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Univerfal Concord.

The first Part.

THE Sufficient TERMS

Proposed for the Use of those that have liberty to use them : And as the Authors Profession of his own Religion, in a contentious, dividing Age.

By *Richard Baxter.*

The *First* and *General* Part, is preparatory to the *Second* Part, containing the *Particular Terms* of Reconciling the severall differing Parties that are Reconcilable.

LONDON,

Printed by R. W. for *Nevil Simmons*, Bookseller in *Kederminster*, 1660.

Ralph Cotton his book

1751

Collection of

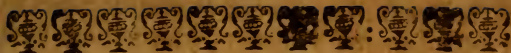
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To the Reader.

Christian Reader,



Must acquaint thee, *What it is* that is here offered thee, and *To what use and purpose.* Here is, 1. The Articles or Summe of the Christian Religion, both briefly in the Antient Creeds, and more

Largly and Explicitly in a *Profession*, 1. Of Christian Belief, 2. Consent, 3. And Obedience.

2. Here is a *Form of Agreement* for the Pastors of such Churches as are left to *Voluntary* Associations and Communion.

3. Here is a larger Description of the Ministerial Offices and Church-Ordinances.

The first of these (which was formerly published as a Catechism, and is now corrected)

rected) was to me a work of greater difficulty than greater Volumes; which those will understand, that have tryed what it is to avoid *Defectiveness*, *Redundancies*, and *Disorders* in such a draught, (which yet I know I have not perfectly attained). The Uses to which it was intended are these. 1. Whereas Mr. *John Dury* (who hath laboured above thirty years for the healing the Divisions among the Protestant Churches) did send to the Ministers of this County of *Worcester*, to give him their advice and assistance in that most desirable work; and whereas one principal part of our Advice was, that the Churches should hold their *Unity* and *Concord* in *Necessary things*, and *Liberty* in things *not necessary*, and *Charity* in both, and that they should each send to other a *Confession* of *their Faith*, containing only such *Necessary things*, and thereupon desire the Acknowledgement and Communion of their Brethren: *This Profession* is purposely fitted to that *Use*; containing as much as neighbour-Churches should require, in order to that distant Communion with us or others, which several Churches are capable of; and containing nothing but what all Christian Churches are agreed in. And whereas many
have

have said, that it is defective, because it containeth nothing but what a Papist will subscribe; I answer, It is so much the better: The Churches had a perfect or sufficient Symbole or Confession of Faith, before Popery (Name or Thing) was known in the world: And they are not bound to alter and enlarge it, as oft as errours shall arise: The Rule must still remain the same, and [A Rejection of all that is contrary to this Rule] is that which we must do in opposition to Heresies and Errours. We have no new Religion, but the same antient Faith which was before Popery was conceived. If we have nothing but what they confess to be true, then *our Faith* is justified by them, (and so we are on the surer side): but they having much which we deny, their *Faith as Popish* is condemned by us, though their *Faith as Christian* we approve.

2. Another use of this *Profession* is to be a *sufficient* test for particular Church-Communion; (where Authority leaveth it to the Church.) I will not reject him as defective in the Articles of his Belief, who believeth but what is comprehend in this Summe.

3. It is also useful for the *Catechizing* of the Ignorant, and the clear explication of the

Creeds and the ten Commandments, to the understandings of the weak. I know it is an inconvenience to children, to have Answers so long to some of the Questions: Which I would have redressed, if I could have done it without greater inconveniences. And I know that there are hundreds of Catechisms abroad already: But if I could have told where to have found one that had contained as much as this doth, in as few words, and no worse order, I had spared this labour. Since the first Edition of this, I received the exactest that I have taken notice of, in certain Propositions, from the most Learned Author Mr. *Thomas Greaves*, much suited to the same designs as this.

To this last use some will think that there is wanting the Definition of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lords Supper: But to them I say, 1. The antient Church did purposely conceal the mysterie of the Eucharist from the Catechumenes, till they were baptized. 2. And then it was by sight and observation of the actual celebration, that they first and chiefly learned the nature of it. 3. And he that nameth them with their *Uses* and *Ends*, (as I have here done) supposing that he speaketh to such as have seen the Administration,

ministration, may perhaps escape the censure of omitting any thing that is of true Necessity ; the Doctrine and Thing signified by them being before explained. 4. But yet I have afterwards given a Description of them, pag. 29. & 46. *Thef.* 8. & 34. from whence it may be fetched for the use of the Catechized.

4. It is also useful to my self, and others in my case, that have swarms of malicious accusers, that would fain be questioning the soundness of our Faith, and accusing us of Errours ; and that have need to make it known what indeed is our Religion to Magistrates or Brethren, for their satisfaction and our just defence. If any question, What is *My Religion* ? It is here expressed : It consisteth in [*my Belief of all that God revealeth to me, and my Love of God in himself and in all the appearances of his Goodness ; my Trust in his fidelity, and Hope of all his Promised Mercies ; and my Obedience to him in all his Laws ; My Assent and Consent in General to all the Will of God revealed in Nature or the Holy Scriptures, as far as I can understand them : and in particular and more distinctly to all the parts of this Profession.*] This is my Religion; I doubt not but this much will

will be acceptable with God, and sufficient to salvation : If it be not acceptable to men, nor sufficient to my being Reputed Orthodox, and accepted into their Communion, the Day is at hand that shall reveal, whether the fault was *theirs* or *mine*. I will reject no man of *this Religion* from my *Charity* or *Communion* : I will censure, or molest, or persecute none such : If they will do otherwise by me, the suffering will at last be greatest, where the fault was greatest.

And yet (though I adhere to the antient simplicity) I will not be wanting to satisfy any as far as I am able : And therefore I have added the other two parts : *The Agreement of the Associated Ministers*, is intended for nothing else but a sufficient enumeration of all those things which Pastors, being left to so much liberty by the Magistrate, should Agree in voluntarily among themselves : But observe that it is only for such times and places of Liberty ; (and there it may serve instead of all the Volumes of Canons and Decrees :) But in places and times of greater strictness, where the Civil Rulers grant no such Liberty to the Churches, much of the Articles of Agreement are in vain, and not to be practised ; especially much in the sixth and seventh

venth Articles: And as we justly swear in the Oath of Supremacy, that the King is the only Supream Governour of this Realm, in all Causes Spiritual or Ecclesiastical (that is, as to all Coercive Government about such Causes, distinct from Spiritual Government by the Keyes of the Word upon mens Consciences) so we must accordingly obey him ; and no Agreements, or Covenants, or Canons of our own or others, without a true and certain prohibition from the Law of God, must be pretended against our obedience to lawful powers. For Gods Law having already bound us to obey our Rulers, we cannot by any Power, or Covenants, or Agreements of our own, disoblige our selves: Otherwise men might evade a great part of their duty; and while they pretend to dispence with the Laws of God, they should, in a sort, set up themselves as above him. But if man command us to disobey our Maker, we must disobey that command, though with patient submission to sufferings, without resistance, or reproaching of our Governours.

And because some men of narrow principles, are calling for Assent to many more particulars (especially about Church-Offices, and Worship, and Discipline) and will not bear

bear with those; that in smaller things dissent from them, especially if Ministers; I have added 80. *Theses* about the Offices of the Ministers of Christ, containing such things as one would think, for *Number* and *Quality*, might be taken as sufficient for our *Concord* and *Communion* with those whose *Opinions* hinder not the prosperity of *their Charity* and of *the Church*.

And now call me by what *Name* or *Title* thou seeft cause; here thou hast my *Profession* and my *Judgement* about the matters of the Church: If thou desire to see the practical part that will bear it, exemplified in any *Forms*, I should not refuse to give thee such satisfaction upon any just occasion. I know of *no Title* that well agreeth to the nature of that *Religion* which indeed *I hold*, and which I have here proposed, and which I think would be fit for the Churches to agree in, but *CHRISTIAN & CATHOLIKE*, and these I own: If thou give me any other, let him that maketh or useth it, be responsible for it.

Understand also that this *General Part*, containing the *Positives of the Catholike Religion*, and fit materials of *Catholike Concord*, is but the *first Part* of the Book, the *second in-*
tended

tended being somewhat large, as containing the particular terms on which the Abassines, Armenians, Greeks, Romanists, Lutheranes, Calvinists, Arminians, Contra-remonstrants, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independents, and moderate Anabaptists should be agreed: and discovering that with most of the parties, the present disagreements are not such as should break Communion, and cause them to reject each other as too many uncharitably do.

I conclude with one necessary Advertisement to thee, that if thou wouldst not be cheated of thy Religion by those that are still perswading men that the essentials or Fundamentals of Religion as distinct from the Integral parts cannot be known, because no one certain perfect form of words is given to the Church which containeth those and none but those, remember that it is the *matter* and sence *believed*, *Loved* and *Obedied* that is the essence of Religion and necessary to salvation for it self; but the *Words* are only *Necessary* as *revealing* or *expressing* the *Matter*: And therefore the *same form of words or sentences* is not *Necessary* alike to all. The most *General words*, are most *comprehensive*, and most *certainly take in all the matter*: But then the *particular things*

things which must necessarily be understood, are not alike conceived of by all men by the helpe or use of General expressions: A wise understanding Christian when he saith but [*I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,*] doth distinctly conceive of all those things that essentially constitute such a true belief; when perhaps an ignoranter weaker person must have those *Generals* opened by more distinct expressions, and more particularly, before he can have a true apprehension of such essentials. And therefore the more Ignorant any person is, (*ceteris paribus*) the more large, distinct and particular his *Creed* or *Profession* should be; because he conceiveth of nothing but by very particular distinct expressions, when the judicious by a few words conceive of as much as the ignorant by many.

