

A Narrative of the Troubles in the Second Church in Windsor,
1735-1741

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Abstract

In 1740-41, the laypeople of the Congregational church in East Windsor drew up a lengthy document, "A Narrative of the Troubles in the Second Church in Windsor, 1735-1741." The narrative describes a six-year conflict within the church, and embedded within it are letters, church records, and the proceedings of church councils relating to the affair. The dispute was between the Rev. Timothy Edwards and his supporters, on the one hand, and a party of the laity headed by the future Connecticut governor Roger Wolcott, on the other. At stake were two issues: first, what powers belonged to the minister and to the membership in cases of church discipline, and by what procedures those powers should be exercised; second, whether one Joseph Diggins could be barred from owning the covenant, and thus whether his children could be barred from baptism.

The "Narrative" is a sustained statement by the East Windsor laity of their concerns about church government, the sacraments, marriage, and relations to their minister. The congregation, which also left behind a number of conversion relations,² was no "silent democracy" in the face of a "speaking aristocracy"; rather, they offered a comprehensive defense of their position from Scripture, New England practice, and analogy to politics. Just as the congregation put their arguments in the context of the history of the New England Way, so it is necessary to recount the history of Congregational church government in the Connecticut River Valley before examining the East Windsor church during Timothy Edwards's pastorate and the content of the "Narrative" itself.

The Congregational Way in the Connecticut River Valley

The Puritans who came to New England did so, in no small part, to establish their particular type of church polity. The first generation worked out the details, arriving at the Congregational Way as described in the sermons of John Cotton and other ministers and as codified in the Cambridge Platform.³ Because Congregationalists

¹ I thank David Hall for his comments on this document and introduction; Kenneth Minkema for his comments and for providing access to unpublished manuscripts from the East Windsor congregation; Abby Mullen for help in preparing the transcription; and Jane Kamensky and the participants in the North American Religions Colloquium at Harvard Divinity School for comments on earlier work with this document.

² Kenneth P. Minkema, "The East Windsor Conversion Relations, 1700-1725," *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin* 51 (1986): 7-63; Kenneth P. Minkema, "A Great Awakening Conversion: The Relation of Samuel Belcher," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 44 (January 1987): 121-126. Other relations from the congregation remain unpublished.

³ For the text of the Cambridge Platform, see Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), 194-237.

treated church polity, governance, discipline, and covenant so seriously, those concerns provoked most church conflicts. The central problems, worked out in church disputes over the course of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, involved the relative power between lay congregations and ministers and the relationship between churches, often expressed in church councils. These disputes, like the one that began in East Windsor in 1735, often hearkened back to the founding generation and to the Cambridge Platform.

The Cambridge Platform proved to be an enduringly important symbol of the New England Way, even as Congregationalists deviated from founding practices. At the Reforming synod of 1679, Boston minister Increase Mather urged the Cambridge Platform upon laity and ministers alike, and asked them to reaffirm it. Chebaco Parish pastor John Wise later became an ardent defender of the Cambridge Platform against innovations. But not all clergy were wholly in favor of the Cambridge Platform; many of them supported changes in church governance in order to meet the challenges of later generations. The laity were often loyal to the Cambridge Platform and to the traditions of church governance that went with it, but like the ministers they favored reforms or adaptations in specific circumstances.⁴

In the church disputes of the seventeenth century, three main principles of the Congregational Way were at stake. The first was that decisions about membership and discipline were made by the minister and congregation together. In admitting members to the congregation, the minister and sometimes lay leaders vetted the candidates, often heard their relations in advance, and propounded them to the congregation. But the congregation held the ultimate authority to admit or turn away potential members. This power went back to the first generation, as in the case of the congregation gathered at Dedham. There a small number of laypeople, along with the minister John Allin who took his place among the congregation, admitted one another upon careful consideration of the evidences of grace working in them. The process in Dedham, writes James Cooper, was an example of “the founders’ emphasis upon free consent and informed laity.”⁵

A sticking point in the shared admission of members was the veto. Beginning with the first generation, lay church members each had the power to veto a candidate for membership, in part to preserve the unity of the congregation and in part to guard against a candidate’s private sins that a member might know of. The power of the lay veto likely declined over the second half of the seventeenth century, as

⁴ James F. Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 142-434, 162-63; David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 197-226; see also Phillip Luke Sinitiere, “The Sad Tendency of Division and Contention in Churches: Church Schism, Ecclesiastical Discord, and Clergy Dismissal in Colonial New England” (PhD dissertation, University of Houston, 2009).

⁵ Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 16-18, 33-34.

congregations shifted from unanimous to majority votes.⁶ Ministers also had the power of a veto. Richard Mather proposed the ministerial veto in the 1640s, and it was implied in the Cambridge Platform. Ministers used the veto from time to time, as in cases where ministers rejected congregations' choice of assistant or successor ministers. The veto was always controversial, since a veto was a rejection of the congregation's will. Thus, when Timothy Edwards claimed the power of the veto in 1735 and then tried to exercise it, his congregation balked. His son Jonathan Edwards would later claim the veto on the basis that Solomon Stoddard had exercised it.⁷

The second principle was that Congregational churches were independent of one another, and the third was that Congregational churches had an obligation to aid one another. These reciprocal principles were practiced in synods, or church councils, an institution explicitly permitted by the Cambridge Platform. In synods, ministers and messengers offered counsel to troubled churches, but synods needed the invitation of the church and were bound to respect its independence. Over the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, councils came to be called more frequently but treated with less deference. As Cooper argues, ministers had successfully taught their congregations reliance on Scripture and the details of the Congregational Way, so that the laity considered themselves as authoritative on procedural matters as the ministers. The number of church quarrels greatly increased in the last part of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century. Though sometimes synods were convened without the permission of the troubled church, as in the Salem dispute described below, East Windsor had the opposite problem: Edwards and the congregation consented to call councils, but neither party could be persuaded to actually follow the councils' plain advice and chose instead to dispute their decisions.⁸

Three disputes—two of them within a particular congregation, and one over the Saybrook Platform's revisions to the Congregational Way—occurred in close chronological proximity to the East Windsor dispute. Though only the Saybrook Platform was mentioned in the "Narrative," it is likely that all three were in the minds of the congregation, as each involved the question of lay and ministerial cooperation in the church and in synods. Two of these three disputes took place within the Connecticut River Valley, home to the East Windsor congregation. These cases lent credence to the congregation's suspicions that they were in danger of losing their liberties, and that their bulwark was the Cambridge Platform.

⁶ Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 34, 110-11.

⁷ George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 574 n. 8; Patricia J. Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor: Religion and Society in Eighteenth Century Northampton* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 178.

⁸ Walker, *Creeeds and Platforms*, 233-34; Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 23-24, 118-19, 121, 128, 132, 170-71, 186-87.

Beginning in 1728, the church in Salem went through a lengthy dispute which tested the Congregational system of synods and independent churches as it related to lay delegates. The Salem troubles began when the minister, John Fiske, was accused of forging an entry in the church records that raised his pay. Though a faction in the church asked for a council, Fiske and the majority would not countenance the authority of either of the two councils that considered the case. The churches represented in the synod disagreed about whether the council had any authority without recognition from the Salem congregation. Even the question of who could participate in the council was muddled: some churches sent only lay delegates against the wishes of their ministers, and the council admitted these lay delegates only after a controversy.⁹ As in the Salem controversy, the East Windsor case raised the question of how to elect lay messengers to councils, and also continued the trend of disregarding the authority of a council's pronouncements.

The Breck affair, which took place in Springfield, Massachusetts, from 1734 to 1736, and which involved Timothy Edwards's son, Jonathan Edwards, was a test of the power of ministerial associations against the power of a congregation. The Springfield congregation wished to ordain Robert Breck, a man of doubtful character and doctrine. Breck was accused of being an "Arminian," and he appeared to be drifting to a more liberal theology, though he subscribed to the Westminster Confession. The Hampshire Association of ministers, with the aid of Northampton pastor Jonathan Edwards and West Springfield pastor Samuel Hopkins as their pamphleteers, intervened to prevent the ordination of Breck against the will of the congregation. After bitter acrimony culminating in the confused arrest of Breck, Breck was nevertheless ordained in January 1736. The Breck affair was resolved by a second council of ministers from Boston. Though the Boston ministers intervened in a town that more naturally fell within the concern of the Hampshire Association, their intervention proved decisive because it came in defense of the "liberty" of the Congregational churches against the "Presbyterian" usurpation of the Hampshire ministers.¹⁰

The ordination of Breck did not lay the argument to rest, for the newspaper and pamphlet dispute continued in 1735-36. The Hampshire ministers, as David Hall has pointed out, were primarily concerned not with the proper church procedures as set down in the Cambridge Platform, but with the soundness of Breck's doctrine and the

⁹ Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 188-193. The Salem council also had to decide how to permit lay delegates to vote. Though most councils gave each delegate, lay or ministerial, a vote, the Salem council decided to give each church that was represented a vote.

¹⁰ *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 12, *Ecclesiastical Writings*, ed. David D. Hall (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 4-17 (hereafter *WJE* vol. no: page no.); Jonathan Edwards, "A Letter to the Author of the Pamphlet Called An Answer to the Hampshire Narrative," *WJE* 12:91-165; Charles Edwin Jones, "The Impolitic Mr. Edwards: The Personal Dimension of the Robert Breck Affair," *The New England Quarterly* 51 (March 1978): 64-79.

ability of the ministers to police themselves. Both sides, however, used the Cambridge Platform as grounds for their arguments. For the pro-Breck party, whose spokesman was William Cooper, the Cambridge Platform guaranteed congregational independence against the “Presbyterian” usurpations of the association of ministers. The Hampshire ministers, whose spokesman was Jonathan Edwards, rebutted the argument by claiming that Breck’s defenders were critics of the Cambridge Platform.¹¹ The laity in the East Windsor dispute would make similar use of the Platform. The Breck case also bore a similarity to that in East Windsor, since the Hampshire ministers’ attempt to reject Breck was a kind of ministerial veto against lay wishes, though not a veto in precisely the same sense that Timothy Edwards claimed.

The Saybrook Platform, drawn up by Connecticut ministers and adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1708, was a contentious revision to the New England Way. Connecticut ministers, among them Timothy Edwards, were the driving force behind the Platform, which gave the sanction of the state to their ministerial associations. The Saybrook Platform was widely resisted by the laity in Connecticut, including by the laity in Edwards’s own church, and many churches refused to adopt the Platform. The animosity that Saybrook engendered would erupt again at East Windsor in 1735 when brought to a head by local issues.¹²

The longstanding questions of congregational and ministerial authority tested by Saybrook, Salem, and Springfield were raised within the contexts of sacramental piety and revival. The means of grace—prayer, Scripture reading, counsel, devotional books, and the sacraments of baptism and communion—were vital in the lives of New England’s pious.¹³ The late seventeenth century saw a rise in piety focused on the sacraments. Though the first generations of New Englanders had conceived of baptism and communion as “seals of the covenant,” by the end of the seventeenth century some ministers, such as Solomon Stoddard, considered the Lord’s Supper to be a converting ordinance, and even those who disagreed with Stoddard on that point, such as Increase Mather and Edward Taylor, practiced a sacramental piety that they held forth to their congregants.¹⁴ The practice of sacramental piety merged into the rhythms of the laity’s life cycle as part of a “family strategy,” for laypeople were often prompted to give a conversion relation or to own the covenant after

¹¹ *WJE* 12:13–17; Jones, “The Impolitic Mr. Edwards,” 64–79.

¹² *WJE* 12:13; Paul Robert Lucas, *Valley of Discord: Church and Society Along the Connecticut River, 1636–1725* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1976), 189–202. For the text of the Saybrook Platform, see Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 502–506.

