Agree* to *give Counsel,* in such cases as may be presented for   
that end, touching either *Faith* or *Order,* as it appeareth   
*Acts* 15.  
Quest 2. *May a Church elect by Messengers or Representa-  
tives, when themselves cannot be present where such Election   
is performed?  
Answ.* An act of Election may be transacted by *some* of   
a Society; yea by *a few* in behalf of the rest, when they   
have their consent, and a calling so to act. For instance,  
 If a *lesser Number* of a Church be necessarily absent from   
an act of Election performed in a lawful Assembly, they are   
all involved in the act of the *major* part: This is without   
Controversie so. Here some onely Elect, and all are en-  
gaged.  
 Again, if the *major* part be necessarily absent, and fond a   
*lesser* part, or a n*ew,* with their express consent to do an act   
of Election, it hath the like force and validity. The royal   
Army which chose *David* to be their King, 1 *Chron.* 12.   
were farre the lesser part of the People, but they were  
*free,* and *elected for them,* and did perform it as affectually  
 as  
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as if the *whole People* had been present; and *David* was   
King, not onely over the *Representatives,* who did actually   
chuse him, but over *all the People,* who did Elect him by   
their Representatives.  
 If the parties *sent* to transact an Election, do act accord-  
ing to their heart who sent them, they will not object, for   
had they been there present, they would have done the   
same: but if the parties sent to Elect, do not Elect accord-  
ing to their heart, they may justly question their act, and   
consider of their Apologie; but that doth not *nullifie* the   
act in point of Order.  
 When *Political Bodies,* whether *Civil* or *Ecclesiastical,*   
are multitudinous, and remote from the place of action,   
either *all cannot act,* or if they do, it must be by *Represen-  
tatives.* Quest. 3. *May a Church Elect Elders or Messengers out of   
another Church, unto a publick and common service of Christ   
and of the Churches?  
 Answ.* Yea, they may: For the *great Collection* of the   
*Gentile Churches,* which *Paul* carried up to *Jerusalem* at   
his last going thither, was an act of *many Churches:* And   
*Paul,* with those that went with him to present it, were   
*chosen by the Churches* unto that service, 2 *Cor.* 8. 19. And   
there were *many more Churches Contributors,* then there were   
*Messengers sent to carry it. Acts* 20. 4. there were but seven   
or eight in *Pauls* company, but all the Churches of *Galatia,   
Corinth, Asia,* and *Macedonia,* were Contributors. There-  
fore many Churches *chose Messengers* who were none of their   
own *particular Churches,* unto that *publick and common ser-  
vice of Christ, and of the Churches.* Again, the ready subjection of all the Churches about   
*Antioch,* and other places, *Acts* 16. 4. unto the Decrees of   
the Council at *Jerusalem,* doth probably speak, That, as the   
trouble by those *Questions,* was a *common case* in all the   
Churches; so they had some *fore-knowledge, concurrence,*   
and *consent* (after *consent* sure enough they had) in the Mis-  
sion of *Paul* and *Barnabas* (Teaching Elders of *Antioch,   
Acts* 13. 2.) unto *Jerusalem,* to the Apostles and Elders   
about that matter.  
 Again, seeing the Rule of *Communion of Churches* doth   
impose upon Elders a *degree of care of all the Churches,* espe-  
cially of those *within their Ordered Communion;* it doth al-  
so give unto all the Churches, a *mutual interest in each others   
Elders,  
 Hence,*

*[ 12 ]*Hence, when they chuse any of the Elders within the   
compass of their Order, they chuse those, who, in *some re-  
spect,* are their own, in whom they have an *Ecclesiastical in-  
terest,* especially unto this publick service of *Counsel.* Quest. 4. *May many Churches Elect a few of their Elders   
unto some publick and common service, wherein all the Chur-  
ches so Electing are interessed?  
 Answ.* Yea, they may: For *all the Churches* of *Asia, Ga-  
latia, Macedonia,* &c. did Elect *a few* to accompany *Paul*   
in carrying their Contributions unto *Jerusalem:* and it is   
expresly said, that from the Churches of *Asia* there were   
but *two sent,* Acts 20. 4. and we know there were at least   
*seven Churches* in *Asia,* Rev. 1.4.  
 Quest. 5. *When two, or a few Elders are chosen by many   
Churches unto some publick and common service of the Chur-  
ches, do they represent all the Churches who did Elect them   
unto that service?  
 Answ.* Yea, they do so: For when *many Churches* (by   
*Paul*'s ordering) sent *a few* Messengers to *Corinth,* 2 Cor. 8.   
23. to fetch their Contribution, to be carried (among the   
Contribution of many other Churches) unto *Jerusalem,* by   
the hands of *Paul,* and a few others, chosen by the Churches   
unto that service, 2 *Cor.* 8. 19. these *few Messengers* did re-  
present *all the Churches who sent them:* So as that what the   
Church of *Corinth* should transact *afore them,* is expresly   
said to be *afore all the Churches,* viz. who sent them, 2 *Cor.* 8. 24.  
 Quest. 6. *These Orders of Councils, First, Second, Third,   
representing fewer or more Churches, Are they a Divine Institution?  
 Answ.* Touching the *first Councils,* consisting of imme-  
diate *Messengers of Churches* sent for that end, it is out of   
question that these are a *Divine Institution,* Acts 15.  
 The great difficulty is, touching the *second* and *third   
Orders of Councils,* and so higher, unto the highest *Oecume-  
nical Council,* whose Members are chosen immediately by   
Councils, yet with the express consent of every particular Church:   
not immediately by the *Churches,* but by their *Representatives.* Touching these, in way of humble Proposal I affirm,  
*That they are a Divine Institution.*   
 1. Because their *Foundation, Formation,* and *Constitution,*   
is deducible from the *Word of God,* as appeareth by laying   
together the foregoing *Questions,* and *Answers* thereunto,   
with what hath been said before. 2. Be

[ 13 ]  
  
 2. Because this *multiplying of Order upon Order,* seemeth   
to be typified in the *Ascents* and *Degrees* in *Ezekiels* Tem-  
ple; and by the multiplication of the Number *Twelve* in   
the *New Jerusalem,* Rev. 21, *&c.* 3. Because if there be not this *multiplying of Council   
above Council* (*above,* I say, not in any spiritual(…?) *Power,* but   
in *Order* and *Extent*) then it doth not yet appear that there is   
any way or expedient, whereby there should be a *General*   
and *Equal* Communion of all the Churches in a Nation,   
wherein every Church shall be, by their own act and con-  
sent, interessed and concerned.  
 Much less can there be an *Equal* Communion of Churches,   
of several Nations.  
 For, if several Nations should need and desire to hold   
*Communion of Councils,* who shall chuse the *Persons* or *In-  
struments,* by whom this Communion shall be held and   
acted?  
 If *Princes* chuse them, it is not a regular Ecclesiastical Council.   
If *Churches* chuse, and send them, shall *some Churches* onely chuse   
them, or *all the Churches? is some* onely; *who?* and why *they,*   
and not *others,* and how can their act interest and oblige all?  
 If *all* the Churches must chuse, then *Immediately,* or by   
*Delegates: Immediately,* it is unfeizible, especially to act   
in knowledge and prudence; but *mediately* by their *Confi-  
dents* and *Representatives* they may.  
 The same may be said of the Communion of all the Chur-  
ches in a Nation or Province, where Elections must be per-  
formed by Representatives. In which way, a *General* and   
*Equal* Election is attainable; and without it, it doth not   
yet appear that it is attainable.  
 Now that *several Nations* ought to hold Communion,   
and also *all the Churches* in a Nation, it doth appear in these   
Scriptures: *Isa.* 19. 23, 24, 25. *Zeph.* 3. 9. 1 *Cor.* 11. 1 *&*   
14. 32, 36. Of which see more in *Synod at Boston.* This being commanded by God, and as yet no Way or   
Expedient appearing, whereby it may be duely acted, we   
are at a great loss. Therefore the Lord opening this way,   
which is so attainable, and not without Scripture Light,   
What if the Churches should set upon the *Tryall* of it, and   
see how the Lord may appear unto his Servants therein?   
As for the *Episcopal Way of Government,* Alas! that is   
most remote from this Ordinance of *Communion of Chur-  
ches. C H A P.*

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### *CHAP. III.*  Of the Constitution of Four Orders of Councils.