Though much of the *second Part* of this Treatise be long since prepared, yet so great are the threatnings of God to deprive me of opportunities of publike serving him, and so wonderful is the impatience of men against Peace makers, (as crossing their *opinions, interests* and *designes*) that I have great reason to question whether ever it will see the light: And therefore I intreat thee at the present

present to accept of this imperfect piece
alone, from him that is resolved by the help
of Christ, and in confidence on his promise,
Matth. 5. 9. to continue his endeavours
(though weak and unsuccessful) for the Church's
Peace, though it cost him a thousand more
injuries and slanders, and all that furious
prosperous malice can inflict, as being

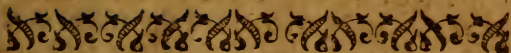
His servant who will beare our
charges, and save us harmless
in his work.

Rich. Baxter.


Er-

Errata.

P Ag. 4. l. 22. for [*the seventh day*] read [*the Sabbath day*]. pag. 10, 11. Those that would have more brevity, may blot out [*to reconcile and bring me unto God*] and all after [*Sanctifier*] to the end of that Paragraph. Pag. 24. l. 12. blot out [*and Consent*] Pag. 61. l. 1. blot out [*any*] Pag. 68. l. 3. for [*great*] r. [*urgent*] and l. 6. for [*omit*] r. [*over-pass*]



The necessary *Grounds, Ends* and
Principles of a Universal Concord
between all faithful Pastors and
Churches according to their capacity
of Communion.

I.  OR our grounds.

I. We take the *Word of God*
for the *Rule of our Faith,*
and *Law of the Church,* suf-
ficiently determining of all

that is of *Standing, Universal Necessity or*
Duty, in order to *Salvation* and the *Pleasing*
of *God;* and giving us *sufficient General Pre-*
cepts and Directions, for the determining of
all such *circumstances* in *Worship* and *Holy*
Obedience, as are not of standing, universal
Necessity or Duty, but are mutable and va-
riable: It is therefore none of our intent to
make any *Laws* for our Brethren, or impose
any thing as *Duty* that *God* hath not im-
posed.

II. We here suppose and include the *LAW* of *Nature* and Revelation of the will of God by his works when we speak of the sufficiency of his Word.

III. We suppose the *Necessity* of *Reason* and *Illumination*, and the use of *Means* both *Instituted*, *Natural* and of *Arts*, for the right *understanding* of the *Word of God*: and therefore shall take *all that for our Rule*, which by these *Helps* and *Means* may be sufficiently proved to be the *sense* of the *Word* or *Works of God*.

IV. Because we are assured that the *Primitive Churches* were acquainted with the mind of God, in all the points of *Necessity*, about his *Worship* and the *Government of the Church*, and because we bear a reverence to those times, and are not willing needlessly to swerve from their example; we shall therefore put nothing into this our Agreement as a *standing, necessary Duty*, in which we have not the consent of those *Antient Churches*.

V. Though our ministerial Duty and Authority do arise from the Laws of Christ himself; yet in subordination to him, we submit to the *just commands of Magistrates*, and thankfully accept of their encouragement and Help, even in the matters of the
house

house and worship of the Lord. And therefore we resolve to keep as near their Directions and Laws as we can, in congruence with our *Divine* and *principal Rule* and *grounds*; and *Ends*, and in all things lawful to obey them.

VI. And because we are not *Lords* but *Ministers*, and have no forcible, *Magisterial Power*, but a *Ministerial Authority* to direct, perswade and command as servants in our Masters name, and cannot govern people as their Pastors against their wills, we shall therefore expect the Consent of our people, and not presume to take them as members of our Churches and special charge; and bring them under the yoke of Discipline, without their consent, or against their minds and wills.

VII. Because we are all imperfect, and need the Advice and Help of others, and because it is the will of God that his Churches and Servants live in Unity, we shall, in cases of Difficulty, and where the concurrence of our Brethren may promote our work, consult with them, and do as much of our work as we can, by their *Advice* and in a way of *Concord*.

And thus we may confidently proceed as
(a 2) going

going upon sure grounds, and expect the concurrence of our Brethen, and be out of the reach of rational calumny, while we have the *Holy Scripture*, or the *Law of Nature*, discerned by *Illuminated Reason*, for what we do: while we have the *leading judgement* of the *Ancient Churches*, the *command*, *allowance*, *encouragement* or *permission* of the *Magistrate*, the *consent of our People*, and our *Brethrens concord and Advice*.

2. **O**ur *Ends* in this Agreement, are,
I. Ultimately the pleasing and Glorifying of God. II. The saving our own and peoples souls. III. The winning of unsanctified souls to God. IV. The Preservation and Edification, and obedient, fruitful, exemplary lives of those that are sanctified. V. The fruitful and comfortable communion of Saints. VI. The right administration of holy things, that Ordinances may be owned by God and prosper. VII. The maintaining of Union and Communion among the Churches and ministers of Christ with more such like, which will be after mentioned.

3. The

3. **T**He *Principles* which we proceed on in order to the following *Practices*, are these, and such as these.

I. We are agreed that it is the Duty of *Ministers* to *Preach the Word*, and be instant in season and out of season, and to teach and endeavour to win as many to Christ as they can: especially those in their *several Parishes*, for whose instruction they are appointed by the *magistrate*, and have the public maintenance.

II. We are agreed that *all members of the Universal Church*, that have opportunity should joyn themselves as members to some *Particular Churches*, for ordinary communion of Saints, in public worship, and for the helping of each other in holy Obedience, and against sin, and that they should know their own Pastors, and the Pastors know their proper flock, as far as may be, in order to the faithful discharge of their great trust, *Acts 14. 23. Titus 1. 5. 1 Thessal. 5. 12, 13.*

III. We are agreed that it is the duty of Pastors to Teach and Rule (or Guide) the flocks, and to go before them as the *Ministers*

sters of Christ, in the publike Administration of his holy Ordinances: And that it is the peoples duty to joyn with them in this publike worship, and submit to their due Administrations, to hear them, and obey them, and to honour them and highly esteem them in Love for their work and masters sake, and to bear peace among themselves.

IV. We are agreed that the Baptism of Infants, giveth none a Right to the Church membership and Priviledges of the Adult, unless they add a personal profession (clear or obscure) of their own faith.

V. We are agreed that this Profession must be *Credible*; and therefore must seem *Understanding, Deliberate, Voluntary, Serious, not Nullified* or made invalid by a *contradicting tongue or Life*; and that it must *Materially* contain the *whole essence of Christianity*: And that in order to their admittance to Church communion, men are not the *sole Judges* of their *own profession*, but it must be *Credible* to them to whom it belongeth to admit them to Communion.

VI. We are agreed that ordinarily *none are to be refused Communion*, that make *such a Profession of Christianity*, as above said, and *desire Communion*, and *consent to be members* of

of the Churches where they live, and to submit to Ministerial oversight and Government, and to do the duty of fellow-members unto others; Yea though they are weak in knowledge and Grace, and duty, and want convenient expressions.

We shall take up with a credible Profession (that is, such as seemeth to be understanding, deliberate, voluntary and serious, not nullified by contrary words or deeds) notwithstanding the weakneses of men.

1. Because we are not searchers of the heart, and therefore must believe a credible person, till we can disprove him.

2. Because we find the Scripture example guiding us in this way, *Act. 2. 37, 38, 41. & 4. 4. & 8. 13, 37. & 16. 33. Matth. 15. 3, 5, 6. Rom. 10. 9.*

3. Because we find that God doth much lay mens good or evil upon their own choice.

4. Because we must be tender of refusing the weakest that Christ doth not refuse, or of wronging men in so great a matter as the Helps of their Salvation are.

And yet we shall receive no other, nor promiscuously admit all of our Parishes in Common as now they are

1. Because we know to our sorrow too many of them to be grossly ignorant of the *Essentials of Christi-*

Christianity. 2. And too many of them deny (in many places) the said *essentials*. 3. And many of them *never made a personal profession of Faith and Holiness*, for ought we know (and we cannot judge of latent things:) 4. Many of them *nullifie their Professions* and make them utterly *incredible* by *notorious ungodly lives*, and violating their *Baptismal covenant*. 5. If they *refuse consent*, they refuse their own mercies; and *God or the Church* do not give such *priviledges to refusers, or non accepters*. 6. If we take all these and such other as are unfit into the Church, and put them under *Discipline*, that *cannot bear it*, we take the way to undo them for ever, by making them desperate enemies of the truth. For as their reigning sin is like to harden them against reproof, and bring them under *publike censure*, so when they find themselves *shamed and cast out*, they are most likely to hate the *Minister and his teaching*, and never more to be profited by him: when as in the state of *catechumens*, they would have remained less irritated, and so more teachable and in hope. 7. We cannot *spiritually guide and govern men against their wills*: and therefore cannot be their *Pastors, nor undertake to do it against their wills*.

wills, or without their own consent. 8. We have cause to judge that men would take it as a heynous injury, if we bring them under this displeasing Discipline without their own consent. 9. They cannot perform the *Duty of Church-members to God, the Pastors or their Brethren*, without their own consent: and therefore they are not to be numbred with adult Church-members, nor receive the Priviledges of such. 10. The excellent ends of *Church Holiness by Discipline* before expressed, will be frustrate, and the contrary mischiefs brought upon the Churches which are many and great. 11. The Rubrick and Canons direct us to deny the *Sacrament* to the scandalous: we resolve therefore in subordination to the word of God to have respect to these directions of our Governours. The Powers both Civil and Ecclesiastical, did command and order in the book of Common Prayer [*that none be admitted to the holy communion, till they can say the Catechism, and be confirmed.*] And they give these Reasons for confirmation at full age
“ 1. Because that when children come to
“ years of discretion and have learned what
“ their God-fathers and God-mothers pro-
“ mised for them in Baptism, they may then
“ them;

“ themselves with their own mouth and their
“ own consent , openly before the Church ,
“ ratifie and confirm the same ; and also
“ promise that by the Grace of God they
“ will evermore endeavour themselves faith-
“ fully to observe and keep such things as
“ they by their own mouth and confession
“ have assented unto. 3. For that it is agree-
“ able with the usage of the Church in times
“ past : whereby it was ordained that con-
“ firmation should be ministred to them that
“ were of perfect age , that they being in-
“ structed in Christs Religion, should openly
“ profess their own Faith, and promise to be
“ obedient to the Will of God.] We so far
reverence the antient Church , and the Au-
thority that established this in *England* , that
we shall not causlessly neglect so much of this
as we can perform.