¹³ Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

¹⁴ E. Brooks Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570–1720* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), chap. 7.

marriage or the birth of a child, in order to secure for the child the right of membership and baptism.¹⁵ In general, ministers and churches tended to guard the sacrament of communion by restricting it to “visible saints” who could give a convincing relation, but access to baptism was widened more and more.¹⁶ The laity’s “family strategy” persisted for many of the East Windsor laity for whom relations survive. Most notably, Joseph Diggins wished to own the covenant to secure baptism for his children, so the East Windsor troubles came to be charged with the enthusiasm of sacramental piety.¹⁷

The Connecticut River Valley also saw another kind of “enthusiasm” as many congregations experienced revivals. Often proving to be divisive, these awakenings led churches to split into Old Light and New Light congregations. These divisions of the Great Awakening were in some ways continuations of the problems of the seventeenth century, since the disputes were often over questions of admitting members. The church of East Windsor did not fracture during the Great Awakening, because Timothy Edwards had led his church to revivals since the beginning of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the strains in East Windsor were amplified by these revivals, and times of awakening often coincided with the start or end of times of trouble. The century-long debates over the Congregational Way, amplified by new enthusiasms, were worked out in the history of the East Windsor congregation.

The East Windsor Congregation During Timothy Edwards’s Pastorate

The First Church in Windsor was founded by pilgrims from Dorset, in England, who had temporarily settled in Dorchester, Massachusetts, then followed Thomas Hooker to Connecticut. The church was avowedly Congregational, as demonstrated in the Windsor Creed-Covenant of 1647, by which they pledged to “join themselves into a church covenant with one another,” to “bind ourselves in special to all the members of this body,” and to “submit or[selves] [*sic*] subject to all church administration in the Lord.”¹⁸ The Windsor church had a series of disagreements concerning lay power and ministerial prerogative. The first was over the Halfway

¹⁵ Anne S. Brown and David D. Hall, “Family Strategies and Religious Practice: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper in Early New England,” in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, trans. and ed. David D. Hall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 41–68.

¹⁶ *WJE* 12:31.

¹⁷ Minkema, “The East Windsor Conversion Relations, 1700–1725;” Minkema, “A Great Awakening Conversion.” Ann Fitch, Frances Bancroft, Ephraim Bancroft Jr., and Joseph Diggins clearly fit the “family strategy” pattern. Mary Rockwell, Jane Elmer, Abigail Rockwell, Elizabeth Bancroft, Mary Elsworth, Joshua Willis Jr., and Josiah Loomis likely converted in response to community, rather than life cycle, events.

¹⁸ Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, 154–56.

Covenant, on which the minister John Warham was indecisive and the laity divided. This dispute spilled into another over politics. The deciding issue came to be a dispute between “Congregational and Presbyterian” elements in the town, leading to a church split sanctioned by the Connecticut General Court. From 1669 to 1682, Windsor had two churches, one under Warham and his successor Nathaniel Chauncey, the second under Benjamin Woodbridge. The two congregations were only rejoined because the General Court was able to broker a compromise when both Chauncey and Woodbridge died in 1680.¹⁹

Timothy Edwards came to be the pastor of East Windsor (the Second Church in Windsor, now South Windsor) because the town of Windsor had grown, and the settlers on the east side of the great river wanted their own church. When Timothy Edwards arrived in May of 1694, the church had not officially gathered itself.²⁰ He ministered to the congregation until his death in January of 1758, with an assistant only in his last three years.²¹ Though his church had its shares of troubles, of which the “Narrative” is the longest recorded, the sixty-four-year tenure demonstrates the stability of the church and the success of Edwards’s pastorate.²²

Edwards’s effect on the congregation can be seen in that his congregants adopted his ideas about conversion. Edwards did much of his thinking about conversion and stressed it in his powerful sermons. He urged his people to prepare for conversion by using the means of grace, thus continuing the pious, preparationist practices of the seventeenth century. He was known as a diligent shepherd of the people in the church, who often sought his counsel. Under his ministry the congregation saw seven periods of revival in the church: 1699-1702, 1712-13, 1716, 1722-23, 1725, 1735, and 1740-41. Edwards propounded a simplified morphology of conversion, which his congregants gave every indication of following in their conversion relations. The relations in East Windsor continued to emphasize the voluntarism of the will and the experience of grace, sometimes even to a mystical level, while in other places, such as

¹⁹ Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century*, 187, 214-16; see also Frank Thistlethwaite, *Dorset Pilgrims: The Story of West Country Pilgrims Who Went to New England in the 17th Century* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1989), 178-83; Linda Auwers Bissell, “Family, Friends, and Neighbors: Social Interaction in Seventeenth-Century Windsor” (1973): 160-61, 228-35; Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 22, 31, 53-70, 79, 109-14; Frederick Lewis Weis, *The Colonial Clergy and the Colonial Churches of New England* (Lancaster, MA: Society of the Descendants of the Colonial Clergy, 1936); Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 94.

²⁰ A list of members of the church in 1700 along with a record of baptisms is transcribed in Henry Reed Stiles, *The History of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut* (New York: Charles B. Norton, 1859), 869-72.

²¹ Benjamin Trumbull, *A Complete History of Connecticut, Civil and Ecclesiastical* (New London, CT: H. D. Utley, 1898), 2:449.

²² Kenneth P. Minkema, “The Edwardses: A Ministerial Family in Eighteenth-Century New England” (PhD dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1988): 73-74.

Haverhill, the emphasis in relations was shifting towards the doctrinal and intellectual than the pious and voluntary. Just as Edwards emphasized conversion, so he strictly guarded the membership of the gathered church. He required relations before people could be joined to the church and be admitted to the Lord's Supper. In this he was like Edward Taylor and the Mathers and unlike his father-in-law Solomon Stoddard. He was also diligent in cases of discipline, and his strictness sometimes led to disagreement in the church.²³

There were several sources of tension within the East Windsor church. Edwards and the congregation had a number of petty disagreements over pay, as did nearly every church and pastor in the early eighteenth-century Connecticut River Valley.²⁴ There was also occasion over sixty-four years for personal disagreements. Edwards was a stern, even austere man. In matters of conscience he was unyielding, and it was his conscience that was at issue in the Diggins case. Edwards refused to go against his scruples in order to follow the council's recommendations, while his congregation tried to argue that he should subordinate his judgment to the council's.²⁵

Edwards's stubbornness amplified other disputes over church polity and cases of discipline. In terms of polity, Edwards favored the 1708 Saybrook Platform, having been a delegate to the synod which proposed it, and seeing the need for stronger ministerial associations to keep watch over churches. His church, however, rejected the Saybrook Platform in favor of the Cambridge Platform. The timing of the rejection may have been important in a complaint by the congregation that Edwards was too strict in guarding the membership of the church. Despite the rejection, Edwards did manage to bring disciplinary charges against some of his parishioners before the Hartford Association. Edwards continued to claim certain powers as a minister despite his congregation's rejection of Saybrook.²⁶

The Diggins case was not the first time that Edwards had to deal with couples who married without the blessing of the women's fathers. In 1725 John Moore and Abigail Stoughton married without permission. The congregation showed little

²³ Minkema, "The Edwardses," 34-40, 48-53, 75-76, 82-89, 95-102; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 25-29. For the conversion relations, see Minkema, "The East Windsor Conversion Relations, 1700-1725;" Minkema, "A Great Awakening Conversion." For the comparisons to Haverhill, see Douglas L. Winiarski, "Gendered 'Relations' in Haverhill, Massachusetts, 1719-1742," in *In Our Own Words: New England Diaries, 1600 to the Present*, trans. and ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press, 2008).

²⁴ Timothy Edwards, account books, manuscript, CHS; Records of the First Congregational Church of South Windsor, Connecticut, microfilm, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut; Minkema, "The Edwardses: A Ministerial Family in Eighteenth-Century New England," 120-26; Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 157-58, 163, 223-25.

²⁵ Minkema, "The Edwardses," 17, 34, 61; Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 22.

²⁶ Minkema, "The Edwardses," 108, 110-15.

interest in disciplining them, since they were adults, but Edwards's judgment was backed up by the Hartford Association of ministers and the law of Connecticut. The couple did not in fact divorce or receive an annulment, though they later had trouble in their marriage. Edwards had a number of personal reasons to be concerned about such marriages. His own parents had an extremely difficult, ill-advised marriage, and his father had been granted one of the first divorces in New England. Then too, Edwards was father to ten daughters, one of whom, Hannah, caused a scandal in 1735 by secretly courting one man and breaking off a betrothal to another.²⁷ So when another man who had married his wife without her father's permission applied to own the covenant, Edwards refused him, and that refusal sparked a dispute within the church.

The Causes of the 1735-41 Conflict

Before the East Windsor conflict began in earnest, Timothy Edwards preached a series of sermons in 1735 on church discipline. Edwards asserted that a pastor had the right to decide which cases were to be brought before the congregation. A number of church members objected to that procedure, as well as to the method for choosing lay messengers sent to church councils. The laity defended their position as rooted in the earliest congregational practices of the New England churches, defined in the Cambridge Platform of 1648, and they rejected the 1708 Saybrook Platform. These procedural questions became the main ground for contention.²⁸

Those theoretical issues did not come to a head until the case of Joseph Diggins raised the practical question. In December 1735 Diggins married Elizabeth Stoughton without the permission of her father, William Stoughton. Because he wanted to have his first child baptized, Diggins applied to own the covenant. Edwards refused Diggins unless he would first confess that his marriage was a scandalous sin. When the congregation asked that the case be submitted to their judgment, Edwards exercised the powers of pastoral rule about which he had earlier preached, arguing that since he had a veto over the congregation's decision and his mind was made up, there was no reason to bring the matter before them.²⁹

²⁷ Minkema, "The Edwardses," 115; Kenneth P. Minkema, "Hannah and Her Sisters: Sisterhood, Courtship, and Marriage in the Edwards Family in the Early Eighteenth Century," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 146 (January 1992): 35-56. J. Hammond Trumbull, ed., *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut Prior to the Union with New Haven Colony, May 1665* (Hartford: Brown and Parsons, 1850), 1:92, 540; *Acts and Laws of His Majesty's English Colony of Connecticut in New-England in America* (New London, 1750), 144-45.

²⁸ For a fuller discussion of the Diggins case, including correspondence and sermons from this time, see Minkema, "The Edwardses," 126-36.

²⁹ *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 61 (1907), 143-44; *NEHGR*, 62 (1908), 98. Diggins and Stoughton were married in Somers, Connecticut, which was near East Windsor.

While Edwards was not without supporters,³⁰ many in the congregation were outraged. They saw the matter not only as a case of church government gone awry and congregational principles forsaken, but also as a threat to their right to have their children baptized and to participate in communion. The sacramental piety preached by Edwards and the other ministers fueled the anger of the congregation when they believed that the congregational right was being denied to one of their own. As the sacraments were the motivation, so the sacraments were the battleground on which the dispute was fought. Starting in March 1738, the church did not take Communion together, a decision that Edwards likely made. After Edwards was satisfied with the judgment of a church council, he offered Communion to his congregants, but they refused it.³¹

However, the congregation's arguments in the "Narrative" were not primarily about the sacraments, but about church procedure. It is to those arguments that we now turn.

The Arguments of the "Narrative"

The "Narrative" is addressed to Joseph Sewall, the pastor of Old South Church in Boston, and to "the other Congregational ministers in New England." The preparation of a manuscript detailing the church's position was not unusual; a Chebaco congregation did so in 1679, as did the Salem congregation in their dispute.³² But the congregations' motives in addressing the "Narrative" to Sewall are something of a puzzle. It may indicate that the document was intended not just as a rhetorical appeal and justification of the congregation, but as a specific request for "counsel" and "protection" by the Boston ministers against the Hartford Association ministers who made up the councils that met at East Windsor, just as they had intervened in the Breck affair. The church did send an earlier version of their complaint to Sewall, who did not respond himself but who sent along the opinion of another Boston minister, Joshua Gee, that the congregation was in the right. Gee and Samuel Mather, Edwards's colleague across the river in the First Church of Windsor, had been two of four ministers who ordained Robert Breck.³³

Since the opening letter is dated 1740, and since the final appeal of the "Narrative" indicates that it was written after June 1740, we can presume that the

³⁰ See the Records of the First Congregational Church of South Windsor, Connecticut, microfilm, Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

³¹ Roger Wolcott, "A Narrative of the Troubles in the Second Church in Windsor, 1735-1741," 60. All page numbers for quotations from the "Narrative" indicate the pagination written in the manuscript.

³² Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 116, 192.

³³ Minkema, "The Edwardses: A Ministerial Family in Eighteenth-Century New England," 130-31; Hall, *Ecclesiastical Writings*, 12:9.

bulk of the manuscript was drawn up after that date. A postscript described the events of 1741, by which time the matter was more or less resolved, causing Wolcott and the congregation to refrain from publishing. But in 1740, when the letter and document was drafted, it may have seemed to the congregation that only an appeal to ministers outside the Hartford Association or the Connecticut River Valley could have won their cause.

The narrative bears Roger Wolcott's name, and he likely composed it on behalf of the congregation. As a man prominent in politics and diplomacy, Wolcott was a natural choice to represent the congregation; he had already been a Windsor selectman, deputy to the Connecticut General Assembly, justice of the peace, and judge of the Connecticut Superior Court. He would later become governor of Connecticut. A pious man, he was the author of a set of *Poetical Meditations*.³⁴

The central claim of the document was that the laity "Adhere[d] to the Order of Church Government" established in the Cambridge Platform, and "Refuse[d] to submit to the order of Discipline agreed upon at Saybrook 1708."³⁵ The congregation argued that though they had sent messengers to Saybrook, they had never adopted the platform in their church. The vocabulary of the critique in the "Narrative" was drawn from the Cambridge Platform. But even more, the laity's arguments about church procedures, such as the manner of voting and the power of lay messengers at synods, was based on the customary, traditional interpretation of the New England Way as described above. The church denied that Edwards could use a veto to prevent the case from coming before the church.

The "Narrative" is notable in its use of arguments drawn by analogy to political states. The church denied the ministerial veto by analogies to the power of the Lord Mayor of London and the governor of Connecticut.³⁶ Roger Wolcott may have influenced this language, and it may also have naturally presented itself to people for whom matters of town and colonial government were closely associated to church government. But this language is also drawn directly from the Cambridge Platform. In chapter ten, the Platform described the church as a "mixt Government" in which Christ was the monarch, the clergy the aristocracy, and the laity the democracy; yet the church was a system which required "the consent of both" ministers and clergy for its acts.³⁷ In contrast the Windsor "Narrative" worried that "If a minister hath a Negative, it Renders the Government of the church a meer monarchy," or "which is worse than monarchy with Tyranny."³⁸

³⁴ *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Wolcott, Roger," <http://www.anb.org/articles/01/01-01004.html>.

³⁵ "Narrative," title page.

³⁶ "Narrative," 17, cf. 20, 26.

³⁷ Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 217-20.

³⁸ "Narrative," 20.

To resolve the impasse, a council made up of ministers and messengers from Windsor, Hartford, Simsbury, Tolland, and Middletown met at East Windsor on October 9, 1738. They judged that Diggins's case ought to be heard by the church. When Diggins was tried and acquitted by the church, Edwards and two others dissenting, another council was held. Meeting on April 2, 1739, and then on June 12 and June 18, this council decided that the church did not err and that Diggins should be acquitted. Nevertheless the council recognized that the case was difficult, and perhaps also recognized the ministerial courtesy it owed Edwards, and so held that Edwards should not be forced to admit Diggins if he was unwilling. The council recommended that Diggins apply to a neighboring minister, own the covenant, and have his children baptized.

Diggins and his supporters refused to follow this advice, arguing that it undermined the principles of church watch which were the very point of owning the covenant. The trouble was also access to the sacraments, due to the difficulty of taking small children a distance to have them baptized, and of traveling for the Lord's Supper if Diggins should be admitted at some future date. Diggins applied again to own the covenant with the East Windsor church, and was refused again by Edwards. Edwards's conscience then became a new battleground. He would not admit Diggins, despite the ruling of the council, because he could not consider Diggins released from the scandal. He was thus "bound in conscience not to hold Communion with the offender."³⁹ Diggins likewise claimed conscience as a grounds for not following the compromise. As a procedural move, Diggins brought a charge against Edwards for "maladministration," but doubtless the maneuver was also motivated by animosity.

Though the first council's recommendations would in the end be followed, the church blamed it for "forming their Resolve so Liable to be construed contrary to itself" and called for another council.⁴⁰ The second council, which was held on April 22, 1740, met during already difficult circumstances. Besides ignoring the first council, the church had not participated in the Lord's Supper for nineteen months. Edwards had apparently suspended the observance; then when he offered to resume it in October, 1739, the church refused to take it. So when the second council refused to consider the questions put to it by the church unless the brethren recognized the Saybrook Platform, the congregation was angered at the "Evident Determining of them out of their Constitution and Denying Council."⁴¹

³⁹ "Narrative," 19. The Cambridge Platform specifically urged that in cases where sinners were admitted to Communion, the rest of the church not feel conscience-bound to refrain Communion. Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 229.

⁴⁰ "Narrative," 51.

⁴¹ "Narrative," 78; Minkema, "The Edwardses," 132.

The council was able to accomplish something outside of its deliberations, however. Persuaded by a group within the church that was increasingly dissatisfied with the stalemate, Diggins applied to own the covenant at the East Hartford church, pastored by the moderator of the second council, Samuel Woodbridge. Woodbridge also baptized Diggins's children, several more having been born during the course of the dispute. But the admission of Diggins to Woodbridge's church only encouraged the congregation to ask why Diggins should not be admitted to the East Windsor church, and so they pressured Edwards yet again to admit him.

During the dispute both sides expressed regret for the rift, and it was with relief that in August, 1741, they resumed Communion. The actual questions in the Diggins case were never resolved to anyone's satisfaction, though the baptism of the children likely took away the most pressing issue. A group of the laity pressured Diggins into withdrawing his case. They thereupon sent Edwards a message, signed by more church members than had signed any of the other documents contained in the "Narrative," saying, "we see nothing in the way butt we may sit Down at the Lords Table Togeather," from which they had abstained for thirty months. Edwards then "Propounded the sacrament which was attended by the Bretherin without objection."⁴² Still, the difficulty about how to select lay messengers remained, and the "Narrative" closes with a quarrel reflecting residual resentment between minister and congregation.

The "Narrative" is a significant document because the events that it describes and the arguments that it makes touch on the primary concerns of New England religious history from the perspective of the laity. Though other congregations published their opinions in church disputes, the East Windsor congregation's statement is particularly rich, all the more so when read in conjunction with the laity's extant conversion relations. Wolcott and the East Windsor laity were concerned with questions of ecclesiastical polity and the division of power between clergy and laity, but also with the implications of that power for the way people experienced religion in the gathered church and in their families. For at stake were the rights to baptism and membership of the laity, whose significance motivated Diggins's complaint and the congregation's defense of him. Questions of authority were also questions of conscience and covenant, dealing with the balance between the autonomy of the consciences of pastor or parishioner and the obligation to submit to church and council. In terms of geography, the "Narrative" is primarily local, but it is embedded in a system of churches within the region around Windsor and Hartford and within the New England colonies. In terms of chronology, the "Narrative" carries on what was by then a century-old tradition of debate over the Congregational Way, as in Chebaco, Salem, Saybrook, and Springfield, but it also contains some of the same elements as church disputes later in the eighteenth

⁴² "Narrative," 104.

century, such as Jonathan Edwards's dismissal from Northampton. In short, the "Narrative" is useful as a lens into New England Congregationalism in all its complexities.

A note on the manuscript

The manuscript "A Narrative of the Troubles in the Second Church in Windsor," by Roger Wolcott, is held in the collections of the Connecticut Historical Society.⁴³ The manuscript has 111 pages, containing copies of letters and church proceedings that substantiate Wolcott's narrative of the controversy in the church. A prefatory letter indicates that the congregation planned to print the "Narrative," which was to be "Published at the Disire of Severall of the Brethren and others."⁴⁴ The document was not in fact printed.

Wolcott is not announced as the author, except in notes added by other hands, but he has universally been understood to be the author and compiler. Throughout, the document bears the authority of the congregation (or at least, that part of the congregation which dissented from Edwards's ruling), in the collection of letters and remonstrances, and in the signatures of the various lay leaders.

The document has numerous corrections, including frequent changes in spelling. Whole sections of the document have been marked out. Henry Reed Stiles, the nineteenth-century historian of Windsor, described the document as "written in the clear chirography of Governor Roger Wolcott."⁴⁵ The corrections to the manuscript and changes in spelling indicate that there were probably two copyists, one who checked the manuscript after the other. The document gives the appearance of having been prepared for the press, albeit not in a fair copy. Though not printed, it is likely that the document was published as a manuscript through the circulation of written copies. As David Hall has pointed out, "any text that existed in one or more handwritten copies can be considered published." Scribal publication had particular advantages, in this case the advantage of discreteness.⁴⁶

The transcription is diplomatic. Superscripts for abbreviations are in the manuscript. Interpolations and carets are written between lines as they appear in the manuscript. Text that is struck through indicates deletions in the original where the underlying text is legible; text that has been rubbed out is restored when possible in the notes. Brackets indicate letters or words added when the sense is not clear; these have been kept to a minimum. Brackets with one question mark [?] indicate doubtful

⁴³ Roger Wolcott Papers, box 3, folder 6, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford.

⁴⁴ "Narrative," title page.

⁴⁵ Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 240.

⁴⁶ See David D. Hall, *Ways of Writing: the Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 29-80, quotation on p. 33.

transcriptions. Line and page breaks appear as in the original. The pagination is that of the manuscript, though the page numbers appear to be a later addition.

Deposited with the Conn. Hist^l. Society.

March 1848 by

George Gibbs¹

Deposited for safe-keeping,—during the

pleasure of Mr. Gibbs of New York.

March 13th 1848.

George Gibbs

R. Wolcott's Narrative, ~~1741~~ 1735-41.

A

Narrative

of the Troubles in the Second Church in

Windsor

from the year 1735: to the year 1741

With the

Reasons why the Brethren of that Church

Adhere to the Order of Church Government

Assented to

By the Churches of New England A: Dom: 1648,²

And

Refuse to Submit to the order of Discipline

Agreed upon at Saybrook 1708

Acts 17:11 These were more noble —————

in that they Received the word with all Readiness of mind

and Searched the Scriptures Dayly whether these things were So

————— Si quid Novisti Rectius Ist is

candidus Imperti Si non his utere meum.

Hor.³

Published at the Disire of Severall of the Bretherin

and others

To the Rev^d: Dr. Joseph Sewall⁴ and the other
 Congregational ministers in New England⁵

=====

Rev^d: Fathers

Here is Submitted to you⁶ a Narrative of our
 Long and Continued Troubles and the Dangerous
 Circumstances of our Present State (Which we
 have Provided Should be Printed ~~and bound up~~
~~with the Congregational Platform~~) you will
 find that in the Cases wherein we want Light
 and Peace we are Denied Counsell from our
 Neighbouring Churches unless we will Renounce
 our Constitution which we Can't willingly do.
 Yet without Counsell we Can't See how we Can
 Preserve Order and therefore must resign.

