

**T**HAT the Committee have examined the Petitions referred to them, and find them all concurring in the Statement "that the number of His Majesty's Subjects, professing either the Presbyterian or Regular Calvinistic Baptist Form of Christian Worship and Discipline, is very considerable in this Province; and that their religious conduct and deportment, is marked with all deference and attachment to his Majesty's Government and the laws of the land: Wherefore, the Petitioners trust the House will favorably consider their applications: the objects whereof they state to be, the obtaining certain civil privileges, due to their peaceable and loyal character; and not incompatible with any fixed principles of the constitution."

The Petitioners also state, "that the Clergymen under whose Spiritual Inspection they have voluntarily placed themselves, are, by not having power to marry *by licence*, retained in a state of painful and unmerited degradation—contrary to existing Laws and the principles of equity and sound policy: and that the character and conduct of those Clergymen, should entitle them to the privilege of uniting Parties in marriage, in the same manner as is often permitted to Laymen, and as has always been enjoyed by Clergymen of the Church of England."

The Petitioners further complain "of suffering great inconvenience from their Congregations not being legally enabled to hold and dispose of Lands, Monies and Chattels, for their Religious uses, with the Powers and facilities of a Corporate Body; whereby the building of Places of Worship, and other desirable objects, connected with the support of Religious Establishments, are greatly impeded."

Wherefore, "in the true spirit of that toleration, promised by his Most Gracious Majesty, at the first settlement of this Province, they pray from this House—for their Clergymen the privilege of performing the Marriage Ceremony by *Licence*; and for their Congregations, the civil privileges which will be derived from the incorporation of their Trustees—with proper powers to purchase, hold, and dispose of Real and Personal Estate—to supply vacancies in the trust—and to make such other regulations as may be requisite: These powers to be conferred under such conditions as may not be at variance with their religious tenets or discipline, respectively."

The subject matters of these Petitions, preferred by a large and respectable portion of the Dissenting Clergy and Inhabitants of the Province, and embodying the common opinion of all that class of our fellow subjects, the Committee deem worthy of most serious attention; for they appear to be entirely within the operation of those principles which our Laws so explicitly recognise as the undoubted right and privilege of His Majesty's Subjects in this Province,