

which, whatever may be the result, will preclude all reasonable ground of complaint on either side, and ensure to you the full and unanimous approval, not only of the Judicatory, whose powers have been delegated to you, but of all impartial men. To be tried by the laws of God and his country, is the inestimable privilege of the accused, secured to him as his birthright by the law and constitution of the land. To be tried by the laws of my church, and to be guarded by its salutary forms and provisions against designing adversaries, or plausible impeachments, is my sole desire at this moment; and if the solicitude, which I express, shall appear needless, you will at least excuse, if not sympathise, with the anxiety which prompts me rather to say what is unnecessary, than to run the hazard of omitting aught that is necessary. By the law of our church you will proceed, I doubt not, in judging of the character, value, and applicability of the evidence, of the relevancy of the charges alleged by my accusers, and of the legality and fairness both of their and of my proceedings. If, in the case now submitted to your arbitration, it shall appear, as I suspect it will, that we have acted, as if we thought ourselves released from all obligations of obedience to Ecclesiastical authority, and, in many instances, as if we had forgot that we have a Law Ecclesiastical, or, having such a law, that we are amenable to it; and if it shall appear that we have manifested a spirit not only of insubordination to authority, but of contempt for order, which we have scarcely thought it needful to dissemble; if we have sought to accomplish ends, that to us were desirable, or at least seemed so by trampling on all the salutary restraints of church discipline and government; and if, in fine, the real root of our whole malady shall appear to be this neglect and impatience of all such restraints, you will doubtless feel it a duty imperative upon you to repress and subdue such a spirit, to enforce due honour and respect to the law of our church, as well as strict obedience to her constituted authorities; and while you lend your impartial aid to detect and to punish delinquencies, if such there be, and to redress the real grievances represented to you, you will feel it no less incumbent, on the other hand, to check an evil of at least equal magnitude, and of a tendency not less dangerous to the best interests, of our church generally, and of our particular congregations individually, namely, departure from established order and resistance to legitimate authority. If you suffer it to be imagined that there is impunity for such spirits—for such conduct—still more if you connive at its mischief, and permit it to have free scope and to gain directly or indirectly its ends, you will open the door to a deluge of evils; and I am warranted to say that your duty is not more imperative to guard against immorality, and severely and impartially to punish guilt, than to restrain and rebuke the refractory and rebellious. Where confusion is, there will be envying, and strife, and every evil work; and the weakness of a government, or its want of vigour, will breed confusion, as surely as the total want or absence of it creates anarchy. In some respects the man who dis-