—

Venerable Sirs _— You Know that Even Nature
 itself Teacheth our Little Children when they
 Fear a violent Death to fly into the arms of
 their fathers. Indeed Protection is the principle
 thing they aim at y but if that cannot be had
 yet it Seemeth Some Satisfaction to them

2

to Die in the arms of a Sympathizing father

So wee in this Case fly to you and Lay our
 Difficulty, and Dangers before you. We may
 have Erred from our Constitution if so You
 will See it and Correct us for it: if we have
 Kept to our Order we pray that if it be not
 too Great a Trouble You would Grant us your
 Countenance and Protection in it but if this
 Can't be obtained frown not upon us whilst
 we are Reaching after this Latest favour
 to be Received into your arms there to Ex-
 =pire we are Rev^d: S^{rs}:

Your fellow citizens and
 of the same household of

June 25th 1740

Faith

The Privileges of the Churches Contended for

~~And [illeg.]~~

~~This~~

~~[illeg.]~~⁷

The Church of Christ, in Windsor, was settled there in the year 1636. under the Pastoral Care of the Rev^d M^r Warham,⁸ who Died Anno Dom. 1670. the Next Minister that Peaceably settled there, was the Rev^d M^r Samuel Mather.⁹ These were both Congregational Divines, and thir Brethren were of the Same opinion. In the year 1698. the Church Divided, and those members, who Dwelt on the East Side of the River, Embodied into Church Estat[e] under the pastoral Care of the Rev^d: M^r Timothy Edwards, their present Minister.

The Congregational Discipline had been Professed and followed, by these Churches from their beginning, untill about the year 1708, at which Time, there was much Discourse, in the Colony, that Something more Should be Done for the Intrest of Religion. Whereupon, by order of the Assembly the Elders, and Messengers¹⁰ of
the

(2)

The Respective Churches, met in the several Countys, to advise on that affair. what those Councils did, we are not Informed, Saving, that they appointed Delegates who met at Saybrook, Sept^r: the Ninth 1708.¹¹ and agreed upon an order of Church Government, which they presented to the Gen^l: Assembly, who approv'd of it ^{chhs in the} so far as to justify the ^ use of it, as far as they Liked it Reserving to the Churches, a full Liberty to Dissent from it, if they tho't best.

After this, the Rev^d: M^r. Edwards, asserted this agreement to be the Establisht order of our Church Government. Because the Church had Sent their messengers to the County Councils; and they had Chose the Delegates, who made the Agreement; which the Assembly had now approv^d.

The brethren Could not be Satisfyed with this, Knowing that, when they Sent their messengers to the County Councils, they were not, in the Lest, aware any thing was Intended to Destroy their Congregational Constitution; nor had Given their messengers any Power, to Give it up, or alter it; nor to Substitute or Impower others under them to Do it; and finding the assembly had fully Secured their Church Privileges to them, the Brethren Refused to Submit to the agreement, made at Saybrook as their Establish't order of Dis-

cipline, Professing their Religious adherence — to

(3)

to their antient Congregational order. ———

The Brethren, finding their Pastor so much attacht to this New Scheme of Discipline, and finding that, by the articles in it, the messengers Signified nothing to make an act of Counsell, unless they Conformed to the major part of the Elders, and having before Sevrall of them Remonstrated against the Silential¹² voates, (as they were Call^d) and being now more apprehensive than Ever, that these Silential voates, would Quickly produce, Silential messengers, Especially Considering Such men were the Likeliest to menage¹³ according to the new Scheme, they to their pastor Insisted upon their Right, to the free Choise of their messengers, but to no Effect. ———

In the Year 1735 M^r Edwards, Preaching Some Sermon of Church Discipline, had amongst others such passages as these 1st It belongs to the Pastor of the Church, to Judge and Determine what Complaints, or accusati-
-ons Shall be brought before the Church and what not 2^{dly}: The votes of the Brethren, to Convict or
Restore an ofender, are of no force or validity,
without the Concurrence or approbation of the ~~pastor~~
Pastor.

Several of the Brethren being of a Different opinion
the
and Desirous that ^ Diferent opinions about the Churches

(4)

Right to Chuse their messengers, as well as our Different Opinions¹⁴ about this matter, might be Settled by a free and open Conference, they put up there motion to their Pastor as follows. — (viz.) —

‘ Windsor Dec^r: 30th 1735

‘ Rev^d: Sr

‘ In those Sermons, you Lately Delivered to

‘ your People, Respecting Church Government (if we

‘ mistook you not) among other things, you Declared

‘ to this Effect:

‘ 1st. That according to the Congregational Principles, when

‘ any Complaint is Brought to the Pastor to be Laid before the Church, for their Determination; such Pastor

‘ might Ex officio Stop Such Complaint, and hinder it

‘ from Ever being heard, by the Church, and altho’ he

‘ Act

‘ should therein Corruptly, the Church had no power

‘ ^

‘ to Rectify it. — In this, Rev^d: S^r., we are at present

‘ of a Different opinion.

‘ that

‘ 2^{dly} When a Complaint is brought To¹⁵ the pastor, to

‘ ^

‘ be Laid before the Church, and the Pastor Enquireth

‘ after the Evidence, what may Probably be Proved

‘ in that Case, it is the Duty of the Wittnesses to

‘ Write and Sign their Testimony, as the uttmost they

Can

(5)

‘ Can say in the Case, So that the pastor may Know and
 ‘ Depend upon it as Such. — In this also, S^r., we
 ‘ must beg Leave to Differ from you, and we are of
 ‘ opinion that it is against Right and Reason,
 ‘ that any Such thing Should be ask’t for or Granted.
 ‘ 3^{dly}: You propounded Sundry objections, that might
 the
 ‘ be made against associations,¹⁶ and answered them;
 ^
 ‘ and indeed, as far as Such associations, are for
 ‘ advice only, we Do not Object against them.

 ‘ But that which has been and Still is the Difficul
 ‘ -ty with us, You Never medled with; we therefore
 ‘ now beg Leave to Propound it.— it is this ———
 ‘ When the Pastors and messengers meet in Councell
 ‘ to Determine Cases, the messengers have not an
 ‘ Equal voice with the Pastors; this we take to be
 ‘ without warrant from the Scriptures and contrar[y]
 ‘ to both Congregational and Presbyterian Principles.

 ‘ And here, Rev^d S^r: Suffer us to mention another
 ‘ thing, as Matter of further Greivance to us, that is
 ‘ the method, that has been Taken in this Church,
 ‘ Ever Since you have been the Pastor of it, (as
 ‘ far as we can remember) In Sending messengers to Counc[el]
 ‘ (Tho’ often spoken against by some members). ———
 it is this

(6)

‘ it is this — When messengers are to be Sent to Councils,
 ‘ Instead of Giving the Church, a Fair and free Choice,
 ‘ of her messengers, the Pastor propounds the man, or
 ‘ men, that Shall be Sent, and Declares to the Church
 ‘ that, unless they Shall Object against it, he Shall
 ‘ Take their Silence for their Consent. And then, unless
 ‘ Some person Rise up, and Say the Person propound
 ‘ -ed is not fit, to be Sent, or Give Some other Reason
 ‘ why he Should not be Sent, (which can’t be done
 at Lest
 ‘ without Some Real or seeming Reflection) on the
 ^
 ‘ man Propounded and the minister that Propounds
 ‘ him, and therefore is Seldom Done. Yet if omitted
 ‘ the Person Propounded Takes his place in Councell,
 ‘ as a messenger Chosen, by the Church when in
 ‘ our opinion he is only appointed by the mi
 ‘ nister. All that Can be Said of the Church is,
 ‘ that they never Declared he Should not be their
 ‘ messenger, and who will Say they have not
 for
 ‘ Done as much, ~~by~~ Every other member? who are
 ^
 ‘ therefore as much Chosen as the man propound
 ‘ ed. _____

(7)

‘ S^r The Rev^d Pastors, that followed God into this Wilder
 ‘ ness, that they might Enjoy his worship in the purity there
 ‘ =of, according to his word, Did, by many arguments ~~D^r~~
 ‘ Drawn from the Scriptures, Settle the Congregational
 ‘ principles, and agree upon it, as the platform of their
 ‘ Church Government; by which principles, the pastor him
 ‘ self took his place, in Councell, by mission from his
 ‘ Church. the Churches had a Fair and free Choice of
 ‘ their messengers. In Councill the pastors and other
 ‘ Messengers had an Equal voice. —————
 ‘ Thus our fathers Believed, and thus they Practised,
 ‘ an
 ‘ and God owned and blest them, in it, with abunda[^][nt]
 ‘ Increase of Godliness, in the Power of it, and in
 ‘ much Cordial Love between ~~minister and minister~~
 ‘ Minister and People, and Christians, Generally one
 ‘ with another. but they were not suffered to Continue
 ‘ by Reason of Death, and since these fathers are
 ‘ fallen Asleep, these Things have not Continued, as
 ‘ they were. we have Left off to do our first work
 ‘ and altho the arguments, and Conclusions of these
 ‘ Eminent Divines the first Settlers of the Churches
 ‘ in New England, have never been Disputed and pr[ov]
 ‘ to be
 ‘ ed unscriptural and unsound,
 ‘ ^

(8)

‘ yet we Insensibly and, we Scarcely Know how, warp
 ‘ -ed off from our Constitution.

‘ And now the Pastor Takes his place in Councill, and
 ‘ the messengers are of his own appointing, without
 ‘ any Fair and free Choice of the Church, and when
 ‘ they Come to Councill, They Stand for Cyphers, unless
 ‘ they Conform themselves to the major part of the
 ‘ Pastors.

‘ And Since we have left of[f] to do our first work,
 ‘ tis manifest New England has Left her first Love.¹⁷
 ‘ Nor Can it be wondered at, if Particular Churches be
 ‘ fearfull their Privileges are not verry safe in a Coun-
 ‘ cill, to which they are denied a free Choice, in send-
 ‘ ing their messengers. Nor will Their messengers be al-
 ‘ lowed to act when they are there, and to these Declensions,
 ‘ we fear, are owing the present Divisions and Distractions
 ‘ in New England, that So awfully Threaten the Subversi-
 ‘ on of our Churches, and Reducing us back into bondage
 ‘ unless we Keep our Constitution.

‘ Rev^d. S^r. we Intreat the favour of you to Give us an
 ‘ opportunity freely to Discourse these things with you.
 ‘ And we should be Glad, if it be agreeable to you, that
 ‘ the Church may be present, that we may be of the Same
 ‘ mind and Judgment, and Practice accordingly ——

(9)

‘ If we are mistaken in any matter of Fact, we are Ready to
 ‘ be Corrected, if in point of opinion, we are wrong, we are
 ‘ ready to retract as the truth Shall appear to be; for we pro
 ‘ fess we move for this Conference only that, we may religious
 ‘ ly Commune of these matters, and Give and receive reason,
 ‘ for it is a very uncomfortable thing to us, that we Should
 ‘ differ from you in any respect. we hope this motion
 ‘ will not be offensive to you, when you Consider that
 ‘ we Really believe the Liberties of Churches, that our fa-
 ‘ thers profes’t, and Enjoyed in their Communion and Dis
 ‘ cipline, are Liberties, purchased for, and Bestowed upon
 ‘ his Churches, by our ascended Lord, who hath also En-
 ‘ joyed us to Stand fast in the Liberty, wherewith he
 ‘ hath made us free.¹⁸ You will also consider that you
 ‘ have Invited us to it. — We are, Rev^d S^r — —

<u>Your Brethren in the</u> }	<u>Hez: Porter.</u> ¹⁹	<u>Henry Wolcott</u> ²⁰
Lord and of your flock }	<u>W^m: Wolcott.</u> ²¹	<u>Roger Wolcott.</u> ²²
	<u>Joshua Loomis.</u> ²³	<u>Sam^l: Bancroft.</u> ²⁴

The Rev^d: M^r: Edwards, Declined this Conference, and so
 So these Different opinions Subsisted between the pastor
 and brethren, untill a Case Came on, which made
 it Necessary to Discuss Some of these points. —

The Case was this. —————

(10)