VII. We are agreed that it is the will of
Christ that holy Discipline or Government
be ordinarily exercised in the Churches : That
the gross and scandalous sinners be reprov-
ed, and the unreformed and impenitent, after
due means and patience, be put away from
the Communion of the Church, and the
penitent absolved : And that wilfully to neg-
lect this holy Order and Work, is a hainous
sin ;

fin : For, 1. It is necessary by Precept, as these Canons testifie : *Lev. 19. 17. Matth. 18. 15, 16, 17, 18. 1 Cor. 5. Tit. 1. 13. & 2. 15. & 3. 10. 1 Tim. 3. 5, 15. & 5. 19, 20, 21, 22, 24. 2 Tim. 3. 5. & 4. 2. 2 Thes 3. 6, 14.*

2. It maketh for the honour of God, that his Holiness may be seen in the face of the Church, which he hath chosen to be a glass to represent it to the world, and men may not reproach him with the impurities of his Church : And it is necessary to the honour of our Redeemer, the Head and Saviour of the Church, that he be not reproached with the loss of his labour, and the deformities of his body : As also it is needful to the honour of our Sanctifier, that the world may see that Holiness is a real thing, and leaves not Saints as defiled as the world.

3. It is needful also to the honour of the Church, which is the Garden, and Vineyard, and Family of God ; a peculiar people, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation ; and not to be like the common Wilderness, but fitted for the praise of him that called them, and the Communion of Saints.

4. It is a part of the very office and work of Pastors : the power is essential to them, and the exercise ordinarily their duty.

5. It

5. It conduceth to the conviction and salvation of the unbelieving world, who are not capable of judging of our doctrine by it self, but will judge of it by the quality of the Church that doth profess it. If the Church be impure, they will fly from Christ and the Gospel as impure : And nothing is more like to win them, then a *visible innocency and cleanness* in the Church.

6. It tendeth also to the convincing and converting of notorious ungodly people among our selves, when there is a visible difference between them and the Churches.

7. And it tendeth to the bruising the head of the Serpent, by casting an open shame on sin.

8. It conduceth also to the honour of holiness, when it is thus solemnly exalted, and the precious separated from the vile : And so men will be encouraged to own it, against the reproach that is cast upon it in the world.

9. It tendeth also to the preservation of the Church from the venome and infection of heresie and sensuality, and the imitation of the ungodly in their sin, that a little of their leaven do not leaven the whole lump.

10. It tendeth also to the comfortable

Com-

Communion of the Saints, and the maintaining of brotherly Love and Charity: Whereas if the Church be constituted of *notorios ungodly men*, the faithful cannot Love them with the *special Love* that is due to *Saints*, nor *communicate* to them *as such*; but will take up with a *common Love and Communication*, which is fitter in the *world* than in the *Church*.

11. It will preserve the Churches beautiful and acceptable in the eyes of God, that so he may delight in them, and own his Ordinances with the more plenteous blessing; and in the Church there will be as a representation of the Judgement to come (*praedictum futuri judicii, ut Tertull.*) when the impurity of it by the neglect of Discipline, may provoke him to punish the Church for the sins which they connive at, and to withdraw his Grace and disown his Ordinances.

12. Lastly, Discipline is necessary for the (capable) offender himself, to shame and drive him from his sin: and to the Penitent, that by that comfortable Ordinance of Absolution, they may be assisted in applying the promise to themselves, and may be revived by hearing the voice of peace from the mouth
of

of an authorized Messenger of Christ. These great and manifold ends and uses to which God hath appointed the exercise of the Keyes, and the Government and holy Order of his Church, will cry out against us, as great transgressors, if we shall wilfully neglect such a needful work, having undertaken the Office to which it doth belong.

VIII. Yet we are agreed that Discipline must not be made a pretence to any *unjust censoriousness*, or *rigor*, much less to *tyrannie* or *revenge*: Nor must we bring men to open shame, or cast them out of our Communion for *sin repented of, confessed and forsaken*; nor yet for the meer *infirmities of Believers*, or sins that are not *scandalous* or *gross*; Nor must Pastors presume by excommunicating Kings and Rulers, to dishonour them and endanger Obedience and Civil peace.

IX. We are agreed that as there must be a personal communion of Christians for the worshipping of God, and for holy walking in a particular Church, so there must be a communion of Churches, as far as necessity doth require, and our capacity will allow: That so they may communicate the truths and mercies which they receive, and may know how to receive or refuse such, as are received or rejected

rejected by any of the Churches. The Pastors therefore (with other meet persons) should meet together (having leave granted by the Civil Christian Magistrate) and hold correspondency to these ends as oft as they well can : As also for the helping and strengthening of each other , and doing the work of God in Concord, and other ends to be mentioned anon.

X. Into this Communion we are agreed, that all such true *Pastors* (and Churches) are to be admitted , as make a *credible profession of Faith and Holiness* ; and that such as *deny this, or are Hereticks, or of scandalous ungodly lives* , must after a first and second admonition , be rejected by the rest of the *Pastors* and the *Churches*. (So as in the manner they make no disturbance of Civil obedience or Peace.)

Handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is extremely faint and illegible due to fading and the texture of the paper. It appears to be organized into several paragraphs or sections, but the specific words and sentences cannot be discerned.

THE
Christian Religion.

Expressed I. briefly, in the ancient Creeds, the ten Commandments, and the Lords Prayer.

And II. more largely in a *Profession* taken out of the holy Scriptures; Containing 1. The Articles of the Christian Belief. 2. Our Consent to the Gospel Covenant. 3. The sum of Christian Duty.

According to the Primitive Simplicity, Purity, and Practice: Fitted to the right Instructing of the Ignorant, the promoting of Holiness, and the Charitable Concord of all true Believers.

Which whosoever sincerely Believeth, Consenteth to, and Practiseth, shall certainly be saved.

It is also by prefixed Questions, made a Catechism.

By Richard Baxter.

London Printed, 1660.

To fill up this vacant Page.

THE *Papists Confession of the sufficiency of our Belief.*
Concil. Basil. Orat. Raguf. Bin. p. 299. [*The Holy
Scripture in the literall sense, soundly and well understood, is
the Infallible and most sufficient Rule of faith.*]

Bellarmin. de verbo Dei, l. 4. c. 11. [*In the Christian doctrine
both of Faith and Manners, some things are, simply necessary to sal-
vation, to all; as the knowledge of the Articles of the Apostles Creed,
of the ten Commandments, and of some Sacraments : The rest are not
so Necessary, that a man cannot be saved without the explicite know-
ledge, belief and profession of them — These things that are simply
necessary, and are Profitable to all, the Apostles preached to all —
All things are written by the Apostles which are Necessary to all,
and which they openly preacht to all*] (See the place.)

*Costenus Enchirid. c. 1. p. 49. Non inficiamur præcipua illa fi-
dei capita quæ omnibus Christianis cognitu sunt ad salutem nec-
cessaria, perspicuè satis esse Apostolicis scriptis comprehensa.*

The Ancient CREED.

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified, dead and buried, he descended into Hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholick Church, the Communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, Amen.

I Believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the holy Ghost of the virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And I believe one Catholike and Apostolike Church; I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Whosoever will be saved : before all things, it is necessary that he ho'd the Catholike faith.

Which faith except every one do keep wholly and undefiled : without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholike faith is this : that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity :

Neither confounding the persons : nor dividing the substance.

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, is all one : the glory equal, the Majesty cōeternal.

Such as the Father is : such is the Son : & such is the holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the holy Ghost uncreate.

The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the holy Ghost incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the holy Ghost eternal.

And yet they are not three eternal : but one eternal.

As also there be not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated : but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

And yet they are not three Almighty : but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, & the holy Ghost is God,

And yet they are not three Gods : but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the holy Ghost Lord.

And yet not three Lords : but one Lord.

For like as we be compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord.

So are we forbidden by the Catholike Religion, to say there be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none : neither Created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone : not made, nor created, but begotten.

The holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son ; neither made nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one holy Ghost, not three holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another.

But the whole three persons be coeternal together, and coequal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that will be saved: must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation; that he also believe rightly in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, is God and man.

God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds: and man of the substance of his mother, born in the world.

Perfect God and perfect man: of a reasonable soul, and humane flesh subsisting.

Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead: and inferiour to the Father touching his manhood.

Who although he be God and man: yet he is not two, but one Christ.

One, not by Conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God.

One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and man is one Christ.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies: and shall give account for their own works.

And they that have done good, shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the Catholike faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

The ten Commandments, *Exod. 20.*

GOD spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; Thou shalt not bow down thy self to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattel, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Seventh day and hallowed it.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy Neighbour.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours.