I. WHen *Twelve Churches,* or any other Number un-  
der *Twenty four,* shall agree to hold Communion   
in a Council for *Mutual Help,* and shall send forth Messen-  
gers at least *two* from every Church, and they of both Or-  
ders of Elders, or in defect of *Ruling Elders, Brethren emi-  
nent in Piety and Wisdome,* who are as Elders, to manage the   
Ordinance of *Counsel* in the behalf, and for the benefit of   
all the Churches herein combined.  
 These do constitute the *first Order* of a compleat Coun-  
cil; the *first Ascent* of the glorious Temple; the *first   
Row* in compacting the *New Jerusalem.* These are the   
*Twenty four Elders* before the Lord, representing all the   
Congregations which sent them. It is both needful and at-  
tainable, that these Councils should meet once every   
Moneth.  
 II. When *Twelve* of the *first Order* of Councils, or any   
other Number under *Twenty four,* shall, with the express   
consent of all their particular Churches, agree to hold Com-  
munion in a Council for *Mutual Help,* and for the benefit of   
all the Churches combined; and to that end, shall send   
forth from among themselves, at least *one* principal and   
eminent *Teaching Elder,* and *one Ruling Elder,* to manage   
the Ordinance of *Counsel,* in a Provincial Synod, in the be-  
half, and for the benefit of all the Churches herein com-  
bined: These do constitute the *second Order of Councils.*   
These are a *Provincial Council;* these do represent very   
many Churches, and all the people in them, with their ex-  
press consent, and yet they are but *Twenty four Elders,* so   
denominated by their least and constituting Number, though   
the Numbers represented be very great, according to *Rev.*   
5. 8, 9, *&c.* These all are *Church-Messengers,* sent forth to   
manage the Ordinance of *Counsel,* though immediately sent   
forth by the *first Councils,* with the express consent of all   
the Churches combined. These are the *second Row* of   
*Churches* compacted by the Number *Twelve;* the *second  
 Row*

[ 15 ] *Row of churches* in the *Temple,* of equal dimensions to the,  
first, and built upon the *first,* standing upon the same bot-  
tom and foundation, the *Twelve Apostles.* It is both need-  
full and attainable, that these should meet quarterly.  
 III. When *Twelve Provincial Councils,* or any other num-  
ber under *Twenty four,* shall, with the explicite consent of   
the *first Councils,* and with the explicite consent of the   
*Churches,* who are in this Combination, agree to hold Com-  
munion in a *Council* for *Mutual Help;* and to that end, shall   
send forth from among themselves at least *one* principal   
*Teaching Elder,* and *one Ruling Elder,* both eminent in ho-  
liness, wisdome, and all fitting abilities, to manage the Or-  
dinance of *Counsel* in a *National Synod,* in the behalf, and   
for the benefit of all the *Provinces, first Councils,* and *par-  
ticular Churches* herein combined: These do constitute a   
*Third Order of Councils.* These are a *National Council;*   
these do represent a *whole Nation of Churches,* and all the   
people of the Land; and yet they are but *Twenty four El-  
ders,* as *Rev.* 5. 1, 13, 14. though *all Creatures* concurre, and   
are combined in the work; all are represented before the   
Lord in *Twenty four Elders.* These are all of them *Church-  
Messengers,* sent forth to manage the Ordinance of *Counsel;*   
but they are immediately sent forth by the *Provinciall   
Councils.* IV. As the first Councils consist of the *most choyce persons*   
in all the Churches; so the Provincial Councils do consist   
of the *most choyce Instruments* in the respective Provinces;   
and the National Council doth consist of the *most choyce   
persons* in all the Nation: who pass through so many Ec-  
clesiastical Elections, before they arrive unto this *high and   
holy Service.* They pass under an opportunity of being   
called out from among all the *Choyce Jewels* of the Nation,   
who are in an Ecclesiastical Order and Capacity. It will be   
both needful and attainable, that these should meet once   
in a Year.  
 V. When *Twelve National Councils,* or any Number un-  
der *Twenty four,* shall agree, with the explicite consent of   
all the Churches, passing and arising through all the *Orders   
of Councils,* to hold Communion in Councils for *Mutual   
Help;* and to that end shall send Forth, at least *one Teach-  
ing,* and *one Ruling Elder,* men eminent in Holiness and   
Abilities for so high a service, to constitute an *Oecumenical   
Council,* and there to manage the Ordinance of *Counsel,* in   
the behalf, and for the benefit of all the *Churches* and *Coun-  
 cils*

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cils herein combined: These do constitute a *Fourth Order of   
Councils.* They are an *Oecumenical Council,* and repre-  
sent all the Churches in those Nations before the Lord  
 VI. *Twenty three Nations* met in one Council, will be a   
great glory to Christ, and by what hath yet been in the   
world, may be called *Oecumenical.* Yet when *the Kingdomes   
of this world, shall become the Kingdomes of our Lord, and of   
his Christ,* I know not but there will be Councils *above* this.   
Nay; why may there, not be *Twelve Ascents* in combining   
all the World? *Rev.* 21. 16, 17. But I leave it to the Lord.   
At present this is the top, and uppermost *Order of Councils,*   
and somewhat higher then we can yet well descry: but *Faith   
in the Promise* can see all the world in the *Gospel Order of   
Jesus Christ.* And now the Lord Jesus is triumphing in his   
Militant Glory upon earth, with his *Twenty four Elders*   
about him, in Ecclesiastical visible Order. And now the   
whole *Militant Body, fitly joyned together, and compacted by   
that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual   
working of the measure of every part from Christ, maketh in-  
crease of the body, unto the edifying of it self in love,* Ephes.   
4. 16.  
 VII. Furthermore consider, that though I have proposed   
but *Three Orders of Councils* within the Nation; yet in po-  
pulous Nations there may be a *〈X〉 of Provinces,* into   
*chief Provinces* and *sub-Provinces.* If a Nation be divided   
into (at least) *Twelve Ecclesiastical Provinces,* and every one   
of these divided into (at least) *Twelve Sub-provinces,* and   
every one of these into (at least) *Twelve Precincts* of *first   
Councils;* then they will have *Four Orders of Councils* within   
the Nation.  
 And *three* such *Ascents* will combine all the world into   
the holy Breastplate of our great High-Priest the Lord Je-  
sus, in an *Oecumenical Council;* or *three Ascents* in one Na-  
tion, and *four* such *Ascents* in the Combination of all the   
World, doth in like manner make up the holy Breastplate   
of Christ: Which *Council* may meet in *Jerusalem,* if the   
Lord will; and if that be so literal a meaning of sundry   
Texts that way looking. And when that *Council* shall agree   
of Universal dayes of *Fasting* or *Feasting* before the Lord,   
upon just occasion; Oh! what glorious dayes will those   
be, when *all the World* shall appear together before the   
Lord in such acts of Worship!  
 VIII. And as an eminent Preparatory to these glorious   
dayes (when Christ shall be King over all the earth, when   
 there