M^r. Edwards had for a Considerable Time Debarred Jo-
-seph Diggins²⁵ from owning his Covenant and having his
 Child Baptized, unless he would Confess himself Guilty
 of a Scandalous Offence, M^r Edwards had Charged him
 with — Joseph Diggins alledged that he was In
 nocent and that as he Stood Justified to his own
 Conscience; so he Doubted not he could Justify him
 self before the Church, if he might have a Tryal, and
 Thereupon Desired M^r Edwards to Assemble the Church
 and Lead the Case on to a Tryal before them. this M^r
Edwards Refused, asserting that he had a Negative up
 on the Church, And therefore, untill his opinion in
 the Case was altered, it was in vain for the Church
 to be Troubled or Trouble themselves about it.
 the Case Lay Long thus untill it became a matter of
 General Dissatisfaction, whereupon, altho M^r Edwards
 still refused to Assemble the Church, yet he publick
 ly appointed an open Conference at his house, to
~~Discuss his p~~ to Discuss his power and Right to
 Negative the voats of the Church: at this Conference
 the Rev^d: M^r Edwards, Partly in writing and part
 ly by word of Mouth, from those Texts of Scripture
 that Declare the Elders to be rulers and Enjoyn —

(11)

obedience to them as Such, and from that Clause in the platform, that Declares no act is vallid, that hath not the Concurrence both of the Elder and Brethren, and from the opinion of those ministers, who met at Cambridge in 1693,²⁶ Endeavoured to Support his power to Negative the voats of the Church. _____

On the other Side, the Brethren Endeavoured to Support their Priveliges against Such a Power, in the Pastor in writing in ~~the words following~~ Substance as followeth

An appeal to the Truth in the Case of Joseph Diggins

‘ Joseph Diggins ~~appeal~~ Moved to M^r. Edwards the pastor
 ‘ of this Church in Windsor, to join in Covenant with them.
 ‘ The Rev^d. M^r. Edwards Objected, that he had married M^r. Stough
 ‘ tons Daughter²⁷ Contrary to her Fathers Mind, and for this
 ‘ he must first Confess himself to have Scandalously Sin-
 ‘ =ned. to this Joseph Diggins answerred that, what he had
 ‘ Done in that matter, was Right and Therefore could
 ‘ make no Such Confession untill he was Convietnced,
 ‘ And therefore prays M^r Edwards that he would propound
 ‘ him to the Church, as one Seeking Covenant with
 ‘ them, or that he would Call the Church together, and
 ‘ Lay the Case before them, and Give him an oppor-
 ‘ -tunity to be heard, and, if the Church Should Judge
 ‘ he had offended, he would Give them Christian

(12)

Satisfaction. this motion M^r. Edwards Denyes, and So
Diggins
 ‘ a Stop is put, for A Long Time. Joseph Kept from
 ‘ Joyning with the Church in Covenant, and his
 ‘ Child Kept from baptism. _____
 ‘ At Length the Deacons and Some other brethren
 ‘ go to M^r Edwards, and pray him to Grant Joseph
 ‘ Diggins his motion. M^r Edwards still Refuseth, and
Diggins
 ‘ for it, Gives this Reason, that he believes Joseph
 ^
 ‘ hath Scandalously Offended in this thing; and that
 ‘ he himself as he is pastor hath a Negative on all
 ‘ the Churches acts. Therefor, tis in vain for the
 ‘ Church to meet or Concern themselves about it,
 ‘ till Joseph Diggins hath Satisfyed him. the
 ‘ Brethren Declare them selves to be of another opini
 ‘ =on, and from hence ariseth this Question between
 ‘ them (viz) Whether in the passing the Judgment in
 ‘ admission of members, and Censurering Offenders,
 ‘ the pastor hath a Negative upon the Church,
 ‘ according to Congregational principles. this we
 ‘ Take to be the Case and Question now before
 ‘ us.
 be
 ‘ That we may the better understood in Discoursing this
 ^
 ‘ Matter, we would here Declare that we Take Congregatio
 ‘ nal Principles to Place the Power of Rule

(13)

In the Elder or Elders; and that it belongs to them to prepare the Case, for the Church, to Assemble the Church to hear it, to Keep order in their meeting, to Lay out the Case before the Church, in the Nature and Evidence of it, and then to propound his opinion upon it, as which the Church is to receive with Great respect, as they would the Doctrines he Preaches: but as they may Reject his Heretical or Erroneous Doctrines, So they may Differ from his Erroneous and Corrupt Opinion in any Case, and act against it.

‘ Further, that in all Difficult Cases (and we allow
‘ that all Cases, wherein the pastor and Brethren
‘ Shall Differ are such) the Church ought not to
‘ Proceed Hastily to Judgment: but Call in the ad-
‘ vice of other Churches and Lay the Case before them,
‘ if their advice shall be Contrary to the Church, the
‘ Church ought not to proceed to Censure any person
‘ for want of Light: but Let the Case fall.

‘ But if the advice Shall be according to the
‘ opinion of the Church, it is the undoubted Duty [of]
‘ the pastor to reassemble the Church, and Lead them
‘ to Pass the Sentence, and then the pastor and
‘ Brethren being Considered as one Body, the Case
‘ is to be Determined by a major voat.

(14)

‘ And yet if the Elder shall refuse to Assemble
 ‘ the Church, or Lead them to pass the Sentence, the
 ‘ Church is not to meet or pass the Sentence without
 ‘ him, but if he obstinately Continue in his refusal
 ‘ the Church are to Let that Case Lie by at present
 ‘ And asking and having the advice of other Church
 ‘ =es, they are to proceed Against the minister himself
 ‘ for maladministration.

‘ Thus far we Acknowledge the pastor hath a
 ‘ Negative, or that the Sentence Cannot pass without
 ‘ his Concurrence. but this is not the present Case.
 ‘ the Question now before us is this — When the
 ‘ Case is thus prepared, and propounded and ready
 ‘ for Judgment, Whether in the act of Giving the
 ‘ Judgment, the pastor hath a Negative upon the
 ‘ Church — this at present we Deny. ——

‘ And, forasmuch as no man Can have a na-
 ‘ tural Right to this Dominion over any Com
 ‘ -munity, it remains that those, who Claim it, must
 ‘ be Content to Take upon themselves the burthen
 ‘ to prove their Title to it. ——

‘ The Reasons we have yet heard Given to
 ‘ prove this power in the pastor are. ——

(15)

‘ 1st: That Doc. Increase Mather²⁸ and other Rev^d
 ‘ Ministers at a Conference they had at Cambridge
 ‘ 1693 were of this opinion — To which we answer —
 =====
 ‘ 1st, Tis probable they Intended no Other Negative
 ‘ than what we have above allowed. For the Doc:
 ‘ in his preface to Doc: Cotton's Ratio Disciplina
 ‘ saith²⁹ — That M^r. Hookers Survey of Church Disci
 ‘ pline is a most accurate Logical Composure Look't
 ‘ upon by Some as unanswerable, it had the appro
 ‘ bation of all the ministers that were then in
 ‘ that and the Next Colony and And that Sur-
 ‘ -vey allows no Greater Negative in the pastor
 ‘ than what we have Granted.

‘ But if it be urged that those ministers Intend-
 ‘ ed a Greater Negative, we further answer. ——
 ‘ 2^{dly} Although we pay Greatest Deference to the
 ‘ Opinion of Such Great men, yet the Doc^r: him-
 ‘ self hath Taught us to Call no man master.³⁰
 ‘ the papists Indeed tell us we must Believe as the Church
 ‘ Believes, and finding this principle too weak to stand of
 ‘ Itself, they Braced it on Both Sides — 1st: on the part
 ‘ of the pope that he was Infallible. —————

(16)

‘ 2^{dly}: On the part of the people — That Ignorance was
 ‘ the mother of Devotion — But finding all Still too
 ‘ weak, they joyned fire and Faggot to it (things in
 ‘ their own Nature verry [illeg.]³¹) yet all put tog-
 ‘ ether could never convince the protestants, whose opini-
 ‘ on is that without Knowledge the heart Can’t be
 ‘ Good, and that the Scripture is the only rule
 ‘ for the faith and order of the Church. and none
 ‘ were firmer in this opinion, than those Great
 ‘ and Rev^d: ministers then met at Cambrige —
 ‘ 3^{dly} The Scripture is the only rule to Establish
 ‘ Truth in this Case. Men are Erroneous and Coun-
 ‘ cills have Decreed Contrary to themselves. it fol-
 ‘ lows then, that this Question is not to be Setled
 ‘ by Inartificial Evidences as the opinions or
 ‘ Testimonys of men, but from the Scriptures and
 ‘ Rational arguments Drawn from thence.
 ‘ Therefore we are not Concluded, by their opinion
 farther
 ‘ from Enquiring after the Truth and Entertain-
 ^
 ‘ -ing it, wherever we find it; Especially if we
 ‘ Consider that other men as Great as they were
 ‘ of another opinion.

(17)

M^r. Hooker was against it. — The venerable Council
‘ at Salem³² was against it[.] The Congregational Plat
‘ form Composed by a synod of Great and Rev^d Di-
‘ vines, men, that had Hazarded their Lives, for our
‘ Lord Jesus Christ, and were Called together by the
‘ Government of the Massachusetts, for that pur
‘ -pose, and their Results approved by that Govern
‘ -ment. This platform Grants no such Negative.³³
yt
‘ Besides, tis uncertain, those Rev^d: Gentlemen
‘ met at Cambridge, were of opinion that in the
‘ act of passing the Judgment the Pastor had
‘ a Negative.
‘ The Second reason Given for it is, that the Elders are Cal-
‘ led Guides, Rulers and Overseers of the Church, to which
‘ we answer — 1st: That this argument is insufficient
‘ to prove they have a Negative upon the Church, un-
‘ less it Can be Shewn, that no man Can be a ruler in
‘ a Corporation, unless he have a Negative upon their
‘ Assembly, but this is so far from being True, that the
‘ Contrary to it is most apparent. The Lord mayor of
‘ London is a Ruler in the City, and yet hath no
m
‘ Negative on the Comon Councill. the Governour of
^
‘ Connecticut is a Ruler; yet hath no Negative
on

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‘ on the assembly. _____

‘ The third Reason is, that if the pastor Differ

‘ in opinion from the Church, and have no nega

‘ tive on their Judgment, he will be forced to act

‘ Contrary to his Conscience in pronouncing Sentence

‘ against offenders — to which we answer —

‘ 1st: In the presbyterian Discipline the particular

‘ ministers have no Negative: yet never wrong

‘ their Consciences in pronouncing the Sentence,

‘ tho he were not in the Judgment. By the Same

‘ Reason, it may be Done in the Congregational

‘ Discipline. Besure no Congregational minister

‘ Can well Turn Presbyterian, untill he has Got his

‘ Conscience thus fitted.

‘ 2^{dly}: In pronouncing or Reading off the Sentence

‘ of the Church against offenders and in Withdrawing

‘ Communion with them, Every member Joyns as well

‘ as the minister. therefore their Consciences are as much

‘ bound, if they were not in the Judgment as the minis-
 to be sufficient to Excuse him

‘ ters. And to allow this is in Effect to ~~is in Effect to~~

 ^

‘ Destroy all Censures. _____

‘ 3^{dly}: if this be a Sufficient objection, Right Can never

‘ be Done in the Case.