The Lords Prayer, *Mat. 6.*

OUR Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever, Amen.



The PROFESSION of the CHRISTIAN Religion.

I. The Articles of the Christian Belief.

It is a Catechism if you prefix to every Article, the Question, *What do you believe?*

I. Of GOD. I. **T**HERE is one only God (a) in three persons, *the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (b): Who is Infinite in Being, Power, Wisdom and Goodness (c): The Creator of all things (d); Our most absolute Lord, most Righteous Governour, and most gracious Father (e).

(*) Or substi-
nencies.]
(a) 1 Cor.
8. 4, 6.
(b) Mat.
28 19.
1 Joh. 5. 7.
(c) 1 Tim.
Neh. 9. 6.
(d) Neh. 9. 6.
(e) Rev. 4. 8. & 15. 3. Ex. 34. 6, 7. Ezek. 18. 4. Psal. 47. 7. & 119. 68. & 145. 9.

1. 17. Psal. 139. 7, 8, 9. & 147. 5. Isa. 40. 17. (d) Neh. 9. 6. (e) Rev. 4. 8. & 15. 3. Ex. 34. 6, 7. Ezek. 18. 4. Psal. 47. 7. & 119. 68. & 145. 9.

2. *Of the Creation of man, and the first Law.* 2. God made man for himself (f) in his own image (g); with Reason and freewill (h): endued with wisdom and holiness (i); and put under him the inferior creatures, for his use (k): and

(f) Prov. 16. 4.
(g) Gen. 1. 26.
(h) Deut. 30. 19.
(i) Col.

3. 10. Eccles. 7. 29. (k) Psal. 8. 5, 6.
B 4 bound

(l) Mar. 12. 30. 33. Deut 6. 5. & 10 12. & 1. 32. bound him by the Law of Nature to adhere to God his Maker ; to Believe him, fear him, love him, honour him and obey him with all his powers (l): Moreover forbidding him to eat of the tree of Knowledge upon pain of death (m).

(m) Gen. 2. 16, 17. Rom. 6. 23.

(a) Gen. 3. John 8. 44. Rom. 5. 12. 18. Gen. 3. 16, 17. 3. *Of mans fall, and of original sin, and our common misery.*

(b) Rom. 3. 9, 19, 23. & 6. 23. 3. Man being tempted by Satan, did wilfully sin, and so fell from God and Happiness, under the wrath of God (a), the curse of his Law (b) and the power of the Devil (c): And hence we are all conceived in sin, and prone to evil,

(c) Acts 26. 18. Eph. 2. 2. Heb. 2. 14. (d) and condemnation is passed upon all (e); and no meer creature is able to deliver us (f).

(d) Psal. 5. 1. Rom 5. 12 Eph. 2. 2, 3, 5. Isa 48. 4. Job 14. 4. & 25. 4. Gen. 6. 5. Hof 11. 7. (e) Rom. 5. 18, 19. (f) Rom. 5. 6, 10. Acts 4. 12.

(a) Joh 3. 16, 17 & 4. 42. 4. *Of our Redemption by Jesus Christ.*

(b) Joh. 1. Rom 9. 5. Joh. 10. 30. 4. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to be their Redeemer (a); who being God, and One with the Father (b) did take our nature, and become man; being conceived by the Holy Ghost,

(c) 1 Tim. 2. 5. Heb. 2. 14, 16. Luke 1. 27, 31, 35. in the Virgin *Mary*, and born of her, and called *Jesus Christ* (c); and being free from sin, he conquered the tempter, fulfilled all righteousness (d), revealed the Gospel, and

(d) Heb. 4. 15. Mat. 4. Heb. 7. 26. Mat. 3. 15. confirmed

confirmed it by Miracles (e); and gave himself a sacrifice for our sins, and a ransom for us, in suffering death on the cross, to reconcile us unto God (f); and was buried, and went among the dead (g)* and Rose again the third day, having conquered death, (h); and afterward ascended into Heaven (i) where he remaineth God and Man, in one person (k), and is Lord of all, in glory with the Father (l); the chief Priest, and Prophet, and King of his Church (m); interceding for us; and teaching and ruling us, by his Spirit, Ministers, and Word (n).

(e) Acts 2. 22. Heb. 2. 3, 4. (f) Heb. 9. 26. & 10. 12. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Ep. 2. 16. (g) 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4. Luk. 23. 43. Psal. 16. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 18, 19. (h) 2 Tim. 1. 10. Heb. 2. 14. Acts 2. 24. (i) Act. 2. 9.

(k) Acts 3. 21. Rom. 9. 5. Heb. 7. 24. (l) Acts 2. 36. & 10. 36. (m) Heb. 8. 2. & 10. 21. Acts 3. 23. & 5. 31. (n) Heb. 7. 25. Rom. 8. 34. Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13. Rom. 8. 9. 1 Thes. 5. 12.

5. The Lord Jesus Christ hath ordained in his Testament, that all they that receive him by a true effectual faith, and by true Repentance do turn from the flesh, the world, and the Devil unto God, shall freely receive the pardon of their sins (a), and shall become the Sons of God, and heirs of everlasting Life, (b) & the Spirit of Christ shall dwell within them (c):

(a) Heb. 9. 15. Joh. 1. 12. & 3. 16. Acts 26. 18. Gal. 5. 6. Acts 11. 18. & 3. 19. & 20. 21. Rom. 8. 1, 13. Mar. 4. 12. (b) Rom. 8. 16, 17. (c) Gal. 4. 6. John 3. 6. 1 Cor. 6. 17. Rom. 8. Eph. 2. 18. 22. and

d) Rev. 2. and all that overcome and persevere to
 Col. 3. the death, shall live with Christ in endless
 22, 23. glory (d): But the Unbelievers, impenitent
 Heb. 4. 1. and unholy shall be condemned to everlast-
 e) Mar. ing fire (e). And this he hath commanded
 16. Joh. his Ministers to preach to all the world (f):
 3, 5, 36. And hath told us, that All that are given
 Heb. 12. 14. him of the Father, shall come to him, and
 Thes. 1. that he will in no wise cast them out, nor
 9. & 2. shall any pluck them out of his hands. (g)
 Luke 3. Mat. 28.
 Mar. 16. 15, 16. 2 Cor. 5. 19. (g) Joh. 6. 37 & 10. 28, 29:

) Joh. 14. 6. The Holy Ghost
 & 15. proceeding from the
 1 Pet. 1. *6. Of the Holy Ghost* Father and the Son, did
 11, 12. *revealing and confirm-* inspire and guide the
 1 Pet. 1. 21. *ing the Gospel.* Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, that
 Tim. 3. they might truly and fully reveal the do-
 Joh. 16. ctrine of Christ, and deliver it in Scripture
 Eph. 3. to the Church as the rule of our faith and
 1. & 2. 20. life (a): and by abundance of Evident
 1. 8. 20. uncontroled Miracles, and wonderfull gifts,
 1. 7. 22. to be the great witness of Christ, and of the
 1. 19. truth of his holy word (b).
 Tim. 6. Luke
 Luke 29, 31.
) Acts 2. 22. 4. & 5. 32. & 19. 11, 19. Heb. 2. 3, 4. Gal. 3. 1,
 3. Joh. 14. 12. & 3. 2. 1 Cor. 14.

7. *Of our Sanctification by the Holy Ghost, and the state and blessings of the sanctified.*

7. Where the Gospel is made known, the Holy Ghost by it doth enlighten the minds of all that shall be saved, and opening and softening their hearts, doth draw them to believe in Christ (a) and turneth them from the power of Satan unto God (b): Whereupon they are joyned to Christ the Head, and into one holy Catholick Church which is his Body, consisting of all true believers (c): and are freely Justified, and made the Sons of God (d); and a sanctified peculiar people unto him (e), and do Love him above all, and serve him sincerely in holiness and righteousness (f), Loving and desiring the Communion of the Saints (g); Overcoming the Flesh, the World and the Devil (h), and Hoping for Christs second coming, and for everlasting life (i).

(a) Acts 26. 17, 18. Rom. 8. 9, 10, 11. Acts 16. 14. Ioh. 6. 44. Eze. 36. 26. Gal. 5. 22.
 (b) Act. 26. 18.
 (c) Col. 2. 19. Eph. 5. 30, 31, 32. & 3. 17.
 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13, 27.
 (d) Rom. 3. 24. & 4. 24.
 John 1. 12.
 (e) Tit. 2. 14.
 (f) Rom. 5. 5. Mat. 10. 37. 1 Cor. 6. 11.
 Luke 1. 75. (g) 1 John 3. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 22. Acts 24. 2. (h) Gal. 5. 17, 24. 1 John 2. 15. (i) 1 Cor. 1. 7. 2 Pet. 3. 11, 12. Tit. 1. 2. & 3. 7.

8. *Of the Judgement and Execution.*

8. At Death the souls of the Justified go to happiness with Christ, and the souls of the wicked to Misery (a): And at the end of this world the Lord Jesus Christ will come again;

(a) Luke 23. 43. & 16. 22. 2 Cor. 5. 1. 8 Phil. 1. 23. 1 Pet. 3. 19. Luke 16. 26, 28.

(b) Acts 1. again, and will raise the bodies of all men
 11. 1 Cor. from the dead; and will judge all according
 15. Joh. 5. to their works (b) And the Righteous shall
 22, 29. go into everlasting life, and the rest into
 Mat. 25. everlasting punishment (c): *All this I do*
 2 Cor. 5. *unfeignedly believe.*
 10.
 (c) Mat.
 25. & 13. 41, 42, 43. 2 Tim. 4. 8, 18. 2 Thef. 1 8, 9, 10. &
 2. 12. John 17. 24.