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*there shall be one Lord, and his Name one,* Zech. 14. 9. And   
when the Lord shal accomplish that Prophesie *Eze.* 34. 23, 24.   
*And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed   
them even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall   
be their Shepherd; and I the Lord will be their God, and my   
servant David a Prince among them: I am the Lord I have spoken   
it.* When Christ shall rule all the World, both in Civil   
and Ecclesiastical affairs, by the *Word of his mouth,*   
by the hand of Saints, even holy and religious *Kings, Prin-  
ces,* and *chief Rulers*) Oh that the Lord would put it into   
the heart of some of his Religious and Learned Servants, to   
take such pains about the holy *Hebrew Language,* as to fit   
it for this *Universal glorious use!* Considering, that above   
*all Languages* spoken by the lip of man (by reason its   
*Trigra macall Foundation,* and other regular Considera-  
tions, for the multiplications of all sorts of words) it is   
most capable to be *enlarged,* and fitted to express all *things*   
and *actions,* all *motions* and *notions* that our Human Intel-  
lect is capable of (to speak no higher of it). in this mortall   
life. Considering also, that it is the *Invention* of God him-  
self, and it is the *purest Language* on earth, not as yet defiled   
with the *scurrilos froth* and *some* of carnal Wits in wri-  
tings. Considering also, what is promised to be in *those   
dayes,* that way looking, *Zeph.3*. 9 *I will turn to the people   
a pure Language:* And when *Egypt* is converted, it is ex-  
pressed by this, that *they shall speak the Language of Canaan,*   
Isa. 19. 18, When all the World do obeisance to Christ   
*disjunction,* then *all Languages shall see my glory.* Isa. 66. 18.   
but when they do it *conjunctim,* in what Language better   
then in it, in which God first spake unto man? How shall   
*all flesh see the glory of the Lord together,* Isa. X. 5. unless   
there be an *Universal Language?* And what one fitter then   
*that,* which it pleased our Lord Jesus to make use of, when   
he spake from heaven unto *Paul t*o his first Conversion,   
*Acts* 6. 13, *I saw a light from heaven; and heard a voice   
speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew Tongue, Saul,   
Saul,* &c.  
 C H A P.

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 *CHAP. IV.*   
  
 The Order of Electing all these Councils; with   
 Consideration of the *Time* of their dura-  
 tion, and of the *Times* and *Place*   
 of Meeting.

I. THe Election of the First Council is severally per-  
formed in euery particular Church combined in   
the Society; wherein there seldome is any variety of   
choice, and therefore no difficulty in the action: So that it   
may be performed either by *Lifting up of Hands,* or by a   
*Silent Vote,* when their Silence is the sign of their Concur-  
rence.  
 If there be *two Teaching Elders,* the Church may send   
them both, if they see good, as *Antioch* sent *Paul* and  
Acts 1.3*,* who were two Teaching Elders of that Church,   
*Acts* 13. And according to the number of *Teaching El-  
ders,* whom they send, the like number of *Ruling Elders,* or  
principal *Brethren,* they are to send, and associate with   
them.  
 II. This act of the Churches Election must be diligently,   
religiously and solemnly attended and performed, as being  
fundamentally and essentially requisite, both for the *Consti-  
tution* of all Councils, and for the *Obligation* of all Chur-  
ches unto obedience.  
 This act of the Church hath reference, not onely to the   
Constitution of the *first Council,* but also of all the rest.   
For origin Churches are the *Efficient Causes* of Councils,   
none are to be chosen as a *Provincial, National,* or *Oecume-  
nical Synod,* but such as were *first chosen* by some particular  
Others to X a *first*  and oX on the of X to order.  
 Hence X it must be carefully and expressedly put into   
the X, of the Churches Election. That   
X are chosen X on the Ordinance of *〈◊〉* in all   
the Orders of it, both in *Provincial, National,* and *Oecum-  
ical,〈◊◊〉* even unto the highest point: for though all  
 that

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that are thus elected and sent by the Churches; are not to   
be elected and sent to *Provincial, National,* and *Oecumenical   
Councils,* yet some of them are to be sent, and all of them   
are to elect and send. And therefore when the Church   
doth elect and send them to this *first Council,* they are, by   
this act of the Church, impowered to carry on the Ordi-  
nance of *Counsel,* through all the Orders thereof, even to   
the top branch, either by *electing others,* or being *•…ected   
themselves,* unto those services of Christ, and of the chur-  
ches.  
 III. The *Time* of this Election, is to be upon the *Sab-  
bath* immediately preceding the *stated time* of the *first Coun-  
cils.* Monethly Meeting: and then are they to be sent forth   
with the Prayers and Blessing of the Church.  
 IV. The *Provincial Council* doth consist of the *choycest   
Instruments* in all the *first Councils,* by whom they are cho-  
sen and sent with their Prayers and Blessing: Every *first   
Council* electing the most holy, learned, and able Elders,   
both *Teaching* and *Ruling,* tha•… they have, who are most fit   
to promote and attain the end•… they are sent for, viz. To   
carry on the Ordinance of *Counsel* in a *Provincial Synod,* both   
by themselves, and by chusing such as may further promote   
the same in a *National Council,* &c.  
 V. The *Time* of *this Election,* is to be in that Session of   
the *first Councils,* which doth immediately precede the   
stated *Quarterly time* of the Provincial Councils Meet-  
ing.  
 VI. The *Order* and *Manner* of this Election may be this:   
The *Moderator* of that Session may first put this to vote, *whe-  
ther they will send bu•… one, or more then one Teaching Elders,* for   
by the good Providence and rich Grace of Christ, there may   
be sundry able and eminent *Lights* in one *first Council,* and   
such, as that it were a publick injury and detriment to the   
Cause of Christ, if they be not sent. This provided, That   
according to the Number of *Teaching Elders,* a like Num-  
ber of *Ruling Elders* be also sent with them.  
 The *Manner* of Election may be by *Papers,* if they see   
meet; which the *Moderator* and *Notary* are to take, and   
number, and manifest who are chosen: and such as are   
chosen, are by the *Notary* to be recorded.  
 VII. The *National Council* doth consist of the most   
choice, holy, able, and eminent *Lights* in all the *Provincial   
Councils,* by whom they are chosen, and sent forth with their   
prayers and blessing.  
 Every

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 Every *Provincial Council* chusing the most holy and   
able Elders, both *Teaching* and *Ruling,* that they have   
among them, to constitute a *National Council,* and to carry   
on the Ordinance of *Counsel,* in that high and holy service   
of Christ, and of all the Churches in the Nation; yet and   
among other Nations if need be, and when there is a calling   
thereunto.  
 VIII. The *Time* of this Election, is to be in *that Session*   
of the Provincial Councils, which doth immediately pre-  
cede the stated time of the *Annual Session* of the National   
Council.  
 The *Order* and *Manner* of their Election, may be in all   
respects according to the forementioned Election in the   
Provincial Synod.  
 IX. An *Oecumenical Council,* is to consist of the most holy   
and eminent *Lights* in all the *National Councils,* combined   
in this holy Ordinance of *Mutual Counsel;* and may readily   
be ordered by this standard, when the Lord shall in the   
riches of his grace, give opportunity to exercise the same.  
 Touching the *Duration* of these Councils.  
 X. Every one of these Councils doth continue in being,   
until, according to Order, a *new Election* be made; the   
new Election doth antiquate the old.  
 Hence, as the Primitive Church had Apostles alwayes in   
being, for their help; So there be at least three *Orders of   
Ecclesiastical Councils,* ever in being in every populous   
Christian Nation, who must at the *stated Times,* and may at   
any f*it time meet,* when the affairs of Christ, and of any of   
the Churches do need, and duely call for the same.  
 And when Christian Nations shall be thus combined, there   
will be an *Oecumenical Council* ever in being: yea, and   
when all the World shall be combined, there will be *a great   
Oecumenical Council* ever in being, to order all ecclesiastical   
affaires, in unity, holiness and peace, all the World over.  
 XI. A principal objection ariseth against this fixing and   
stating of Councils; viz. *That although pro-renascent Coun-  
cils are a divine, remedy, when troubles arise, as it was at*   
Antioch, *who also then finished the Council, when the present   
work was finished: but of fixed, stated, and permanent Coun-  
cils we have no example, nor doth there appear any ground is   
Scripture to bottom them upon.  
 Ans.* The Primitive Churches had a *stated* and *permanent*   
way of counsel eminently, and more then our *stated* and *per-  
manent Councils* can be, for they had the Apostles and Evan-  
gelists constantly among them. And