(19)

‘ ‘tis in vain to ask or have Councill. for meerly the
 ‘ Determination of a Councill Cannot Satisfy his Consci-
 ‘ ence more than the Determination of the Church ——
 ‘ and, if after the first advice of other Churches, he hath
 ‘ a Negative, he hath it as well after the Second and
 ‘ So on ad Infinitum. and thus the Sentence Can never be
 ‘ Pronounced in the Case but by another minister, in
 ‘ the Desk of the minister Discenting: and all against
 ‘ his mind and Conscience. and he is Still bound in Con
 ‘ science to hold Communion with the offender as much
 ‘ as if the sentence had never Been past.³⁴ _____
 ‘ 4th. It is Ill arguing that he hath a Negative,
 ‘ Because he must otherwise act Contrary to his Con
 ‘ science in Declaring the Sentence. for that is only
 ‘ a Consequence flowing from the other. If he have
 ‘ not a Negative his Conscience is not bound ——
 ‘ therefore to make this a Reason or Cause to prove
 ‘ he hath a Negative, is to make an Effect to be the
 ‘ Cause of a Cause, of which it only an Effect.
 ‘ He must therefore prove by other Reasons that, he hath
 ‘ [a] Negative, and then he may argue well that his Con
 ‘ science is bound. _____
 ‘ Reason
 ‘ The fourth objection is, that, unless the pastor hath
 ‘ a Negative the Government of the Church is a meer
 ‘ Democracy. _____

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‘ to which we answer — 1st it is no more a Democra
 ‘ -cy, than most other Corporations are. they have their
 ‘ mayors, Rulers and Governours, who act as fully to
 ‘ the Extent of their office, and yet have no nega
 ‘ tive upon their assembly, and this is So far from
 ‘ being a Nusance, that the affairs of the Corporation
 ‘ are Carried on the better for it. —————
 No
 ‘ 2^{dly} ~~That~~ Governour of any Corporation pretends to
 ^
 ‘ have a Negative, because otherwise the Government
 ‘ would be a Democracy; but Because this power is
 ‘ Expressly in the Charter. —————
 ‘ 3^{dly}. Where the Governours have a Negative ’tis
 ‘ only in acts of Legislation or favour and not in
 ‘ Judging matters of Right. Particular acts of Le-
 ‘ gislation or Favour may be omitted, where the whole
 ‘ Legislature Cannot agree. But Justice must be done
 ‘ and this Doubleheaded monster Can Never do it.
 ‘ 4^{ly} If a minister hath a Negative, it Renders the
 ‘ Government of the Church a meer monarchy, for what
 ‘ is Worse.³⁵ For it stops Justice in all Cases, wherein the
 ‘ Church and he Can’t agree in opinion. Which is worse
 ‘ than monarchy with Tyranny. or Let it be Granted, as
 ‘ we all Grant, that the Elder hath a Power to Suspend
 ‘ a member, and Keep him Suspended from his

(21)

‘ Privileges untill he be Restored by the act of the
 if you
 ‘ Church; add to this that he hath a Negative on all
 ^
 ‘ Church acts, then none Can be admitted, but whom
 ‘ he will. None can hold his privileges, but at his will
 ‘ None Can be Restored, but at his will. The Church Cant
 ‘ ask Council, but at his will and what is this
 ‘ short of monarchy? _____
 ‘ ^{ly}5: If he act Never so Corruptly, None Can Reprove
 ‘ him for it, for it is Granted that he hath a Nega
 ‘ ~~-tive in the a~~ on the Church in the act of Jud-
 ‘ ing. and ’tis most Certain, that in Judging he
 ‘ ought to act his own opinion, and not the opi
 ‘ -nion of Others, and who, but God alone, Can En-
 ‘ ter So far into his heart, as to Say he Did not
 ‘ Give Judgment according to his opinion?
 ‘ Therefore be his Judgment as it will, if he
 ‘ will but Say it is his opinion, Every one must
 ‘ say he hath Done faithfully in his place.
 ‘ if so, what is become of those Great and value
 ‘ able Priviliges of these Churches, we have been
 ‘ so Long amused with? _____

(22)

far

‘ Having thus answered the objections against
 ^
 ‘ the Churches Right in Chusing her officers, ad-
 ‘ mitting her members and judging offenders. —
 ‘ we now proceed to Shew those powers and pri-
 ‘ veliges ~~not~~ do belong to the Churches. ———
 ‘ 1st. From the Scriptures
 ‘ 2^{dly}. From the Platform of Discipline
 ‘ And³⁶ From the Nature and Nessesity of the thing
itself.

=====

‘ 1st. From the Scriptures. that the Churches
 have a Right to Chuse their own officers,
 ‘ appears from Acts 6th. The Church then wanted of
 ‘ ficers, the way then to Cloath men With office power, was
 ‘ For the Church to Chuse them, the apostles Led in the action
 ‘ but how? not by asserting that the Church Could Chuse
 ‘ none, but whome they nominated; but the Contrary they
 ‘ Say to the Church, Chuse you out men from among your
 ‘ selves – The Church Chose them, and then Set them before
 ‘ the apostles to be ordained. They ordain’d them, without
 ‘ making any Questions, but that after the Church had
 ‘ Chose them, they were fitt subjects for it. This Precedent
 ‘ Sheweth the Churches Right to Chuse

(23)

and that ministers, Who assert a negative on the Election
of officers made by the Church, assumes a more Lordly Domi-
nion over the Church, than the Twelve apostles pretended
to have, when they were altogether. —————
^{2^{dly}}. The Church hath power of Judgment in passing the
by
Censures on offenders. — This appears the Institution in
w^{ch} ^
Matthew 18th. hath Erected the Church into a Tribunal for
^
this purpose. Let him Tell the Church, if he will not
hear the Church, Let him be &c — one man is not a Church,
the pastor of the Church is not the Church. and there the
Order of the process is to ascend from one to Two or
three, and from thence to a multitude. —————
^{2^{ly}}. This Tribunal hath the same Right to Judge and ad-
monish as the Two or three that went before them in the
Process. but none hath a Negative on them, but only an
appeal from them —————
^{3^{dly}}. This Tribunal hath a Right to hear a Complaint
any
Against an offending Brother. that is every offending
yt ^
Brother, Every Brother, ~~is~~ Can may and Doth offend,
is Liable to the process and Censure — Therefore none
are above it. —————
^{4^{ly}}. The Sentence pas't by this Tribunal is Judicial
And Needeth not the aiding of any other man to make
it so. For he, who will not hear it, is to be Cast out.

(24)

5^{ly}: Hence it follows, that no minister Can wrong his
 ‘ Conscience in pronouncing the Sentence, His Conscience
 ‘ being Rightly Informed, for the Case was never Submit
 ‘ -ted to him to hear and Determine it, but to the Church
 ‘ who having Given Judgment in the Case, The Elder as
 ‘ the proper officer is bound to pronounce it, as much
 ‘ as the Chief Judge in a Court, is obliged to Declare
 ‘ the Judgment of the Court, Given upon the verdict
 ‘ of a Jury against a Criminal, or in matters of
 ‘ Right, when on a Demurrer, his Judgment is rul
 ‘ ed by the other Judges, his own personal Opinion,
 ‘ Notwithstanding.
 ‘ 6^{ly} This power of Judgment in the Church is Decla-
 ‘ red by the apostle in the Case of the Incestuous Corin
 ‘ thian.³⁸ In that Case the apostle is informed of the
 ‘ offence, he Calls the Church together he opens the Case
 ‘ to them, tells them he is present with them in Spi
 ‘ rit or opinion,³⁹ tho not in person, propounds his
 ‘ own opinion in the Case to them, then Leads
 ‘ them to Judgment, and tells them it belongs to
 ‘ them to Judge them that are within.⁴⁰ — They pass
 ‘ the Censure, whereby the punishment is inflic
 ‘ -ted of many, The offender proves penitent, the
 ‘ apostle is informed of it, he Calls the Church

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‘ Lays the Case before them again, propounds his own opi
 ‘ nion, that they ought to forgive him, and tells them
 ‘ that if they forgive him, he for their Sakes forgives him.⁴¹
 I
 ‘ If the apostle had thus Decared that, it belonged to
 ^
 ‘ the officers of the Church to Judge them that are with
 ‘ -in, and Directed them in this manner to Cast the of
 ‘ fender out, there would have been no Dispute against
 Greater
 ‘ their power to do it. What Reason Can there be to Ques
 ^
 ‘ tion the power of the Church, Since the apostle
 ‘ Declared it Belonged to them to Judge those that
 ‘ are within, and Directed them to Do it? The obe
 ‘ dience the apostle there Speaks of was, with respect
 ‘ to his power of Rule in Calling the Church Together,
 ‘ and Leading them to Judge the Cases, he Laid before
 ‘ them, and not with Respect to the Act of Judging.
 act
 ‘ for to Obey and Judge, in the same ~~Case~~ is incom
 ^
 ‘ pactable. The Commands of ~~their~~ Superiours, but Espe
 ‘ cially their Tortures may Compell men to Confess
 ‘ as they will, but they Can never Perswade a Rati
 ‘ onal mind to Judge that to be Right, which it
 that
 ‘ Believeth to be wrong — It is no new thing the
 ^
 ‘ Power of Rule and the power of Judgment
 ‘ should be Logged in the hands of Different persons

(26)

‘ The Governours of the plantations are Rulers, they
 ‘ Call the assemblys, Preside these, and it may be in
 ‘ Some places, put in the Judges themselves, yet
 ‘ they Judge no man; that belongeth to the Judge,
 ‘ they Judge the Case and Judge the Cases Even
 ‘ of the Governours themselves. ——
 ‘ 7^{thly}. The Congregational Platform of Discipline Declares
 ent
 ‘ the power of Judgm is in the Fraternity.⁴² It Delini-
 ^
 ‘ ates the power of Rule in the Elder, to be a power
 ‘ to Receive and prepare the Case, assemble the Church
 ‘ Keep orders, propound the Case with his opinion only,
 ‘ Lead the Church to pass Judgment, and Pronounce
 ‘ the Sentence. It Declares that this power in the
 ‘ Elder and Power of Judgment in the Brethren
 ‘ Do not Destroy Each other: but so Concuer that in
 ‘ an organized Church no act Can be vallid with
 ‘ out the Concurrence of both. From whence it is
 ‘ manifest that, when the brethren Proceed to hear
 ‘ and Determine the Case, without the Elder is
 ‘ Leading and Going before them in it as afores^d
 ‘ their proceeding is not Good, and when the Elder

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‘ Extendeth his Power so far, as to frustrate the Power
 ‘ of Judging in the Brethren, his So Doing is Evil
 ‘ and thus it is understood by Congregational Divines
 ‘ and Churches. For the venerable Councill at Salem
 ‘ Censured the Church there, for not proceeding to
 ‘ Judgment in a Case wherein their Elder was a
 ‘ Party
 ‘ Thirdly the church hath a right to admit her own
 ‘ members — 1st: This is plain from the Case of the
 ‘ Incestuous Corinthian — 2^{ly}: From the nature and
 ‘ nessesity of the thing itself. All Allow an Infant
 ‘ Church may Embody, and being now a Corporation,
 ‘ if She Should be Denied to Let in a Succession, one
 ‘ Great End of her being is lost. — 3^{ly} the Congrega
 ‘ tional Platform Declareth this Privelige belongeth
 ‘ to the Church, and as it Cannot be understood in
 ‘ any proper Sence, that She hath a right to Chuse
 ‘ her officers, if the person Elected by her be not Cho
 ‘ sen, or that she hath power of Judgment, if the
 ‘ Case She hath Given Judgment upon is not Judg-
 ‘ neither can it be Said,
 ‘ ed, so that she hath power to admit her members
 ‘ ^
 ‘ if the persons She admitts are not admitted.