II. *Our Consent to the Gospel Covenant, with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; by which we are Christians, and members of the Catholick Church.*

Quest. *Are you willing and resolved to Give up your self to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, according to the Gospel doctrine which you profess?*

(a) Luke
 15. 21. Act.
 2. 37. & 3.
 19. Rom 8.
 13. Luke
 14. 33.
 1 Thef. 1. 9.
 (b) Exod.
 20. 3. Deut.
 17. Jos.
 24. 16. 10
 16.
 (c) 2 Cor. 8. 5. (d) John 17. 3. 1 Cor. 8. 6. 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18.
 John 1. 3. Eph. 4, 5, 6. (c) John 14. 6. Luke 5. 14. & 14. 26.
 Acts 9. 6. Rom. 6. 13, 16. Luke 19. 27. John 3. 19.

Sanctifier;

Sanctifier; that he may further illuminate, sanctifie and confirm me, and I may hold fast and obey the doctrine of Christ, which was revealed by his inspiration, and witnessed by his gifts and Miracles, and is now contained in the Holy Scriptures; and that he may be in me the earnest of my everlasting Happiness with God (f).

(f) Mat. 28. 29. Eph. 2. 18, 22, & 1. 13, 14, 18. Rom. 8. 9, 13, 16, 26. 1 Cor. 2. 10. Eph. 2. 18. 22. Rom. 15. 6.

& 3. 5, 16. 2 Cor. 1. 22. & 5. 5. Isa. 44. 3, 4, 5.

III. *The summ of Christian Duty.*

Quest. *what are*

1. *The publike means, and duties of Holiness.*

1. **C**Hrist hath appointed that fit men shall be Ordained his Ministers, to preach the Gospel to the Nations of the world (a), and make them his Disciples, Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (b): and to congregate his Disciples (c), and to oversee and Guide the several Congregations, and each member thereof (d): Particularly, to Teach them the word of God (e); to Pray and Praise God with them and for them (f):

(a) Mat. 28. 19, 20. (b) Rom. 10. 7, 14. Act. 14. 23. 2 Tim. 2. 2. Acts 13. 2. & 2. 41. (c) Acts 2. 42. & 6. 2. (d) Act. 20. 7, 28. 1. Tim. 5. 17. Tit. 1. 5.

(e) Acts 20. 20, 31. Col. 1. 28. Eph 4. 11, 12, 13. Mal. 2. 7. 1 Tim. 5. 17. (f) 1 Cor. 14. 16, 26. Acts 20. 7, 36. James 5. 14. Acts 6. 4, & 2. 42. Phil. 1. 4. Neh. 12. 24. & 11. 17. & 9. 5. & 8. 4, 6.

to administer the Lords Supper in remembrance of him (g); (h) Especially on the Lords Day, which he hath appointed for holy communion in such works (i): Also to Rebuke with authority the scandalous and unruly (k); and to bind and reject those that are obstinately impenitent, and unreformed; and to Absolve and Restore the Penitent, and confirm the weak (l).

(g) 1 Cor. 11. 24. & 10. 16.
 (h) Heb. 7. 7. Numb. 6. 23.
 (i) Rev. 1. 10. Acts 20. 7. 1 Cor. 16. 2.
 (k) Tit. 2. 15. & 1. 9, 11. 1 Tim. 5. 19. & 3. 5. (l) Mat. 18. 17, 18. Tit. 3. 10. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, 11, 13.

(a) Acts 2. 42. It is therefore the Peoples Duty to joyn with such Churches, for the aforesaid Worship of God (a); and to know, hear, submit to, and obey these their Guides that are over them in the Lord; (b) and to avoid Division and Discord, and to live in Unity, Love and Peace (c).

(b) 1 Tim. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 7. 17. 24. 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. 1 Cor. 16. 16.

(c) 1 Cor. 1. 10. & 3. 3. Rom. 16. 17. Eph. 4. 3, 15, 16. Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3. Rom. 15. 6.

2. The *secret Duties of Holiness*. 2. The *secret Duties of Holiness* are these: The exercise of Faith, Repentance,

(a) Jude 21. Gal 5. 22. Luke 10. 27. 1 Tim. 4. 7. Isa. 64. 7. Love, Hope, Delight in God, and all other graces (a): The mortifying of our sins; especially Atheism, Unbelief, and unholiness; hardness of heart, disobedience and unthankfulness,

thankfulness, flesh-pleasing, covetousness, and Pride, (b): The diligent Examining of our own hearts, about our Estates, our Duties, and our sins (c): Meditating upon God, and his word and works; especially of our Redemption by Jesus Christ; and of Death, Judgement, Heaven, and Hell (d); Watching diligently over our Thoughts, Affections, Words and Actions (e): Resisting Temptations (f): And frequent and fervent Prayer to God, in the name of Christ, with Confession, Thanksgiving, and cheerful Praises (g);

6. 3. 4. Psal. 4. 4. (d) Psal. 104. 34. & 1. 2. & 119. 97, 99. Gen. 24. 63. Eph. 3. 18, 19. Psal. 90. 12. Luke 12. 36. 2 Pet. 11, 12. (e) Luke 21. 36. Psal. 141. 3. 1 Cor. 10. 12. Psal. 39. 1. Prov. 4. 23. (f) Eph. 6. 10. to 19. 1 Pet. 5. 9. Jam. 4. 7. (g) Psal. 34. 1. & 145. 2. 1 Thes. 5. 17. Phil. 4. 6. John 16. 23.

(b) Acts 24. 16. Col. 3. 5. Rom. 8. 13. Heb. 3. 12. 13. Mat. 15. 18, 19. Luke 12. 15. Rom. 13. 13, 14. 1 Cor. 3. 18. (c) 2 Pet. 10. 2. Cor. 13. 5. Gal.

3. Parents and Masters

3. *The Private Duties of Holiness in our Relations to others.*

must diligently teach their children and servants, the word and fear

of God (a), and Pray with them, and for them, and hinder them from sin (b), and use all their power that they and their households may serve the Lord (c): children and servants must willingly learn and obey (d): We must seek instruction in the matters of

(a) Eph. 6. 4, 9. Deut. 6. 11, 12. (b) Dan. 6. 10. Act. 10. 30. Prov. 22. 6, 15. & 23. 13. Psal. 101. 1 Sam. 2. 23, 29.

(c) Gen. 18. 19. Josh. 24. 15. (d) Col. 3. 20. 22. Eph. 6. Deut. 21. 18.

our

(e) Act. 16. our salvation, especially of our Teachers(e):
 30 Mal. we must take heed of the company of tempt-
 2.7. 1 Cor. ing, and ungodly persons, and delight in
 14. 35. the company and help of the Godly: We
 (f) Pſal. must lovingly and faithfully give, and thank-
 1. 1. & 15. fully receive admonitions and exhortations
 4. & 119. (f): Confessing our faults one to another (g):
 63. Prov. and by Prayer, Pſalms, and edifying confe-
 13. 20. rence, and a holy conversation, provoking
 Eph. 5. 6, 7, one another to Love, and to good works (h).
 11. Lev.
 19. 17.
 Mat. 18.

15. Heb. 3. 13. Jam. 5. 20. 1 Pet. 5. 5. (g) Jam. 5. 16. (h) Col.
 3. 16, 17. Acts 12. 12. & 16. 25. Eph. 4. 29. 1 Pet. 4. 11. &
 3. 2. Jam. 3. 13. Col. 1. 3. & 4. 3. Heb. 10. 24.

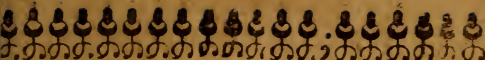
(a) Deut.
 1. 17.
 2 Chron.
 19. 6, 7.
 Joſh. 1. 8.
 Iſa. 56. 1.

4. *The Duties of Ju-
 ſtice and Charity to-
 wards men.*

4. Superiors must rule
 for God and the common
 good, with Justice and
 Mercy (a): Inferiors must

honour and obey them in the Lord (b): We
 must not injure, but preserve the Life, Cha-
 (b) Rom. rity, Estate, Name, and Rights of our Neigh-
 13. 1, 2, 3. bour (c): Not seeking our *Own* against his
 1 Pet. 2. 13. welfare (d), but doing as we would be done
 Eph. 6. 1, 5. by (e); forbearing and forgiving (f); and
 (c) Exod. loving our neighbour as our selves (g): Yea
 20. Mat. 5. loving our enemies; and doing good to all
 17. to 48. according to our power (h).
 (d) Deut.
 5. 21. Phil.
 2. 3, 4.

1 Cor. 10. 24, 33. & 13. 5. (e) Mat. 7. 12. f) Col. 3. 13.
 (g) Mat. 19. 19. & 22. 39. (h) Mat. 5. 44. Gal. 6. 10. Heb. 13. 16.



The Agreement of the Associated

P A S T O R S.

- I. **W**E do each one for himself, profess our Resolution, in the strength of Christ, to be faithful and diligent in the works of our Ministry; and to live an holy and exemplary life, in Piety, Justice and Charity, according to the measure of our abilities: Especially watching against those sins that tend to the corrupting or dividing of the Church; and to the hindring of our Ministry; and to the dishonour of the Gospel, and of our holy profession.
- II. We do profess our Agreement and Resolution in the strength of Christ, to be faithful and diligent in publick Preaching the Gospel: And in the personal instructing of all in our Parishes, or undertaken limits, that will submit thereto; teaching the Ignorant the Principles of Religion;
- C
- ender-

Art. 1. For

2 Chron. 15. an holy ex-

12, 13 14, 15. exemplary

Act. 20 28. life.

1 Tim. 4 12,

13, 14, 15, 16.

and 3. 1, &c.

and 5 17, 21.