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 And though they had fixed Elders in every Church, yet   
they did need the visitations, and frequently made use of   
the counsel of the Apostles and Evangelists, who were the   
*permanent Councils* of the Primitive Churches.  
 And though it hath pleased the wisdome of our great   
Lawgiver, to give us but *one Example* of an ordinary Coun-  
cil, and that he hath done, to be our perpetual guide in our   
ordinary way; yet there be many examples of the Churches   
need of, and frequent use of the Apostles and Evangelists   
counsel, whom they had alwayes with them, or knew *when*   
and *where* to repair unto them for their help.  
 And we finde by much and long experience, that our *Re-  
forming Churches* do stand in as much (if not more) need   
of *constant* and *stated Councils,* as the primitive Churches   
did, of the *constant presence* of the Apostles and Evangelists,   
alwayes for their *directive,* and often for their *corrective   
help.* We finde by experience, that our Churches do oftener   
need the *directive* help of Councils, then the *corrective,* and   
in both respects together we need them to be always in being.  
 Many good works for the promotion of the Gospel and   
Kingdom of Jesus Christ do stick long in the birth, and   
languish: yea, oft miscarry and vanish for want of the help   
of Councils.  
 Sundry Churches also, and remote places, ly long in the   
dark, without food and help, for want of the orderly care   
of setled Councils; *Every bodies work is no-bodies.* But   
when all Churches are in order, all know where their work lyeth.  
 Disorders likewise, and insuperable distempers, by long   
fretting and burning in the bosom of sundry Churches, to   
the great dishonour of God, and scandal to the Saints, for   
want of *stated Councils:* some or other refusing (in the   
time of their temptations) to submit themselves unto the   
remedy, especially having that advantage, that without   
*their consent,* a *pro-renascent Council* may not be called; or   
if called by *some onely,* they have the less opportunity of   
doing good, and are in the more danger of doing hurt.  
 Nor can it be said that there is *no example* nor ground of   
stated and permanent Councils in the holy Scriptures, seeing   
the Apostles and Evangelists were so, and more, unto the   
Primitive Churches.  
 Hence also it was enough to give us *one pattern* of an or-  
dinary Council, there was no need for the continuation  
 therefore

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thereof, whilst the Apostles and Evangelists did survive.  
 Object. *But doth not this strengthen the Argument for   
Bishops, and such like Superintendents over the Churches? for   
so they argue.  
 Ans.* Were there a like example in an ordinary way, set   
down in Scripture, for this work to be done by any one   
*Man* not extraordinarily called, as there is *for a Council,* then   
their Argument would have force with it; but such a   
*pattern,* or *precept* for it, is not to be found. And the way   
of Councils, (which is clearly instituted) is sufficient to   
attain the end, as we have found by gracious and pieteous   
experience: though we are still defective, in that we have   
not our Councils *stated,* and we do finde great inconvenience   
by reason of that defect.  
 XII. These Councils, in the time of their *duration,* may   
multiply or cut short their Sessions, as need may require,   
according as the business of the Churches, and affairs of   
Christ may be more or less pressing and urgent.  
 Stated,  
 XIII. There be *two sorts* of their Meetings,  
 Occasional.

The *stated* Meetings of the *first Councils* are every *Moneth,*   
and what if it should be on the first *Third day* of the week,   
in every month, through the year?  
 The *stated* meeting of the *Provincial Councils,* are once   
every *quarter:* and what if two of them be the first *Third   
day* after the Sun touches the middle point of the summer   
and winter *Solstices?* And the other two, the first *Third   
day* after the Sun is in the *Vernal* and *Autumnal Equintial,*   
With this consideration, that if the Sun touch any of these   
points upon the *Third day* of the week, then that is the day   
of meeting; if on any other day, then the *Third day* after.  
 The stated meeting of the *National Council,* is once a *Year,*   
and best in the Spring: and what if it be the last *Third day*   
of the *First Moneth* called *March?* XIV. The Law of the *Constitution* doth call all these   
Councils to meet at the stated times, without any other   
order or appointment.  
 XV. It is very requisite that some eminent man preach a   
*publick Lecture,* on the day of the meeting of every Council,   
to draw many Saints together, and to raise a strong breath of   
Prayer, and to put the greater Solemnity upon so holy a work.  
 XVI. *Occasional Meetings* may be multiplied either by   
 intricacy

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intricacy of *Cases,* Variety of *Opinions,* Troublesomeness   
of *Persons,* Danger of *Churches,* Gross *Scandals* that can-  
not proceed to Censure, because of some obstruction, with-  
out the help of *Counsel.* Such *Occasional Meetings,* if foreseen, may be appointed   
by the Council before they rise; if not foreseen, then they   
must be called by the *Moderator* then in being, and the *No-  
tary,* by Letters under either of their hands, where distance   
of place requireth it.  
 XVII. The place of Meeting for these Councils, and   
especially of the *first Councils* is not to be limited, or tyed   
to any *one place,* because there be sundry Considerations   
about the place, whereof one may be prevalent at one time,   
and another time another: Sometimes the *age,* and unfitness   
for Travel of some eminently useful person; sometimes the   
common conveniency for all: Sometimes it may edifie to   
meet in that Church where the chief Trouble may at the   
present be, ard yet this not alwayes so, because the trou-  
bles of *Antioch* were heard and setled at *Jerusalem,* where   
the best and ablest Counsel was to be had, with the least   
trouble and inconveniency unto any.

*CHAP. V.*   
  
 The generall Work of all Ecclesiasticall   
 Councils.

THese *Ecclesiastical Councils* are to do for all the Chur-  
ches in an ordinary way, what the Apostles were to do   
in an extraordinary way. *The care of all the Churches doth   
lye upon them,* which appeareth both in the *Manner* of their   
Constitution, and *End* of their Meeting.  
 Yea, they are to do for *all the World* what lyeth in them,   
as the Apostles were to do, *Matth* 28. *Go, and teach all   
Nations,* &c.  
 I. Hence, first, if there be any Heathen people that yet   
know not Christ, it is a work well-becoming any of these   
*Orders of Councils,* and all of them in their harmony, to   
seek out, and *send forth sit Labourers* to such a work and  
 service

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service of Christ, to carry the Gospel, and preach Jesus   
Christ unto them; to gather and *plant Churches* amongst   
them. And it is the duty of particular Churches, unto   
whose Society such *Instruments,* chosen by the Councils, do   
belong, by *Fasting and Prayer,* and *Imposition of hands,* to   
send them forth unto that Work; as the Church of *Antioch*   
did unto *Barnabas* and *Saul,* when they were extraordinary-  
ly called, and sent forth unto such a Work as we are now   
speaking of, *Acts* 13. 2, 3. And this will be one holy way   
of improvement of *Church-treasuries* raised by voluntary   
Contributions, to *spread* and *propagate the Gospel* to all   
the World.  
 II. If there be any among the professing Nations *that sit   
in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death, and see   
no light,* (and too many such dark Corners there be, in the   
Land of *Zebulon* and *Naphthali,* Mat. 4. 15, 16.) who have   
none to bring the glad Tidings of Light and Life unto them,   
at least, none that *do it:* It well becometh the vigilance of   
these Councils, to provide and send fit Instruments unto   
them, by whose Labours, the *Light* (through grace) may   
arise, and shine among them. And it is the duty of the   
Churches to send forth such persons with their prayers and   
blessing, as abovesaid.  
 III. If there be any Sister-Church that hath *no Breasts,*   
(which, by death or other means oft falleth out, where   
Churches are numerous) it is a special and proper care of   
the Ecclesiastical Councils, to take a prudent, pious, and   
speedy course for their supply: It being a matter that hath   
a great tendency to the well-being not onely of that Church,   
but of the Councils also, into whose Communion all Elders   
are received.  
 And unto this point of their care and duty it doth be-  
long, sometimes to remove *Lights* from one *Candlestick* to   
another, where the gifts and labours of some special Instru-  
ments may be most fruitful, to the glory of God, and the   
publick good of Religion, and all the Churches.  
 But this is to be done with all wisdome, tenderness, and   
evidence of Scripture-light, that it is the *Will of God,* and   
for his *Glory* so to be, that so the Church concerned may   
yield it as an act of obedience to Christ, for whose sake they   
should be willing to *pluck out their right eyes,* and give them   
unto Christ, in obedience as unto the *Apostles,* so unto   
*Councils* their ordinary Successors.  
 IV. As the care of *all* the Churches dyeth on the Eccle∣siastical  
 Councils

