

THE RESULT OF A COUNCIL OF NINE CHURCHES, MET AT  
NORTHAMPTON, JUNE 22, 1750.

*AT A COUNCIL OF NINE CHURCHES, VIZ.*

THE church in Enfield, Rev. Peter Reynolds, pastor ; Mr. Edward Collins, delegate.

Sheffield, Jonathan Hubbard, pastor ; Mr. Daniel Kellogg, delegate.

Sutton, David Hall, pastor ; Mr. Jonathan Hall, delegate.

Reading, William Hobby, pastor ; Mr. Samuel Bancroft, delegate.

The first church in Springfield, Robert Breck, pastor ; Mr. Thomas Stebbins, delegate.

Sunderland, Joseph Ashley, pastor ; Mr. Samuel Montague, delegate.

Hatfield, Timothy Woodbridge, pastor ; Oliver Partridge, Esq. delegate.

The first church in Hadley, Chester Williams, pastor ; Mr. Enos Nash, delegate.

Pelham, Robert Abercrombie, pastor ; Mr. Matthew Gray, delegate.

CONVENED at the call of the first church in Northampton, together with the elder of the church in Cold Spring,\* added by the consent of both the pastor and church of Northampton, in order to advise to a remedy from the calamities arising from the unsettled, broken state of the first church in Northampton, by reason of a controversy subsisting about the qualifications for full communion in the church.

The Reverend Mr. Hubbard was chosen moderator, and the Reverend Mr. Williams scribe.

The council, after seeking the divine presence and direction, had the matter in controversy laid before them, and finding the sentiments of the pastor and church concerning

\* Reverend Mr. Billing.

the qualifications necessary for full communion, to be diametrically opposite to each other ; the pastor insisting upon it as necessary to the admission of members to full communion, that they should make a profession of sanctifying grace ; whereas the brethren are of opinion that the Lord's supper is a converting ordinance, and consequently that persons, if they have a competency of knowledge and are of a blameless life, may be admitted to the Lord's table, although they make no such profession : And also finding that, by reason of this diversity of sentiments, the doors of the church have been some years, so that there has been no admission : And not being able to find out any method wherein the pastor and brethren can unite ; consistent with their own sentiments, in admitting members to full communion : The council did then, according to the desire of the church, expressed in their letters missive, proceed to consider of the expediency of dissolving the relation between pastor and people ; and, after hearing the church upon it, and mature deliberation of the case, the questions were put to the members of the council severally ;

1. Whether it be the opinion of this council that the reverend Mr Edwards, persisting in his principles, and the church in theirs in opposition to his, and insisting on a separation, it is necessary that the relation between pastor and people be dissolved ? *Resolved in the affirmative.*
2. Whether it be expedient that this relation be immediately dissolved ? *Passed in the affirmative.*

However, we take notice that notwithstanding the unhappy dispute which has arisen, and so long subsisted between the pastor and church of Northampton, upon the point before mentioned, we have had no other objection against him, but what relates to his sentiments upon the point aforesaid, laid before us : And although we have heard of some stories spread abroad, reflecting upon Mr. Edwards' sincerity with regard to the change of his sentiments about the qualifications for full communion ; yet we have received full satisfaction that they are false and groundless : And although we do not all of us agree with Mr. Edwards in our sentiments upon the

point, yet we have abundant reason to believe that he took much pains to get light in that matter ; and that he is uprightly following the dictates of his own conscience ; and with great pleasure reflect upon the Christian spirit and temper he has discovered in the unhappy controversy subsisting among them ; and think ourselves bound to testify our full charity towards him, and recommend him to any church or people agreeing with him in sentiments, as a person eminently qualified for the work of the gospel ministry.

And we would recommend it to the Rev. Mr. Edwards and the first church in Northampton, to take proper notice of the heavy frown of divine Providence, in suffering them to be reduced to such a state as to render a separation necessary, after they have lived so long and amicably together, and been mutual blessings and comforts to each other.

And now, recommending the Rev. Mr. Edwards, and the church in Northampton, to the grace of God we subscribe,

JONATHAN HUBBARD, Moderator;

In the name of the Council.

*Northampton, June 22, 1750.*

A true copy examined by

CHESTER WILLIAMS. Scribe.