1 Pet. 5 2 3.

Art. 2. For

teaching all

that will

submit.

endeavouring in Love, Compassion and Meekness, and yet with seriousness and zeal, to convince the erroneous and opposers, to awaken the presumptuous and secure, and help them to try the state of their souls, and to see and feel their sin and misery, and return to God by Christ that they may live: to strengthen the weak; to raise the fallen; to edifie and confirm the strong; and to comfort such as need consolation; and to help them all to prepare for death and judgement, and for everlasting life: And all this, as frequently, constantly and orderly, as our strength, and time, and greater duties will permit.

Art. 3. For a personal profession of Christianity to be made by all that will be taken for adult members, and partake of their Communion.

III. That the Churches may be capable of the Discipline of Christ, and constituted and ruled according to the Word of God, and the ends of our Office and Labours may be attained, we are Agreed and Resolved to take none for *Adult members of the Churches committed to our special charge*, nor admit them, *as such*, to Church-Communion and Priviledges, but those that have first made some personal credible Profession of true Christianity, that is, of Faith and Obedience, and as members of those Churches, submit to our Pastoral oversight according to the Word of God. But all that make
this

this Profession of Christianity and Consent to live in Communion with the Church, and under the Ministry and Discipline of Christ, we shall receive, though they be weak in knowledge, and utterance, and duties; and shall faithfully imploy our Ministerial abilities and care for their edification and salvation.

I V. We are Agreed and Resolved in the strength of Christ, while we have ability and opportunity, to Congregate the people, and hold constant Assemblies, especially on the Lords-Dayes; and therein faithfully to perform the works of our office, in Reading the holy Scripture, Preaching, Praying, Baptizing, Praising God, celebrating the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and guiding the people in the whole publick worship of God: And to manage our work with as much prudence, and reverence, and love, and compassion to the peoples souls, and with as much plainness and convincing evidence, authority, seriousness, and zealous importunity as we can: Avoiding as far as we are able, such things as corrupt and dishonour Gods Ordinances, and tend to corrupt the peoples minds with error, presumption, deadness, negligence, or other distempers, displeasing to the Lord.

Art. 4. For
publick
worship.

Art 5. For
Discipline.

V. For the ends of our Office, in obedience to the Lord, we Agree and Resolve in the strength of Christ, to exercise so much of Church-Government and Discipline, in the Churches committed to our charge, as we discern to be our certain duty; that is, to keep order and decency in the holy Assemblies, and see that all be done to edification: Convicting seducers, and stopping the mouthes of perverse gain-sayers; Over-seeing the several members of our charge; and requiring them to walk obediently to Christ, and do their duties towards each other: to Reprove the gross and scandalous offenders: and if they continue impenitent or unreformed, to tell the Church, or rebuke them before all; (and publicly pray for their recovery): And if they hear not the Church, but remain impenitent and unreformed, after sufficient reproof and patience, to put away such persons from among us, declaring against them the threatnings of the Lord, and requiring them to forbear Communion with the Church, and requiring the Church to avoid them, and have no familiarity or communion with them, as persons unmeet for the communion of Saints. And those that credibly profess Repentance, we are to
Absolve

Absolve Ministerially in the name of Christ, and comfort with the promises of Grace; receiying them, and requiring the people to receive them, as Brethren, into their Communion: but warning them to watch and sin so no more, lest worse befall them. This holy Discipline, by the help of God, we shall exercise faithfully and impartially; but yet with caution and moderation; neglecting no necessary consultations with other Pastors, or concurrence of the Church: and consenting to be responsible for male-administrations.

VI. For the Communion of Churches, and the strengthening our selves for the work of God, and helping one another therein, and maintaining Unity, Love and Concord; We do Consent to hold a Brotherly communion and correspondency: And to that end, when necessity or greater duty hindreth us not, we shall meet at such convenient times and places, as shall be appointed or agreed on from time to time; and shall labour to improve these meetings to our mutual edification, in such consultations, conferences or other holy exercises, as our present case shall most require. And we consent to deal faithfully in advising and admonishing one another; and for the satisfaction

*Art. 6. For
Communion
of Churches
by Associa-
tions.*

The Agreement of the

faction of the Brethren (to the fore-mentioned ends) to be responsible, if any shall charge us with Heresie, scandal, schism, or male-administration : And forbearing matters without our line, to study and endeavour the promoting of Truth, and Holiness, and Unity among our selves, and with other Churches, as we have a call.

And also we agree by communicatory Letters upon all needful occasions, to certifie our Brethren and other Churches of the state of our affairs, and of particular members, that those that justly have communion in one Church, or are excluded, may have communion with other Churches, or be refused by them accordingly, when there is just occasion.

And if any Brethren or Churches be prevailed over so far by temptation, as unjustly to deny us their communion, in this way of Association, Assemblies, or Correspondency, we shall not therefore deny them to be our Brethren, or Churches of Christ, but shall Love and Own them, and have so much Communion with them, as their distance shall leave them capable of, if they joyn with us in the Profession and Practice of true Christianity, and of the points that are necessary to Church-constitution and communion,

munion, and are not proved guilty of heresie, ungodliness, or such kind of schism or scandalous sins, for which the Scripture commandeth us to reject men, and avoid them. But such as are thus guilty (though they offer themselves to associate with us) we shall refuse to hold communion with, till they credibly profess Repentance, and manifest a Reformation.

VII. Because it is a matter of great concernment to the honour of Christ, the propagation of the Gospel, and the encrease and welfare of the Church, that there be a Provision of able, faithful Ministers, and that unworthy persons be kept out; and because deceivers and unworthy men are forward to intrude, and the people ordinarily are insufficient of themselves to make such tryal of mens ability and soundness as is requisite to the safety of the Church; and the Church in all ages hath received Ministers by the Ordination of other Ministers of Christ: We do therefore Agree to be careful and faithful in the discharge of our duties hereabout, so far as we can discern them, Resolving that if any vacant Church desire us to recommend a fit person to be their Pastor, or to Judge of any recommended to them, we will not recommend

Art. 7. Of Ordination and Approbation of Ministers.

or approve of any, but such as we judge most agreeable to the will of Christ; nor will we prefer less fit and worthy men, for friendship or any carnal interest or respect. And if any intollerably unworthy person be about to intrude, or have intruded, or any neighbour Church be about to choose, or have chosen such, if we have opportunity, we shall faithfully acquaint them with their sin and danger, and perswade them to a better course. And if we shall be called to invest any by solemn Ordination in the sacred office of the Ministry, we shall perform it, as near as we are able, according to the directions of the Word of God; admitting none that Christ excludeth: And if it may be, we shall do it in that Congregation which the person is to Over-see, that so we may the better discern their mutual Consent, inculcate their duties, and engage them to a faithful performance thereof.

And whereas it is much controverted of late, Whether the Power of Ordination be given to the people, or the Pastors of a particular Church, or the Associated neighbour Pastors, and whether a stated President among these should not have a negative voice herein; We are Agreed, that leaving the people their due Liberty of Consent in
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the reception of their proper Pastors, We will none of us singly Ordain, without the assistance of other Pastors : Nor will we joyn with any Hereticks or others, in unjust and impious Ordinations, that tend to the corrupting or dividing of the Churches.

And to avoid Division upon a tolerable difference of Opinions, where we may agree in Practice, we Consent that the Associations that have no stated Presidents, or that give not to such a Negative voice, shall receive into their Communion those that are of the contrary opinion; giving them leave, if they desire it, to profess or record their opinion in that particular, so they will afterward walk among them in Love and Peace. And that the Associations that choose a stated President, and give him a Negative voice in Ordination, shall in like manner, and on like terms, receive into their Communion, such as dissent in that particular, and having professed or recorded their dissent, will walk submissively in Love and Peace. Which liberty also of professing and recording their different principles, we desire may be allowed them, that joyn in Synods, as being only for Communion of Churches, and them that joyn in them, as having a direct superiour Govern-
ing

ing Power over the particular Pastors of the Churches.

*Art. 8. Of
Obedience
to Magi-
strates.*

VIII. Though it be the surest way to Peace and Concord, to take up with these necessary things, and we cannot approve of the narrow dividing Principles of those men that will impose things unnecessary, to the excluding of the necessary; yet if our lawful Rulers shall command it, or the peace of the Church, through the distempers of the Brethren shall require it, we shall obey, and consent in things that God hath not forbidden; and if we suffer for well-doing, and for obeying God rather than men, we shall endeavour to imitate our Lord, who being reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, threatned not: but committed all to him that judgeth righteously, 1 *Pet.* 2. 23.

The



*The Office of Christs Ministers
more largely opened.*

1. **T**HE Lord Jesus Christ having purchased our Salvation by his blood, and stablished his Testament or Covenant of Grace, and left us his example of perfect holiness, ascended to the Father, and is there the Glorified Lord of all, and Head over all things to his Church, all power being given him in Heaven and Earth; that interceding for us with the Father, he might be the Treasury of our Light and Life; and offering salvation to the miserable world, might gather, and cleanse, and save the Church, which is his Body; Communicating to them that grace that is here necessary to them, in their way and warfare, and perfecting them in Glory with himself, when their warfare is accomplished.

2. Christ Being thus invisible to us, in Glory with the Father, performeth not these works below, by himself in person, immediately and alone; but by his Spirit, Ministers, and Word. The Holy Ghost being his Advocate or Agent to these ends; and his Ministers the Instruments used by his Spirit

Spirit and himself : to indite and bear witness to his word, and to Preach it to the world, as that infallible Truth which must guide them to Salvation.