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Councils, so especially the care of *those* Churches   
which are in Combination together, and whose Communion   
they do act, and towards whom their *first trust and care* is to   
be exercised, for their well-being on earth, and for the fur-  
therance of their eternal being in the Kingdome of heaven,   
and in all for the glory of Christ: and in particular to take   
care that there be general directions for Publick Worship,   
and all other Ecclesiastical Administrations, and Conversa-  
tion; and for *Catechism,* and *Platform* both of *Doctrine* and   
*Discipline.* V. If any *Errour* or *Heresie* arise, or be by any evil Instru-  
ments openly or secretly buzzed and infused, or any way   
rented and diffused, to hazard the infecting and poisoning   
any of the people: It is a special care of these *Councils* to   
take up the matter, to clear up the light of the case by the   
Word of God, and in due order to settle the *Cause.* and sup-  
press the *Errour,* by counselling the Church to whom the   
person belongeth, to a due *exercise of Discipline,* if need be.  
 VI. If any *Controversie,* or *doubtful Disputation* arise in   
any of the Churches, about any point of Religion, either in   
*Faith* or *Order;* because all difference of *Opinion* is apt to   
breed aliemtion of affection, and give entrance to Satan,   
and grief to the Spirit of Love and Peace: It concerneth   
the *Councils,* with all care and prudence, in due order to   
*settle* and *silence* such a Controversie.  
 VII. If any *Strife* or *Division* arise among any, either *per-  
sons,* or *parties,* or *Churches,* or *Towns,* or *Magistrates;* be-  
cause all strife is of Satan, and dangerous, and the higher   
the worse: Therefore it ought to be the care of all the   
Councils, speedily to *reconcile* (in an Ecclesiastical way, as to   
their spirits and affections) *all such strife,* with all care *re-  
fusing* to interpose, or meddle with the *Civil cause,* if any   
be, leaving that to be decided in Civil Order, according to   
the Ordinance of God.  
 VIII. If there arise any *difficulty* in any of the Churches   
about *Election of Officers, Administration of Censures, Admis-  
sion of Members, Education of Youth,* or in such like cases;   
(and when do all these vigorously proceed without *difficul-  
ty?*) It is the duty and care of these *Councils,* by the evi-  
dence of the light of the Word of God, so to *advise* and   
*counsel* these Churches, as that they may proceed to act in   
due unity, good order, and in the power and peace of the   
Gospel.  
 IX. Because the pious and prudent management of the  
 publick

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publick stock of *Prayers* and *Praises,* is a point that greatly   
doth concern the Church Militant: and because all the great   
Motions in the world are steered and managed by *Divine   
Providence,* according to the *Prayers* of the Churches, and of   
the Saints; Hence it is a great service of Christ, and of the   
Churches, for all the Councils to order and present matter   
of *Prayers* and *Thanksgiving,* and also to order and guide   
the times and seasons of *publick Fastings* and *Thanksgivings.*   
The management of the *great Wheel* of *publick Prayers,* as to   
the *presenting of matter,* and *ordering of seasons,* lyeth within   
the care and guidance of the Councils, by whose pious pru-  
dence, all the Churches will be led on in an united Spirit of   
Prayer, both for *matter* and *seasons▪* but abandoning the   
Antichristian *stinted Forms* and *Times.* X. If *Colonies,* or *New Towns* are to be erected in Wil-  
dernesses, or any unhabited places in the world; and peo-  
ple appear ready in their mindes to undertake such a *De-  
sign:* It is a singular point of wisdom and love, to manage   
such a design religiously, so as that God may go with them,   
and dwell in the midst of them. And therefore it is neces-  
sary that they have the Ministry of Gods Word, and some   
other godly persons with them, who may carry on Church-  
work among them. And this care belongeth to the *Coun-  
cils,* to order, guide, and provide for them.  
 XI. When *Parishional Congregations* are to be called up   
unto Reformation; and when Officers are to be Ordained   
among them, where none were before; and when, by *addition   
of Churches unto the Communion,* Councils are to be multipli-  
ed: These (and such like) are *blessed Births,* and very well-  
pleasing to Christ; and Oh how well it becometh these *Ec-  
clesiastical Councils* to Midwife forth such Births as these?  
 XII. When a *whole Church* or the *major* part thereof, do   
remove their dwellings, and transplant themselves into   
some other place; great care is to be had, that Christ may   
go with them that go, and that Christ may tarry, and not   
depart from them that tarry: The care of the holy and   
loving management of such a design, doth much concern,   
and well become the holy care of the *Ecclesiastical Coun-  
cils.  
 CHAP.*

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 *CHAP. VI.*   
 Concerning the particular works of all the Orders   
 of Councils: and first of the *First Order.*

WHen a Council of the *First Order* is met at the *stated   
time,* and in the *Place* agreed on, and have com-  
pleated themselves by chusing *Moderator* and *Notáries,* and   
have commended their work, their Churches, and all the   
Government, Civil and Ecclesiastical, &c. unto God in   
Prayer; then  
 I. The *Moderator,* with the Co-attestation of his Asso-  
ciate *Ruling Elder,* doth first declare the present state of   
the Church where they do minister, and who have sent them,   
to act *Communion of Councils* with the sister-Churches here   
represented, in this Council.  
 The present state of the Church he doth declare, in these   
five Points, in answering to these five Questions:

1. Whether they walk together in Truth and Love?   
truthing it in love, *Eph. 4. 15.*2. Whether Peace ruleth in their hearts, and braves it among   
them? 〈 in non-Latin alphabet , *Col. 3. 15.*3. Whether they walk in holiness of Life, Evangelically un-  
blameable? *Luk. 1. 6.*4. Whether the Lambs of the Flock be diligently fed, and   
trained up for Christ, in the nurture and admonition of the   
Lord? *Joh. 21. 15.*〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉, My little Lambs.   
*The care of the* Lambs, *is* one third part *of the charge over   
the Flock of God.*5. Whether the Lords-day be reverently, religiously and   
strictly observed by all? *Rev. 1. 10. Isai. 58. 13.*

The Affirmative of these Questions, (in Gospel Measure,   
and Endeavour, though not without infirmities) declared   
by him, and co-attested by his Associate *Ruling Elder,* is to   
be accepted, with all thankfulness unto God, for the present   
good estate in Christ, of that Church; and the *Notary* is to   
record the same to the praise of Christ Jesus.  
 II. The *Moderator* is to call upon all the Elders in order,   
to declare, with the co-attestation of their Associate R*u-  
ling Elders,* the state of all the Churches, touching the same   
five *Questions.* All whose *Reports* are distinctly to be re-  
corded, as the present good estate, in Christ, of all those  
 Churches,  
  