(28)

This Conference made no Impression upon our pastor to Admit Joseph Diggins to a hearing of his Case, nor to perswade the Brethren that the pastor Could Ex officio Bar him from it, but, after Several months, the Church being Called together upon other Business, the brethren ~~prevailed with their pastor~~ ^ ^ to Joyn with them to Call a Councill to advise, if Joseph Diggins had not a right to be heard on his motion; and the Church had not a right to hear it, and it were not the Duty of the Pastor to Lay the Case before the Church for their hearing and Consideration. —————

Accordingly a Councill was Called, who met Octo 9th: 1738, before whom the Brethren Laid the State of the Case and the Questions arising from it, in writing as followeth —————

A State of the Case and Question arising from it
Laid by the 2^d Church in Windsor befor the Rev^d

Councill there met Octo 9th 1738. Joseph Diggins

‘ Moved to the Rev^d. M^r Edwards, Pastor of the Church

‘ to propound him to the Church, as one Seeking [to]

‘ Joyn in Covenant with them. —————

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‘ M^r. Edwards Answered him, that in his opinion he was
 ‘ Guilty of a Scandalously offence, in marrying his
 ‘ wife without her fathers Consent. and that he must first
 ‘ Make a Publick Confession thereof. Joseph Diggins
 ‘ Replied, that in his own opinion, he had Done nothing
 ‘ in this affair; but what he Could Justify. and thereupon
 ‘ Moved M^r. Edwards to Lay the Case before the Church;
 ‘ and said that, if upon hearing him, the Church Should
 ‘ Judge that he had offended, he was Ready to make
 ‘ Christian Sattisfaction, and this M^r Edwards Refused.
 ‘ And all Farther proceedings Stopt, for a Considerable
 ‘ Time . —

‘ Afterwards, the Deacons and Several of the Bre-
 ‘ thren went to the Rev^d: M^r Edwards, and Desired him
 ‘ to Grant Joseph Diggins’s motion, So far as to Lay
 ‘ his Case before the Church, for their hearing and Con-
 ‘ sideration: this M^r Edwards Refused also — the moti-
 ‘ on was again made by other of the Brethren, and
 ‘ again Refused by M^r Edwards And then all farther
 ‘ Proceedings Stopt for about Twelve months. and hereup-
 ‘ on the Church has Called the Rev^d Councill to advise
 ‘ them in the affair, and beg Leave to State the Ques-
 ‘ tions as Followeth —————

(30)

‘ Question: Whether, according to Congregational
 ‘ Principles, Laid Down in the Platform of Church
 ‘ Discipline antiently agreed upon in New Engl^d.
 ‘ Joseph Diggins had not a Right to have his
 ‘ Case Laid before the Church to be heard and Consi
 ‘ =dered by them, and the Church has not a Right
 ‘ to hear and Consider his Case, and it be not the
 ‘ Duty of the Pastor to assemble the Church and
 ‘ Lay the Case before them for their hearing and
 ‘ Consideration? —————

===== A True Coppy -----Test Benj: Colton⁴³ Scribe

The Rev^d: M^r. Edwards Made no objection, but
 that this was A Just Stating the Case, and Questi
 ons Arising from it — The Parties were heard,
 and the Power of the Elder to Deny ~~the Church~~
 A Hearing of the Case before the Church, because
 he had a Negative upon the Church, was Largely
 Discuss’d, and the Rev^d: Councill Gave us their
 opinion from the Records as followeth ———

Att a meeting of the Councill by adjournment
at Windsor Second Society Octo 9th 1738 &c

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‘ The members Present being Elders Mess^{rs} Samuel
 ‘ Woodbrige,⁴⁴ Jonathan Marsh,⁴⁵ moderator, Timothy
 ‘ Woodbrige,⁴⁶ Benjamin Colton Scribe. Stephen Steel.⁴⁷
 ‘ Of Messengers Dea: Cooke.⁴⁸ Dea: Cornish.⁴⁹ Dea: Gay-
 ‘ -lord.⁵⁰ M^r Zebulun West.⁵¹ ——— Having Considered
 ‘ the Question proposed to us by the Rev^d: M^r
 ‘ Timothy Edwards, and Roger Wolcott Esq^r Re-
 ‘ lating to Joseph Diggins. It appears to us that
 ‘ According to the Platform of 1649 page 38:39⁵²
 ‘ S^d Diggins having been Baptized, by the Rev^d—
 ‘ M^r Tim^o: Edwards; as also his Cohabiting and
 ‘ General Joyning with the Assembly, in Publick
 ‘ Worship, is So far a member of this Church and
 ‘ under his Pastoral Care, And also under the Church
 ‘ watch, as that he hath a Right Orderly to Desire
 ‘ Eclesiastical Priviliges in Sd Church, and is ~~account~~
 ‘ Accountable thereto, in Case of Scandalous offence
 ‘ and one Reason, at Least, we apprehend that has
 ‘ hitherto Obstructed their having his Case Refere^d to
 ‘ them, has Been their Misunderstanding of Sd
 ‘ Platform, which Considering we think the
 the

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‘ Parties ought to Judge favorably one of ano-
 ‘ ther, With Respect to what is past, Relating to Sd
 ‘ Diggins Case— voated in Councill Test Benj^a: Colton Scribe
 -----A True Coppy ---- Test – Benj^a. Colton Scribe
 Sometime after this the Rev^d: M^r Edwards Assem

bled the Church and Entered a formal process a-
 gainst Joseph Diggins Charging him, with a-
 of
Scandalous Breach the fifth and Eighth Com-
 ^
mand of the Moral Law — The parties were Large
 -ly heard, and the Church Gave their Judgment
 that Sd Diggins was not Guilty, and that what
appeared against him was no Sufficient bar to
Grant him his motion. The Rev^d: M^r Edwards
 and Two Brethren Dissented —————

Whereupon the Councill of other Churches Was
 Desired to Give their opinion, Whether the Brethren of
the church had Erred in Judging as aforesd —

The Councill met April 2^d: and adjourne^d to June
12th: and to June 18th: 1739 — The parties were heard.
 And the Right of Parents to Dispose their Children [in]
 marriage was Long Discuss’d, and the Councill from
 resolved
 off the Record, as Followeth. —————
 ^

(33)

At an Ecclesiastical Council Convend at Windsor

East Side at the Desire of 2^d Church in Windsor april

1739 and adjourn^d: from that Time to June the 12th

and 18th: 1739 when were present

	{ <u>Sam^{ll}: Woodbrige.</u> }		<u>M^r Nath^a: Drake⁵³</u> }	
	{ <u>Jonathan Marsh Mod^r</u> }		<u>M^r. W^m Harris⁵⁴</u> }	Messen
the	{ <u>W^m Russell⁵⁵</u> }	Elders	<u>M^r. Zebulon West</u> }	=gers
Rev ^d	{ <u>Steph: Steel</u> }		<u>Cap^t Joseph Cooke⁵⁶</u> }	
	{ <u>Dan^{ll}: Wadsworth⁵⁷</u> }			

=====

‘ And the Church aforesd Represented to the Coun-
 ‘ cil, that Sometime past one Joseph Diggins moved
 ‘ to M^r Edwards, pastor of Sd Church, that he would propound
 ‘ him to the Church, as one Seeking to Recognize the Cove
 Chh.
 ‘ nant [of] this M^r Edwards Refused, and the motion was
 ^
 ‘ Stopped till the 21st: of Dec^r last past, then the Rev^d—
 ‘ M^r Edwards Assembled Sd church and put in a formal
 ‘ Charge against Sd Diggins, that the Sd Diggins, by marry
 ‘ ing his Wife Contrary to her fathers Mind had Scanda
 ‘ -lously Sinned against and Broken the 5th and 8th
 ‘ Commands of the moral Law.⁵⁸ upon hearing of which
 ‘ Case, the Brethren of Sd Church Gave their Judgment
 ‘ that Sd Diggins was not Guilty, and that ~~the Brethren~~
 ‘ What appeared against him was no Sufficient Bar

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‘ to Granting his motion The Rev^d: M^r Edwards and two
 ‘ of the Brethren Dissented — Wherefore they Desire the
 ‘ advice of this Council, in the Premisses, and the opini-
 ‘ on of this Council, Whether the Brethren of Sd Church
 ‘ have Erred in Judging as aforesd— This Council having
 ‘ Largely heard the Pleas and Arguments of the Rev^d
 ‘ M^r Edwards, and of the Brethren of the Church afore
 ‘ Sd, and maturely weighed and Considered the Same –
 ‘ Came to the following Resolve: (viz) That it Does
 ‘ not appear to this Council, that the Brethren of the
 ‘ Church afores^d have ~~not~~ Erred in their Judgment
 ‘ Afores^d — and that for the following Reasons. —
 ‘ 1st As it is Conceded by all parties Concerned in the present
 ‘ Case, So we are of opinion that parintal authority
 ‘ and Power, in Disposing of their Children in marri
 ‘ age, is not absolute and unlimited, tho Great Re-
 ‘ gard and Deference is to be paid to the advice and
 ‘ Direction of Parents in that affair. —————
 ‘ 2^{dly}: Joseph Diggins Took Such Reasonable Methods to
 ‘ Obtain M^r Stoughtons Consent, that he Might Marry
 ‘ his Daughter, as were Judged by Judicious persons
 ‘ Proper and Sufficient. —————

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‘ 3^{ly} That he had the advice of Civil authority, in pro
 ‘ ceeding to marry in the manner, that he did.⁵⁹
 ‘ 4^{tly} That the woman Sd Diggins married had for Some
 ‘ Considerable Time before Marriage, by her fathers
 ‘ Implicit Consent at Least, been out of her Fathers
 ‘ house, and from under his Government and Care
 ‘ and was upwards of one and Twenty Years of age
 ‘ 5^{ly}: Her Marriage with Diggins appears Equal and
 ‘ Hopefull, and nothing appears, but the Reasonable and
 ‘ Comfortable Ends Parnts Expect in Marrying their
 ‘ Children, were Likely to be obtained in her marriage
 ‘ with Joseph Diggins —————
 ‘ But yet it b[e]ing Difficult Exactly to Define and
 ‘ Discribe the Extent of Parental authority, with Regard
 ‘ to Dissposing Children in marriage, as well as the
 ‘ Right of Children in Dissposing Themselves; and the
 ‘ Sentiments and Tho’ats of Some of the most learn-
 ‘ -ed having been verry Different in that affair; we think
 ‘ it an Instance of the Tenderness, prudence and faith
 ‘ fullness of the Rev^d: M^r Edwards, that he has proceeded
 ‘ With So much Caution, painfullness and Care, in that
 ‘ the opinion
 ‘ matter, he having had (as he supposes) of So
 ‘ many Worthy Persons to Support his own.

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‘ But as to the matter of Scandal Alledged against
 ‘ Diggins, the most that Can be Said in proof of it,
 ‘ Leaving it uncertain, and in Such a Case the Cha
 ‘ ritable Side being most Safe: we advise that Joseph
 ‘ Diggins be admitted to the Privelige he Desires –
 ‘ But Nevertheless, if M^r Edwards Cannot see it in
 ‘ the way of his Duty to admit him, we advise
 ‘ that the Brethren of the Church do not press and
 ‘ urge the Matter upon him, but that Sd Diggins
 ‘ Apply himself to Some Neighboring minister to
 ‘ own the Covenant, and to Obtain Baptism for his
 ‘ Children: and that all Debates and Disputes about
 ‘ this affair, be Laid aside, by the Brethren of the
 ‘ Church afores^d, and that they Entertain no uneasi
 ‘ -ness and Dissatisfaction towards their Rev^d. Pastor
 ‘ with Respect to the Same; but that they all Endeavour
 ‘ to Live in Love and Peace that the God of Peace may
 ‘ be with Them —————

Passed in Council

Test Jonathan Marsh } Moderator

Daniel Wadsworth Scribe

Notes

¹ George Gibbs was a descendant of Roger Wolcott. His name is signed.

² The reference is to the Cambridge Platform. For the text of the platform, see Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 194-237.

³ Horace, *Epistles*, 1:6, 67-68, "If you know any better principle than this, candidly impart it; if not, use this with me."

⁴ Joseph Sewall (1688-1769) was the minister assisting Ebenezer Pemberton at Boston's Old South Church. John Langdon Shipley and Clifford Kenyon Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1933), vol. 5.

⁵ The words "Dr. Joseph Sewall and the other" have been partially rubbed out. The words "New England" are written over several rubbed-out words: "[illeg. England]." These two lines therefore appear to have been amended to read, "To the Revd: Congregational Ministers in New England" with out the specific appeal to Sewall.

⁶ The words "Here is Submitted to you" are written over several scratched out words.

⁷ Beneath the title and the deleted lines, seven lines of text have been rubbed out: "A Nar[rative] [illeg.] the Second Church | in Windsor from the year of our [Lord 173]5 to 1740 | with the Reasons [illeg.] Brethren of the Church | adhere to the [Platform] of Church Government Assented | to by the [illeg.] England Anno Dom. 1648 | And [illeg.] Submit to the Order of Discipline | agreed [illeg.] Saybrook 1708" (cf. title page). The most important difference is that this rubbed-out title take the "Narrative" to 1740, while the final title page takes the "Narrative" to 1741. This detail, along with the presence of a postscript beginning on ms. p. 101, indicates that the bulk of the manuscript was composed in 1740 and supplemented in 1741.