3. The first Prophetical and Apostolical Ministers, being sent by himself, and qualified by the inspiration, conduct and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, did found the Church, and enlarge it unto many nations of the world, and left them the holy Scriptures, which contain the doctrine which they preached, that it might be certainly and fully preserved, and propagated till the coming of Christ. And they setled by the appointment of Christ and his Spirit, an ordinary ministry to succeed them, not to deliver a new Law or Gospel, but to preserve and preach the doctrine which in the holy Scriptures (and conjunctly at first also from the mouths of the Apostles) they had received as once delivered to the Saints, and to guide the Churches by it to the end.

4. Though Christ appointed Ministers that should have so far a charge or care of the whole Church, as not to be limited to any one part, but to extend their labour and oversight, as far as their capacity and opportunities would permit: yet did he never
make

make any man his Vicar or Vicegerent, as Head of the universal Church : nor lay upon any one, whether *Peter, Paul,* or any other, the charge and oversight of the whole : nor did ever *Peter* or any one Apostle exercise such an Office, in governing all the Catholike Church : especially when it ceased to be confined to *Jerusalem* and the adjacent parts, and was dispersed through the world. Never did the Apostles receive their Commissions from *Peter* : or all the Ministers then in the world, perform their work by his Commission, or by any power received from him, nor were accountable to him, and judged by him for what they did. Much less is this universal Head-ship, committed to the Pope of *Rome* through all (or any) generations : But because a certain Primacy of Order was granted him by Emperours and Councils, within the limits of the Roman Empire, long after the Apostles days : therefore doth he take advantage thence, to pretend a Title to the universal Head-ship : As if the Roman and the Christian world had been the same ; or the Emperor and his Clergy had been the Rulers of all the Christian subjects of all other Princes or Pastors upon earth : and his limited Primacy had been an universal Sovereignty.

Sovereignty. This claim of the Pope of *Rome* to be the Vice-Christ, or universal Pastor of all the Christian world, is a tyrannical, impious, irrational usurpation; contrary to the holy Scripture, and the state of the Primitive Church, and contrary to nature and common sense, which declare his incapacity of the work; far more then any Prince is uncapable of being the universal Monarch of the world; And therefore all Christians should abhor this proud and impious usurpation, and fly from the guilt of that horrible schism, and those corruptions in doctrine, worship and government, which it hath introduced.

5. Christ calleth his ordinary ministers to that office, by enduing them with his gifts, and disposing them thereunto, and moving the hearts of the people to consent, and by ordination of the senior Pastors; and giving them opportunities for the work: and sometime the Magistrates command hath a hand in the obligation.

6. It belongeth to the Office of the Ministers of Christ to Preach the Gospel to the nations of the world, and make them Christs Disciples, Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

7. This

7. This Preaching or publishing the Gospel, is done by voice or by writing: that by voice, is done by Reading, by publike Sermons, or interlocutory conference: that by writing is either by translating the holy Scriptures into the languages used by the Nations, or by expounding and applying them. So that the holy Scriptures in the *original languages*, are the word of God, both as to the *terms and sense Grammatical and Doctrinal*: The same Scriptures in a *Translation* are the word of God as to the *sense*, both *Grammatical and Doctrinal*; but not as to the Terms: The holy doctrine of the Scriptures delivered in the *writings*, and *Sermons*, and *conferences* of the *Preachers* of the Gospel, is the word of God, as to the *Doctrinal sense*; but not as to the *terms* or *Grammatical sense*, except when they recite the Scripture words, as in the original or translated.

8. Baptism is a holy Sacrament instituted by Christ, in which a person professing the Christian faith (or the Infant of such a Professor) is (regularly by a minister of Christ) baptized in water into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in signification and solemnization of the holy Covenant, in which as a Penitent Believer
(or

(or the seed of such) he giveth up himself (or is by the Parent given up) to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, from henceforth (or from the time of natural capacity) to Believe in, Love, and serve this blessed Trinity, against the Flesh, the World, and Devil, and this especially on the account of Redemption: and (if he sincerely make this Covenant) is solemnly entred a member of Christ and his Church, a justified reconciled Child of God, and an heir of Heaven: all which, with the other present benefits of the Covenant, he is hereby instated (or invested) in; they being thus solemnly delivered to him by the Promise thus sealed, and applyed by an appointed Minister of Christ.

Or if some of us doubt whether these special benefits of the Covenant are delivered thus to all the Infants that are sincerely dedicated unto God; yet we are all agreed, that they are assured to them as soon as they believe: and in the interim of their incapacity, they have a general promise that God will be their God, and his mercy shall be to them.

9. It is a notable part of the ministerial Office to Baptize: and consequently to try and judge of their Profession who are thus solemnly

solemnly to be admitted into the Church, and estated by Baptism in these benefits: Therefore hath Christ given the Keys of his Kingdom to their trust, both that his holy Church may be preserved from the unjust intrusions of uncapable persons: and that the faithful Covenanters may have the fuller consolation, by receiving a sealed promise and pardon, from the hand of a minister of Christ, commanded by him to seal and deliver it in his name.

10. We are perswaded that it is the Will of Christ that the Infants of the faithful shall be dedicated to him in Baptism, and engaged in his Covenant, and made members of his visible Church, because we find that under the promise before Christs Incarnation it was their duty to devote and engage their Children to God in the holy Covenant, and that God did accept them as visible members of his Church; And we never find where Christ had discharged Parents from this duty, or turned all Infants out of his Church, and reversed this blessing of their Church-membership; but contrarily we find him offering to have taken the Jewish Nation to be still his Church, if they would have taken him for their Saviour; and telling us that it was for Unbelief,

that they were broken off; and that it is but some of the branches that were broken off, and we are grafted in amongst them into the same Olive-tree, and that all Israel shall be saved, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in; And we find Christ rebuking his Disciples for hindering little Children from being offered to him, and that he charged them to forbid it no more, and that he received and blessed them himself, and tells us that of such is the Kingdom of God; and we find it the Commission given to his Ministers, that they were to Disciple the Nations, Baptizing them. All which, and much more (especially having not the least intimation of his Will against that which was even then the Duty and Practice of the Parents, and the Infants benefit) do deter us from forbidding the dedication of Children unto Christ, and receiving them into his Church by Baptism.

11. Baptism being so great a work, should be deliberately, seriously and reverently performed, if it may be, publicly before the Church, where the person (or Parent) should make their solemn profession, and be received with the joy and prayers of the Church; whether Infant or Adult.

12. The

12. The Catholick Church consisteth of all the Christians in the world : Those that have the sanctifying Spirit of Christ are the living members : Those that openly profess Christianity, and enter into Covenant with Christ, and are not yet Baptized, are visible members initially, but the solemnization and investiture is defective ; If it be where Baptism cannot be had, the defect is innocent ; If where it may be had, it is sinful : but yet not such as nullifieth the persons visible Christianity. And no errours, offences or differences do exclude any totally from the Catholick Church, while all the essentials of Christianity are kept.

13. It is the will of Christ that all Christians that have opportunity, be members of some particular Church, as well as of the universal : that he may have the honour, and they the great and necessary benefits, that by the Ministry, Ordinances and Communion of Saints, is there to be expected.

14. A particular Christian Church, is
[A competent number of Christians cohabiting, who by the appointment of Christ, and their own expressed Consent, are united (or associated) under one or more
D 2 Pastors,

Pastors, for the right worshipping of God in publike, and the Edification of the members, in Knowledge and Holiness, and the maintaining of their obedience to Christ, for the safety, strength and beauty of the society, and thereby the Glorifying and pleasing of the Lord.] It is a Political organized society, that is here defined, and not a meer Community that is incapable of the Sacraments and other Ordinances, and the benefits of them, for want of Overseers.

15. Those Ministers that are placed in Parishes, where are many sorts of people, some Ignorant of the essentials of Christianity, some Apostates, some impious and of wicked lives, and some that consent not to be members of their Pastoral charge, should teach them all that will submit and learn : For we are called to it by the Magistrate and obliged by the publike maintenance which we receive to that end ; and engaged by the general command of improving our talents, and the special opportunity that we have thereunto.

16. This teaching of all our Parishioners that will submit, must be both personally and publicly, as far as we have ability and opportunity.

opportunity. The former must be by Catechizing, and conference ; wherein we must teach them first the essential points of Christianity, and labour to help them to the clearest understanding of the doctrine of Salvation ; and press it on their affections, and help them to discern their sin and misery, and do all that we can to procure their conversion or edification, according to their several states ; managing the whole work with those holy affections, that the weight of it doth require.

17. The great necessity of our neighbours, and the advantages of this familiar way, do tell us that this work of catechizing and conference is so great a part of our duty, that we should do it with much diligence, prudence and constancy. And the general precepts of doing all to edification and in order, oblige us ordinarily to appoint a stated time and place where every family may come in order ; And if we are able we should go to them, that cannot or will not come to us, if they will but hear us.

18. Those that are Baptized in Infancy, and there engaged to God in the holy Covenant, should with all possible care and diligence, be educated by the Parents, or

any that have the tuition of them, in the Nurture and admonition of the Lord; and taught betimes to know the doctrine of the Gospel, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to Love God above all, and their neighbours as themselves, and to hate iniquity, and live to God, and first to seek his Kingdom and righteousness; To which end Parents should Catechize their Children, and daily be teaching them the word of God, and acquainting them with his fear and holy worship. And ministers must with special care and diligence oversee the several families of their charge, and excite the Parents to this necessary duty. And also should themselves assist them herein, and Catechize such youth (as well as all others that are Ignorant) as often as they can; especially where Parents do neglect it.