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Churches, to stand as a monument of Gods mercy to future   
ages: and to be presented upon record unto the *Provincial*   
and *National Councils.* III. If all the Churches walk in an Evangelical measure   
of Truth, Peace and Holiness, and have no cause that la-  
boureth among them, for want of *Helpe*d *Counsel;* then the   
*Moderator* is to declare to the praise of God, that the work   
of this present Session, as touching their own Churches, is finished.  
 IV. But if there be any *difference,* or *strife,* or any *difficult   
case* in any of the Churches, there opened by the *Elders:* The   
matter is first to be put, and resolved into a *Question* or   
*Questions,* according as the state of the case doth require:   
and those *Questions* recorded, as matter for the Council to   
give *advice* in, unto that Church from whence they came.   
Also it must be provided, that the party, or parties con-  
cerned in the case, or cases, be present, both at the *…ating*   
of the *Questions,* and *discussion* thereof, and at the *Applica-  
tion* thereof unto the particular case; and that he or they   
have competent liberty to *Discuss, Argue, Answer,* or what   
ever is requisite, to finde out and clear up the truth. The   
*Answer* to the *Questions,* and the *Application* thereof (so   
far as may stand with due reverence to the Church and glory   
of Christ) are to be recorded.  
 V. If there be any case which the *Elders* see cause not to   
produce themselves, or do refuse, then any *Brother* concern-  
ed may, yea though it reflect upon the Elders themselves.   
Or in case of Male-administration: or if any already censured   
appeal for further *Light* and *Conviction:* or if any *deserving   
Censure,* do appeal from the Church for *clearer conviction,*   
and the Church seeth cause to defer proceeding unto *Cen-  
sure,* (as sometimes it may be) upon his appeal: Or whatso-  
ever the case or trouble be; only all such *proposals* by any of   
the Fraternity, must be with due reverence, humility,   
and in the fear of God.  
 VI. If any other person or persons whatever, have any   
*Question* or *Case,* in matters of Religion, to propose unto   
the Council, they in the next place may have liberty in a   
reverent and orderly manner, to propose the same, and it is   
to be *Considered* and *Answered.* Also any other matter   
concerning the publick good of the Churches, and promo-  
tion of Religion, may be discussed and ordered, as *Fastings,   
Feastings propagation of the Gospel,* and the like.   
 VII. If business so multiply, that one day sufficeth not   
to finish the work, the Council have liberty to appoint other  
 times  
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times, so oft as they need, within the moneth: and if they   
finish not in that moneth, it must be left on record how the   
case standeth, and so to be presented to the Council that   
shall be chosen for the next moneth, which ordinarily, in   
this order, will be the same persons, or (at least) most of them.  
 VIII. If any *Case* prove too hard for them to resolve, or   
if they be considerably divided in judgement, then the *Case*   
is to be transmitted to the next *Provincial Council,* and re-  
corded so to be, with the *Reasons* of transmitting the sa•….  
 IX. If they agree in Counsel about any case or point of   
Religion, in *Faith* or *Order:* and if any person or persons,   
or Church concerned therein, do not *accept* of their counsel   
and judgement; he, or they, have liberty to appeal to the   
next *Provincial Council;* provided, that if the Council ad-  
vise the Church to proceed to *Ce•…re,* they are to follow   
that counsel, notwithstanding his appeal, and not to suffer  
sin to ly upon their brother; for if it were in the appeala•…   
power to stop the clear process of a Gospel-medicine to his   
soul in gross scandals, some would never come under the   
Soul-medicine of Christ Jesus, or not so soon as were meet:   
but he may appeal higher, for all actions of the Churches and   
Councils, are liable to a *Review,* until it come unto the high-  
est. And his *Appeal,* with the *Reasons* and manner thereof,   
are to be recorded.  
 X. Every first Council, in the Sessions immediately fore-  
going the quarterly time of the Provincial Councils meet-  
ing, must chuse from among themselves, at least *one Teaching   
Elder* and *one Ruling Elder,* to be sent unto the *Provincial   
Synod,* as Members of the same, there to represent the *first   
Councils* (who chose and sent them) and all the Churches   
with them combined: and to carry on the Ordinance of   
*Counsel* among them, according to due Order.  
 XI. Unto these thus chosen for the *Provincial Council,* are   
to be delivered in writing, first, a *Note* of the present state   
of all the Churches combined with them. Secondly, a *Note*   
of such *Cases* as are transmitted to the *Provincial Council,*   
if any such be. And thirdly, a *Note* of such *Appeals* as are   
made unto them, if any such be: all these, being first read,   
are then delivered unto them. And thus they are sent with   
their Prayers and Blessing.  
 XII. When all these Elders do return to their *own   
Churches,* they are (so far as in prudence is meet) to relate   
the *particular state* of all the Churches, the acts of the   
Council, the *persons chosen* for the Provincial Council, the   
 cases

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cases transmitted,* and *Appeales;* or so much as may give   
them a general view of the publick state of the Churches and   
Affaires of Christ, as matter of continual Prayers, Praises   
and Obedience in all the Churches.  
 The Particular works of the Provincial Council,   
 the second Order of Councils.  
THe *Provincial Council* being met at the *stated time,* and   
in the *place* agreed on, *Moderators* and *Notaries* chosen,   
the *work* blessed, as in the Council of the *first Order;* then  
 1. The *Moderator,* with the co-attestation of his Associate   
*Ruling Elder,* declareth the present state of the *first Council*   
that sent them; as also the present state of all the Churches   
combined in that Council, which he delivereth in writing,   
and may be now read in this Council. Then he delivereth   
in writing such *Cases* as are transmitted to them, and such   
*Appeales* as are made unto them, if any such be; these be-  
ing also read in the Council, are kept in order by the *Notaries* 2. The *Notaries* are to record the present state of that   
Council, and the general good estate of all the Churches, re-  
ferring unto the Records thereof now presented.  
 3. The *Moderator* is to call upon all the Elders, in order,   
with their Associates, delegated from all the *first Councils,*   
who are all to do as the *Moderator* did, declaring the *state* of   
the Councils, and of the Churches, delivering their Wri-  
tings to the *Notaries,* which are all read, and recorded.  
 4. The *Notaries* are to produce, when called for, all the   
*Papers* which present any Business or Work unto the Coun-  
cil, either by *Transmission,* or by *Appeals:* which are or-  
derly to be discussed. Care being taken, that all persons   
concerned be present, and have free and competent liberty   
to *argue, answer, object, dispute,* or what else may be requi-  
site for finding out of the Truth.  
 5. If there be no *Cases transmitted,* nor *Appeals* from any   
*first Councils,* then the business of the Lord, touching all   
their Churches, is (with glory and praise to Christ) so soon   
finished as mentioned.  
 6. If any person or persons whatsoever, have any *Que-  
stions* or *Cases* concerning Religion, & Ecclesiastical affairs   
of Christ, now they have liberty, in due reverence and order,   
to propose the same to be discussed and answered. And if   
work multiply, the Council may either tarry together, or   
multiply their Sessions, so oft as they see cause, in their   
*Quarter.* And what *Cases* they have unfinished, they are to  
 leave

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leave them upon *Record* for the next Council.  
 7. If there be any case *too difficult* for them, or that they   
be *considerably* divided in judgement in, then that Case is to   
transmitted to the *National Council.* The Notary is to *Re-  
cord* it, with the *Reasons* thereof.  
8. If any *counsel* or *judgement* agreed on by this *Council,* be   
not accepted or acquiesced in, by the party or parties con-  
cerned, he or they may *Appeal* unto the *National Council,* for   
further light; and the *Notaries* are to record it, and the   
*Reasons* thereof. Provided, that if this Council advise the   
Church to proceed to *Censure,* they may so do, if they see   
cause, notwithstanding his *Appeal.* 9. Those *Provincial Councils* which do immediately forego   
the *stated time* of the *National Councils* meeting, are each of   
them to chuse, at least, *one Teaching,* and *one Ruling Elder,*   
according to the manner aforesaid, who are to be *Represen-  
tatives* of these *Provincial Councils,* and of all the *first Coun-  
cils,* and Churches with them combined, in the *National   
Council;* who are chosen to carry on the Ordinance of   
*Counsel* in that Order.  
 10. The *Notaries* are publickly in the presence of every   
Council, to deliver in writing unto them who are chosen   
for the *National Council,* 1. The *present state* of all the *first   
Councils,* and of all the Churches combined with them.   
2. All the *Causes* that are transmitted by them unto the *Na-  
tional Council.* 3. The *Appeals,* if any such be. All these,   
being first read, are delivered to them: and so they are sent   
with their prayers and blessing.  
 11. If these *Councils* foresee any future Sessions this *quar-  
ter,* they may now agree upon the same: if any *Fasts* or   
*Feasts* are to be kept by all their Churches, they may now   
agree upon it, and propose the *Causes* thereof.  
 12. When these Elders do next meet in their *first Councils,*   
they must prudently and faithfully report the *good state* of all   
the rest of the *first Councils* in the Province, and of all the   
Churches combined with them, and all other *weighty affairs*   
fitting to be communicated, that so they may *relate* them to   
their *Churches,* that these things may be *mutter of joy, praise   
thanksgiving, prayer,* and *obedience* in all the Churches.  
 The particular Works of the National and highest Eccle-  
 siastical Council within the Nation.  
THe *National Council* being met at the *stated time,* and   
*place* agreed on, *compleated* and *blessed;* then  
1. The *Moderator,* with the co attestation of the *Ruling  
 Elder*