⁸ John Warham (1595-1670) was a minister in Exter, England, who moved with his congregation to Dorchester, Massachusetts. He was an assistant minister in Dorchester from 1630 to 1635, then moved again with his congregation to Windsor, Connecticut, where he was minister of the First Church from 1636 to 1669. Frederick Lewis Weis, *The Colonial Clergy and the Colonial Churches of New England* (Lancaster, MA: Society of the Descendants of the Colonial Clergy, 1936), 215; see also Frank Thistlethwaite, *Dorset Pilgrims*.

⁹ Samuel Mather (d. March 18, 1727/28) graduated from Harvard in 1671 and in 1682 was settled as the pastor of First Church in Windsor. Mather reunited the churches that had separated with the permission of the legislature. Beginning in 1708, he began to be assisted by Jonathan Marsh. Henry Reed Stiles, *The History of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut* (New York: Charles B. Norton, 1859), 190-92, 211, 700.

¹⁰ In Congregationalist practice, a "messenger" is a lay delegate to a synod.

¹¹ For the Saybrook Platform, see Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 503-506.

¹² The procedure for a "silential" vote is described on ms. p. 6. In this type of voting, after a measure or man was proposed, the silence of the congregation was taken as an affirmative vote but dissenters were obligated to speak up to make their negative votes known. New England congregations frequently complained about silent votes.

¹³ I.e., "manage."

¹⁴ A second copyist has over written "O" over "op" in "oppinions" for many instances of the word. This change is not noted hereafter.

¹⁵ The word "to" is written over the scratched-out word "before."

¹⁶ I.e., associations of ministers, such as the Hartford Association to which Timothy Edwards and the ministers who attended the East Windsor councils belonged.

¹⁷ Revelation 2:4.

¹⁸ Galatians 5:1.

¹⁹ Hezekiah Porter (1669-1757) was a deacon of the Second Church in (East) Windsor, Connecticut. Cf. ms. p. 51. Henry Porter Andrews, *Descendants of John Porter of Windsor, Conn.* (Saratoga Springs, NY: G. W. Ball, 1893) 1:11, whose dates differ from those in Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 753-54.

²⁰ Henry Wolcott (1670-1746) was the elder brother of Roger Wolcott. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 233, 830.

²¹ William Wolcott (1676-1749) was the elder brother of Roger Wolcott. His name appears often in connection with the business of the East Windsor church and town. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 241, 247, 353, 469, 830.

²² During the period described in the "Narrative," Roger Wolcott (1679-1767) was judge and then chief justice of the Connecticut Superior Court, an assistant to the General Assembly, and beginning in 1741 deputy governor of Connecticut. See the introduction; see also Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 831; American National Biography, s.v. "Wolcott, Roger," <http://www.anb.org/articles/01/01-01004.html>; Roger Wolcott, *A Memoir Relating to the History of Connecticut*, 1759, *Connecticut Historical Society Collections* 3 (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1895).

²³ Joshua Loomis (b. 1692) of East Windsor. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 680-81.

²⁴ Samuel Bancroft (d. Nov. 29, 1742) was active in town and parish affairs. As a lieutenant in the colonial militia he participated in an expedition to Canada in 1711. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 527; John Alden Stoughton, *Windsor Farms: A Glimpse of an Old Parish, Together with the Deciphered Inscriptions from a Few Foundation Stones of a Much Abused Theology* (Hartford, CT: Clark & Smith, 1883), 100, 115. The relation of Hannah Bancroft, Samuel's first wife, given in November, 1700, is in Minkema, "East Windsor Conversion Relations," 27-29.

²⁵ Joseph Diggins (1710-1791) married Elizabeth Stoughton sometime in 1735. They had five children: Oliver (b. circa 1735--36), Jerusha, Naomi (b. Aug. 8, 1741), Ann (b. 1747), and Tryphena (b. 1749). The first three children were born during the time of the dispute in the East Windsor congregation. The last two children both died in July 1752. *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 61 (1907), 143--44; *NEHGR*, 62 (1908), 98.

²⁶ On the question of the veto, Edwards cited the Cambridge Association of ministers who gathered to discuss such matters and who published their decisions. On May 7, 1694 (not 1693 as the "Narrative" states), the Association took up the question "Whether the elders of a church have not a negative on the votes of the fraternity?" While at Harvard College in 1686, Edwards had come under the wings of Increase and Cotton Mather, both members of the Association. Since Edwards took his BA and MA from Harvard in July of 1694, it is conceivable that he may have been in Cambridge for the discussion, or at least that he heard about it shortly thereafter. The ministers gave this answer in the pamphlet *Thirty Important Cases*:

"But the Elders of the Church have a *Negative* on the Votes of the *Brethren*: Who indeed in the exercise of their *Liberty* and *Privilege*, are under the conduct of the *Elders*.

"To take away the *Negative* of the *Elders*, or the Necessity of the consent unto *Church-acts*, indeed is to take away all *Government* whatsoever: and it is to turn the whole Regiment of the Church into a meer *Democracy*.

"And if the *Positive* of the *Brethren* can supersede a *Negative* of the *Elders*, either the *Elders* may be driven to do things quite contrary to the light of their Conscience, or else the *Brethren* may presume to do things which belong not unto them."

It is likely that Edwards and the congregation had this pamphlet in hand during the dispute. The ministers' answer states Edwards's position precisely, down to the concern about conscience, while the "Narrative" rebuts the arguments of the Association by name, even using the wording "meer Democracy" (see ms. pp. 15-20).

"Records of the Cambridge Association," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 17 (1879-80): 269-271; *Thirty important cases resolved with evidence of Scripture and reason. (Mostly,) by several pastors of adjacent churches, meeting in Cambridge, New-England* (Cambridge, 1699), 36-37; Minkema, "The Edwardses," 26-30.

²⁷ Elizabeth Stoughton (1711-1769) was the daughter of William Stoughton (d. 1750). *NEHGR*, 61 (1907), 143-44. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 808.

²⁸ Increase Mather (1639-1723), minister of Second Church in Boston, was a defender of the Cambridge Platform, much of which had been drafted by his father, Richard Mather.

²⁹ Cotton Mather (1663-1728) was minister with his father, Increase Mather, at Second Church in Boston. Cotton Mather (referred to as "Doc: Cotton" in the text to distinguish him from his father) published *Ratio Disciplinae Fratrum Nov-Anglorum* (Boston, 1726), a history of the New England church polity. The "Narration" here quotes from Increase Mather's preface to the book, which cites Thomas Hooker's *Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* (London, 1648). Hooker (1586-1647) was the founder of Hartford, Connecticut, and influential in creating the New England Way.

³⁰ Matthew 23:9.

³¹ The word is likely "convicting," possibly "convincing."

³² The Salem Council of 1728, called in response to a dispute over minister John Fiske. See introduction and Cooper, *Tenacious of Their Liberties*, 188-93.

³³ Cf. Cambridge Platform, ch. 10 in Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 218-20.

³⁴ Cf. Cambridge Platform, ch. 14 para. 8-9, which deems it "unlawfull" to refrain from taking Communion with a church because it tolerates "scandalous livers." Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 229.

³⁵ The "Narrative" here turns on its head the argument of the Cambridge Association in *Thirty Important Cases*. The ministers argued that the lack of a ministerial veto made the church a "meer democracy" (p. 37), but the congregation argued that the ministerial veto taken to extremes made the church a "meer monarchy." Cf. the Cambridge Platform, ch. 10 para 3, which argues that the church "is a mixt Government." Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 217.

³⁶ The word "and" is in a different ink.

³⁷ "To the contrary" is in a lighter ink and perhaps in a different hand.

³⁸ 1 Corinthians 5:1.

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 5:3-4.

⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 5:12.

⁴¹ 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

⁴² Cf. Cambridge Platform, ch. 10, para. 5 in Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 218, on the admission and censure of members.

⁴³ Benjamin Colton (d. 1759) was ordained to the ministry in 1713 at West Hartford, Connecticut, where he served as pastor until shortly before his death. His first wife, Ruth Taylor, was the daughter of Edward Taylor, minister of Westfield, Massachusetts. William Richard Cutter, et al., eds., *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Connecticut* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1911), 2:901.

⁴⁴ Samuel Woodbridge (1683-1746) was the minister the Third Church of (East) Hartford, Connecticut, from 1705 to 1746. Weis, *Colonial Clergy*, 235.

⁴⁵ Jonathan Marsh (d. 1747) was the pastor of the First Church in Windsor, across the river from the Second Church. He likely played the role of moderator because of his proximity to the church. He had been ordained an assistant to Samuel Mather in 1709. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 235, 275.

⁴⁶ Timothy Woodbridge Jr. (1686-1742) was the minister at Simsbury, Connecticut, from 1710 to 1742. Weis, *Colonial Clergy*, 236.

⁴⁷ Stephen Steel (1696/97-1759) was minister at Tolland, Connecticut, from 1719 to 1758. Weis, *Colonial Clergy*, 193.

⁴⁸ John Cook (d. 1751) was a deacon of the First Church in Windsor. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 438.

⁴⁹ James Cornish (1663-1740) was deacon of the church in Simsbury, Connecticut beginning in 1715. Joseph Edward Cornish, *The History and Genealogy of the Cornish Families in America* (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1907), 8-9.

⁵⁰ William Gaylord (1678-1770) was a deacon of the First Church in Hartford. Lucius Barnes Barbour, *Families of Early Hartford, Connecticut*, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2001), 258.

⁵¹ Zebulon West (1705?-1770) was a resident of Tolland, Connecticut. Beginning in 1736, he was town clerk and selectman of Tolland, and later held the offices of justice of the peace, representative in the General Assembly, speaker of the Assembly, judge of the probate court and judge of the Hartford County Court. Loren Pickney Waldo, *The Early History of Tolland* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood, and Co., 1861), 115-16, 119-120.

⁵² The citation in the text is to the Cambridge Platform, ch. 12, para. 7, which states that, though people baptized as infants must give relations in order to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, they are nevertheless "church-members that were so born, or received in their childhood" and so "they are also under Church-watch." Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 224.

The page numbers of the citation given in the text indicates that the Wolcott was using the edition of the Cambridge Platform issued in 1680 at the order of the Massachusetts General Court and reprinted in Boston in 1701 by Bartholomew Green and John Allen (Evans no. 969).

⁵³ Nathaniel Drake (d. 1769) was a deacon of the Second Church of (East) Windsor. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 586-87. His son Nathaniel Drake Jr. was the "Young Deacon Drake" of the Second Church of (East) Windsor who was imprisoned as a Baptist in the 1760s for refusing to pay the taxes for the Congregational minister and meeting house. Stiles, *Ancient Windsor*, 439-40.

⁵⁴ Likely William Harris of Middletown, Connecticut. Judith McGhan, *Genealogies of Connecticut Families* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1998), 1:475-76.

⁵⁵ William Russell (1690-1761) was the minister of the First Church in Middletown, Connecticut, from 1715 to 1761.

⁵⁶ Captain Joseph Cooke (1679/80-1747) was a member of the First Church in Hartford. Barbour, *Families of Early Hartford*, 198.

⁵⁷ Daniel Wadsworth (1704-1747) was the minister of the First Church of Hartford, Connecticut, from 1732 to 1747.

⁵⁸ Exodus 20:12, 15, the commandments to honor one's parents and not to steal.

⁵⁹ Perhaps this sentence indicates that Wolcott, certainly a prominent civil authority in Windsor, had advised Diggins that he could marry Elizabeth Stoughton. But Connecticut law did forbid marriages without the permission of the woman's father. J. Hammond Trumbull, ed., *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*

Prior to the Union with New Haven Colony, May 1665 (Hartford: Brown and Parsons, 1850), 1:92, 540; *Acts and Laws of His Majesty's English Colony of Connecticut in New-England in America* (New London, 1750), 144-45.