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*Elder* his Associate, is to declare unto them the present good   
estate of that *Provincial Council* which sent them, as also the   
state of all the *first Councils,* and *particular Churches* with   
them combined. Also he declareth such *cases a*s are *transmit-  
ted* by them unto this Council; and such *Appeals* as are made   
unto them, as part of the *present business* of this Council.   
All these things to be delivered in writing distinctly, unto   
the *Notaries,* who reade them all, and then record the pre-  
sent good estate of that Province, and all the Councils and   
Churches therein combined; as also the matters that are   
from them dilated unto the present Council.  
 2. The *Moderator* calleth all the rest of the *Provincial Re-  
presentatives* in order, who are to make the like declaration   
as the *Moderator* hath done, with the co-attestation of their   
Associate *Ruling Elders.* All their *Papers* are to be deli-  
vered to the *Notaries,* who are to reade, and then record   
them distinctly, with the present *Ecclesiastical state* of all the   
Provinces in the Nation, whose *Representatives* do there ap-  
pear, & make declaration thereof before the *National Council.* 3. The *Notaries* are orderly to propose all the *matters,* pre-  
sented by the *Provincial Councils,* when the *Moderator* re-  
quireth the same. Care being had, that the persons concern-  
ed be present, and have free and competent liberty to *argue,   
answer, object,* in due, reverent, and modest manner, and to do   
what may be necessary for the finding out of the truth.  
 4. If there be no *Cases transmitted* to them, nor *Appeals,*   
the affairs of all the Churches in the Nation are presently issued,   
with glory and praise to the *Lord Jesus, the King of Peace.* 5. If any other person or persons within the Nation, or of   
any other Nation, have any *Cases* or *Questions* about Religion, they   
may now have liberty of proposing the same, to receive an answer.  
 6. If any *Cases of difficulty* be such, as that they cannot   
obtain an *issue,* and *resolution satisfactory,* then the Case must   
be recorded, and stay untill by further consideration and   
discussion, God shall please to reveal further light therein,   
because there is no *Higher Council* to appeal unto for light,   
within the Nation. And in such casés, so the Apostles did   
walk, and teach the Churches to walk, *Phil* 3. 15, 16. *Let us   
therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any   
thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto   
you. Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let   
us walk by the same rule, let us minde the same things.* But if the matter be of due weight and worth, then either by

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by *Transmission* or *Appeal,* it may ascend unto an *Occumenical Council.* 7. If any person or persons, whose opinion or practice   
receiveth *a judgement,* with counsel and advice in reference   
to the person or persons concerned, and he or they rest not   
therein, as to Peace and Order; then if he or they (be they   
many or few) be not already under *Church Censure;* the   
Church to which they belong, are to proceed (according to   
the determination of this Council in the case) unto their   
*Censure,* as the Church of *Corinth* did upon the advice of   
*Paul,* 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5. for the healing of their soules, and   
bringing of them unto repentance, and good order. Which   
being effected, the end of all this acting, both in *Conviction*   
and *Correction,* is attended. And thus, within the compass   
of *one year,* the whole Order of Ecclesiastical Discipline   
hath its course, and that in a most difficult case.  
 8. But yet if he or they rest not, such are *high disturbers,*   
and must be suppressed by civil Power.  
 And in *civil Order,* he that doth not submit unto and rest   
in (as to peace and order) the sentence of the *Supreme Power,*   
is guilty of a *Capital Offence,* and ought to be put to death,   
by the Law of God, *Deut.* 17. 10, 11, 12, 13. and the rea-  
son is; because *Order* is better then any of our lives. It is   
a greater good to preserve *Order,* then to preserve the lives   
of the wilfull and obstinate violaters thereof. And the loss of *Order*   
and *Peace* in Ecclesiastical Government, in the way of the Churches,   
is of greater consequence, then the loss of their lives. *Zec.* 13. 3, 6.  
 9. All things that are to be commended or committed to   
*Civil Authority,* either from the Churches, or in behalf of   
the Churches, and Religion, are to be resolved, and acted   
by the *National Council.* Where great care is to be had, to   
keep a clear distinction, betwixt *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical   
Power,* and not to meddle, or in the least, intrude or intrench   
upon *Civil Authority.* The usurpation of *Antichrist* upon   
the *Civil Authority,* must ever keep the Ecclesiastical Coun-  
cils in a vigilant fear of that aspiring pride: a worm too   
apt to breed and grow in the breasts of learned, and eminent-  
ly gifted men, if there be not a vigilant spirit of mortifica-  
tion, and humble subjection unto Order.  
 10 It will be necessary that an appointed *Committee* of this   
*National Council* be alwayes (some or other of them) resi-  
dent near unto the *Supream Civil Authority;* that they may   
speedily have notice of all occurrences, that may have   
respect unto, or concern the Ecclesiastical affaires of the Churches

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Churches: and may receive *Commands* from Authority, about   
*Fastings* or *Feastings,* according to the well or ill being of   
the affaires of the Nation, or the Churches, either at home   
or abroad; and may call together the *whole Council,* if there   
be any cause that it should be so, &c.  
 11. Such *publick Fasts* and *Feasts* as concern all the Chur-  
ches in the Nation to solemnize, which are not first com-  
manded by civil Authority, why may they not be appointed   
and agreed on by the *National Councis* such *publick sins* as   
are to be bewailed; such *mercies* as are to be implored for   
our Churches, or for the Nation, or for forreign Churches   
and Nations; such *motions* and *designes* of spreading and pro-  
pagating religion as are in hand, &c. These are to be pre-  
sented to all the Churches as matter of *Prayer,* both ordi-  
nary and extraordinary.  
 12. When these Members of the *National Council* return   
unto the *Provincial Councils,* whose delegates they (immedi-  
ately) are, they are to report unto them the state and   
affaires of all the Churches in the Nation, and in forreign   
Nations also And they are to report them to all the *first   
Councils.* and they unto all the *Churches,* as matters of praise,   
and prayer to God, and of incouragement to obedience unto government.  
 And that this communication of Ecclesiastical affaires may   
be the more readily expedited:  
 1. All the *first Councils,* or some one of every Council,   
may meet that day seven night after the *Provincial Councils*   
meeting to hear the affaires of all the *Province.* And some   
of the *Provincial Council* may be there, to declare the   
affaires of all the Churches in the Province.  
 2. So likewise the *Provincial Councils* (or some of every   
*Provincial Council*) may meet that day seven-night after the   
Session of the *National Council,* to hear the affaires of the   
whole Nation, and some of the *National Council* may be there   
to give information of all things fitting to be communicated.   
But experience will put men upon the best way of Order in   
these things.  
 The particular duties of the *Oecumenical Council* I pass   
in silence; I leave them to their consideration, whose happy  
portion it shall be, to see those *glorious times,* when such   
Councils shall be called.  
 Notwithstanding these publick Orders of Councils, it is   
lawful for any person, or parties, or Church, to take any   
private cou*nsel,* that he or they will or can obtain, ac-  
cording to God, as they may have occasion.

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 *CHAP. VII.*   
 *Concerning the way to bring every Christian Pa-  
 rishional Congregation to be an explicite Re-  
 forming Congregational Church.*

I. EVery *Parishional Congregation,* who solemnly renoun-  
cing all their *sins* and *evils,* both personal and ec-  
clesiastical, shall willingly (by what wayes, means, or motives   
soever thereunto induced) *submit* themselves and their chil-  
dren to the *Government of Christ,* in Gospel-Order; and   
particularly to be guided in the *common concernments of Re-  
ligion,* by the holy advice of the forenamed *Orders of Coun-  
cils;* and do (by their pious and prudent *counsel* and *concur-  
rence*) orderly *elect all Officers,* both *Elders* and *Deacons,* a-  
mong themselves, and promise for *themselves* and their *house-  
holds,* to walk in the Christian exercise of all Gods Ordi-  
nances, according to Rule, in the *Faith and Order of the   
Gospel:* That *Parish,* or so many of them as shall herein con-  
curre. is to be owned *a particular Reforming Congregational   
Church;* and is to be received into the *Communion of the   
Churches* in this Order of Government. They delivering this   
act of theirs *in writing,* unto that *first Council* with whom   
they associate, there to be recorded.  
 II. It may, by the good blessing of God, greatly *promote   
Religion,* and the *Reformation* of *particular Churches,* if such   
of the *godly Gentry* of the Land, who are not in Civil Autho-  
rity, would please to do that honour to Christ, to *subject   
themselves* to his service, in accepting of the Offices of *Ru-  
ling Elders* and *Deacons,* in the churches of Jesus Christ. It   
would much strengthen the hands of *Church-government,* and   
be no small honour to themselves; and they will hereby   
render themselves *great in the Kingdome of Heaven.* III. By the Ordinance of Catechizing prudently exercised,   
both *publickly* in the Church, and in *private* houses, all the   
Church are to be trained up unto a competency of know-  
ledge in Jesus Christ.  
 IV. Special care is to be had in the *training up of Youth*   
in the good knowledge of God, made manifest to the *Church*   
by their publick account, answer, or confession thereof;   
and unto an explicite acknowledgement of Christ, with sub-  
mission and engagement of themselves unto the Church,   
 wherein

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wherein they *give up themselves and their children unto God,*   
to be ruled by Religion, in the *Faith and Order of the Gospel.*Which done, their Children are to be baptized.  
 V. Upon the due evidence of some hopeful *reall work* and   
*change of heart by Faith and Repentance,* duely manifested   
to the Church, whereby the persons concerned may be in   
Charity conceived *able to examine themselves, &to discern the   
Lords body* in the Sacrament, and spiritually to *judge* of a   
*spiritual cause,* such ought, by the Church, to be received   
unto Communion in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and   
such Males unto *Voting* in the Church; because ordinarily,   
such as are *able to discern Christ* in the Sacrament, are also   
able *spiritually to discern of a spiritual cause,* and thereby ca-  
pable to *Vote,* in such cases wherein the Fraternity is called   
to *Voting* in the Church.  
  
 *CHAP. VIII.*  *Touching the Maintenance of these Councils.*

I. THough it be meet that all their *necessary Charges* be   
born for them; for *who goeth on a warfare at his own   
charge?* yet it is in no wise meet that any Profits or Re-  
venues should be annexed unto any of the *Councils,* from the   
lowest unto the highest. Worldly Profit, Power and Splen-  
dor, are beneath the spirit and aim of the Gospel of Jesus   
Christ. Onely the *Notaries Place,* being a service of much   
labour, pains and diligence, it is ment that some considera-  
tion be had for some convenient *recompence* for their *labour.* II. If any godly minded Christian, out of a love unto,   
and zeal for the honour of the Kingdome of Jesus Christ,   
should desire to give, and annex *Maintenance* unto any of   
these forenamed Councils, more then conveniently to bear   
their Charges (as Noble *Constantine* did for the worldly   
splendor of the *Bishops*) it ought not to be *permitted,* but   
religiously opposed: for it will certainly prove an *Inlet* of   
great Corruption, Ambition, Avarice, and Strife, unworn-  
thy and unfit persons will endeavour to *Bribe themselves* into   
Places, more for the *Wages,* then for the *Work.* III. The *honour* of the Service, and the *glory* of Christ   
that is upon the *Messengers of the Churches,* these are inse-  
parable from the *Work,* and are as much as *flesh and blood*   
(we being in the flesh, and state militant) will be able  
 to

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 to *weather,* and keep from running a*ground* upon.  
 But *Revenue* and *Profit* are separable from the *Work, an*d must   
be religiously and earnestly, kept off, It being a *Work* that will   
surely, corrupt this blessed Work, and glorious Service of *Jesus Christ.* IV. A small *Revenue* will maintain the government of   
Churches by Councils, even in a great Nation, in comparison   
of the vast revenues which the *Antichristian Hierarchy* have   
farred and inriched themselves withall: which also hath   
advantaged them to arrogate unto themselves, and 〈◊〉   
civil Authority. And by these *carnal 〈◊〉* unto the Church,   
Religion hath been *corrupted,* most men have been *damned,*   
and no*w saved.* Therefore the Church ought   
now, in our reformation and resurrection, *to despise the   
World,* and not to suffer great revenues to be annexed unto   
this part of the kingdome of Christ especially.  
 V. The religious meetings of Councils, must be 〈◊〉   
of all meetings of all men, throughout the Nation: for   
they are many *shining Lights* met together, and all men will   
mark what they do, and one *Inch* of excess in them who are   
the Center, will be an *Ell* in the people.  
 Hence they must strive to be patterns to all men.  
 1. In *Gravity:* not full of Mirth, Laughter and Jesting.   
 2. In *Sobriety:* no excess in drinking wine and strong drink.   
 3. In *Moderation* of diet, Ornaments, or any Pomp.  
 4. In *Sedu….bity,* and *Diligence:* it is the Lords work, and   
*Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negtigently.* 5. In *all Holiness of Discourse* and *Behaviour.* 6. In *Patience* and *Meekness of Spirit,* in all matters.  
 7. In *Care for the publick Cause of Christ, and welfare of all  
the Churches,* the chief care of all which doth firstly and chiefly   
ly upon the Moderators.  
 VI. Great care is to be had of the *first Councils,* that there   
may be some *grave* and *exemplar Eaers* in every one of them,   
because according to our custom, there may be sundry that are young,   
raw, and weak, and need to be trained up unto the gravity, prudence,   
and holiness of the affaires of Christ his Ecclesiastical kingdome.  
 Care is also to be had, that *Grave, Sober,* and *Prudent   
Ruling Elders* may be sent, such as may be an awe unto green   
and young Schollars, where need may be.  
 Care is also to be had, that they stay no longer then ne\_  
cessary business, and just imployment holdeth them, that   
there may be no temptations like company-keeping in   
vanity, and smoaking away their precious time. VII. Their

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 VII. Their entertainment may be 8 *d. Ordinary* at soon,   
and 6 *d.* at night, provided they be necessitated to tarry all   
night, otherwise their charges are but their dinner and   
horse meat.  
 For the defr….enying of which charge, the *Deacons* of that   
Church where they meet, may be authorized so to order the   
matter with the *Deacons* of all the Churches in that com-  
bination, as that the charge shall be by them defrayed, and   
not put to the accompt of any of the Elders. And by the   
same hands some recompence may be given to the *Notaries,*   
for their labour and service.  
 For the supply of which charge, the *voluntary Contribu-  
tions* of every Church will be such a treasury, as will never   
know want, so long as Religion, and love to Christ remain   
and rule among them.  
 VIII. The *Provincial Councils* will be more choice and   
grave assemblies, and their treatment must be with more   
respect and reverence: but their expences with the like mo-  
deration and sobriety. It is to be supposed that these dwell   
more remote, are fuller of work, and must tarry longer.  
 If the *State* entertain these, and allow them 10 *li.* a   
Session for their four stated Sessions in a year; and 5 *li.* for   
the *Notaries,* it will not be a great charge.  
 And if the *National Council* have 100 li. *per annum* for   
their *Attendance* and *Notaries.* One thousand pound *per annum* will suffice for a great Na-  
tion where they may be in twenty Ecclesiastical Provinces.  
 And this charge will be less then the the revenues of   
some one Bishoprick. The design of *Antichrist* was to   
*pamper the flesh;* the design of Christ is to mortifie it, and   
to *honour Grace.*