19. As Infants are by baptism admitted among the Infant-members of the Church, upon their Parents profession of Christianity, and dedicating them to God; so must they personally make a profession of their own faith, and own their baptismal Covenant, and give up themselves to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, before they are to be admitted into the number and Communion

munion of the Adult members of the Church; Which profession is to be tryed and approved of by the Pastors of the Church: And so excellent a duty, to be carefully, and seriously, and solemnly performed, that the transition into the state and communion of the Adult, may appear to be so great and observable a thing, as may excite all to an answerable care and diligence, in preparation thereunto, and to look after that saving faith and holiness, which they must so solemnly profess. And Ministers should have a special care, that they take nothing for a credible profession, that is not so: and corrupt not the Church by letting in uncapable members, that must either be cast out again, to the grievous exasperating them against the Church and way of God, and so to the apparent hazzard of their souls: or else must live ungoverned in their wickedness, to the great dishonour of God, and the provocation of his wrath against them and the Church.

20. For the publike worshipping of God, and our own Edification, the Pastors, where there is opportunity, must congregate the people in a solemn Assembly in a convenient place and time. And all that can

must constantly there attend, preferring the publike worship of God before the private : much more before their worldly businesses, that are not of flat necessity to themselves or others.

21. In these publike Assemblies it is lawful for us to admit, even, Infidels to be present, and such Catechumen's as are yet unfit to be members of the Church, and there to teach, reprove and exhort them, and pray for them according to their state : though we may not receive them to be members of the Church, nor admit them to our special communion.

22. Because it is the holy Scriptures that containe that Gospel of which we are Ministers; and because the honour of Gods holy word is to be preserved, and the people to be instructed in it, and taught to know it; it is therefore our duty in the solemn Assemblies to read the word of God to the people, in a known tongue; (as *Moses* and the Prophets were read every Sabbath day in the Synagogues of the Jews.) Such portions being chosen, and order observed, as the Pastors discern to be most for edification.

23. Our publike preaching of the Gospel

spel should be from faith and holy experience, with plainness, and perspicuity, with reverence and gravity, with convincing evidence and authority, with fervent zeal, and perswading importunity, with the tenderest love and melting compassion, with faithfulness, impartiality and prudence, suiting both matter and manner to the necessity of the hearers, and with frequency and unwearied patience, waiting on God for the success.

24. The Pastor is to lead, and the people to consent and joyn in heart in the public prayers, and unanimously to pour out their souls unto the Lord in penitent confession of sin, and fervent petition, and joyful thanksgiving and praise: and this according to the direction of the holy Scriptures; and especially of the Lords prayer: which is the most perfect, comprehensive summary, form and pattern of our prayers.

25. Confession is to be made, both of our own sin, and the sins of the Church and Nation, of Magistrates, Ministers and People: yet so as that we turn it not into a reproaching and dishonouring of our superiours, or an abusing of mens persons, by venting our malice or distempered passions,
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or uncharitable censures against them; we must confess our original and actual sin: The great corruption of our hearts and lives: our sinful thoughts, affections, words and actions: our privative and positive sin: our omissions and commissions: our secret and unknown sins in general, and our known and open sins by name: our sins of ignorance, and sins against knowledge: our sins before and since conversion: our sins against the Lord himself, consisting in our unholiness, contrary to the first table; and our injustice and uncharitableness against our neighbour; and our folly and injury against our selves: The sins of our relations, and of our more private life: our sins against the light and law of nature; and our sins against the Gospel and grace of a Redeemer: Against the outward means of Grace, and against the inward motions of the Spirit, and of our consciences: against mercies and judgements: against the examples of Christ and his servants, and the warning-falls of others; especially those sins by which we have most dishonoured God and our holy profession; and have most scandalized, hardened or tempted others: And all our confessions should proceed from true contrition and hatred of the sin.

26. Our petitions must be only for things agreeable to the revealed will of God : And principally for the hallowing of his name, and the coming of his Kingdom, and the doing of his will, in earth, as it is in heaven : And therefore we must have compassionate thoughts of the dark and miserable parts of the world, where by Heathenism, Infidelity and Mahometanism, the name of God is grievously dishonoured, and his Sovereignty denied or rejected, and Satans Kingdom doth prevail, and where the will of God is partly unknown, and partly willfully disobeyed : And our eye and heart must be on the state of the universal Church, that all this interest of God-in-Christ, may be *there* preserved and advanced. And in order to these blessed ends, we must beg such necessaries of our life, as the supportation of our natures for the work of God requireth : And the forgiveness of all our sins through Christ (which yet we cannot expect to receive, if we from our hearts forgive not others :) And a gracious preservation from temptations, or the power of them, and from Satan and sin the greatest evils : That so the holiness of our hearts and lives may shew that we are the loyal subjects of the Kingdom of
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our Lord, and that we acknowledge and magnifie his Sovereign power, and live as a people devoted to his glory. And all this we must beg in an humble sense of our great unworthiness, misery, necessity and insufficiency to help our selves; and in the name of Christ, in understanding and faith (and therefore not in a tongue that we understand not) and with fervency and uncessant importunity, as directed, excited and strengthened by the Spirit of Christ.

27. Our thanksgiving unto God must not be like the Pharisees, in hypocrisie and pride, or to make ostentation of things that we never had, but in humility and holy joyfulness of mind, we must declare our thankfulness, for our Creation, Redemption, Justification and Reconciliation with God, our Sanctification, and all the parts thereof, and helps thereunto: For the Gospel and Ministry; and the plantation, preservation and propagation of the Church thereby: for common and special works of providence, for the good of the Church, our brethren or our selves: for mercies ordinary or extraordinary: spiritual or corporal: for prevention of evils, or removing them: for the quality and degree, the suitability and seasonableness of all our mercies

cies, with the rest of their aggravations: especially for those that most promote our everlasting happiness, and the publike good and glory of the Lord.

28. The matter of our holy praises of the Lord, must be his blessed and infinite Being and Nature, and all his Attributes: his infinite Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness: his Truth, and Holiness, and Love: his absolute Dominion, his Sovereignty, and Fatherly benignity: his Justice and his Mercy: even as they are revealed in the works of the Creation, and in the glass of the holy Scripture, and in the person of Jesus Christ, and in the Image of God upon his Saints: And all these his works also must be praised in subserviency to his praise. And because it is a most high and excellent duty to praise the Lord, we must strive to do it with all the faith, and reverence, and admiration, and love, and delight, and joy, and cheerfulness that possibly we can attain: and this with constancy as our daily work, with our eye on heaven, where we shall do it in perfection to all eternity.

29. As the holy Scriptures should be read in a tongue that the people understand, so should the purest exactest translation of them be used that can be had: And though

though it be not of absolute necessity to the communion or peace of the Churches; yet it is to be desired and endeavoured, that all neighbour Churches that are of one language do all agree in the use of that one translation.

30. Though in cases of necessity the Gospel may be publikely expounded and applied by the reading of the Expositions and Sermons of others; yet as it is meet that the Preachers of the Gospel be able to perform this work themselves, by the abilities given them from God, in the use of just and edifying means; so it is meet that by diligent studying, meditation and prayer, these abilities be improved; and that from this holy and spiritual treasure within them, the Ministers of Christ do draw forth found Explication, with pertinent lively Application of the truth.

31. So also in the publike prayers, though it be lawful (in it self) to read the words of prayer prescribed us by others; yet as all Ministers should be able to pray themselves from the knowledge and feeling of their own and the peoples wants, so it is meet that their graces and holy abilities be ordinarily exercised in such prayer; and that they be not restrained from speaking to
God

God in such sound and meet expressions, as shall either presently, or by the means of their preparations, proceed from the sense of the matter of their prayers, excited and drawn forth by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ. But whether any particular Pastor should use a stinted form of words imposed by others, or invented by himself, or whether he shall pray without such stinted forms, or both, by turns, is a point to be determined according to his own abilities, and the state of his flock, and other accidents: but it is not to be made a matter of such necessity in it self, as to lay the unity or peace of the Churches, or the liberty of the Pastors and Worshippers of Christ upon it.

32. The *Publike Praises* of God must be expressed by the Pastor *in such words* as are produced by that holy knowledge, faith, admiration, love and delight, with which his soul should be possessed that is so nigh to God; and also by the recitation of sacred Psalms and Hymns, and by the cheerfull singing of such by the Church: wherein the melody must be spiritually, and not carnally used: for the assisting of our souls in the exercise of that holy alacrity and joy that is required in so high a work;

and not to draw off our minds from the matter, nor to stop at the pleasing of our ears. Such Psalms also may be recited or sung, as contain matter of confession of sin, petition, thanksgiving, and such narratives as tend to praise.

33. The form of words to be said and sung, must be taken especially out of the holy Scriptures: to which use we have the Psalms of *David* and other Hymns: And also we may use such as have been or shall be composed by wise and holy men, agreeable to the doctrine of the Scripture, and suited to the Gospel frame of worship, and as far as may be, even in Scripture phrase. And though it be not meet to insist upon a concord in lesser things, when it cannot be attained without the violation of concord in greater things; yet is it much to be desired and endeavoured that all the Churches of the same language (especially that are near and in the same dominions) should agree in using the same Psalms and Hymns for matter and meeter; and that the version so agreed on, be the best that they can have.

34. The Eucharist or Supper of the Lord is [a holy Sacrament instituted by Christ, wherein bread and wine being first by con-secration

secration made Sacramentally or representatively the Body and Blood of Christ, they are used by breaking and pouring out, to represent and commemorate the sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood upon the Cross, once offered up to God for sin: and are given in the name of Christ unto the Church, to signify and solemnize the renewal of his holy Covenant with them, and sealing it unto them, and the giving of himself to them to expiate their sins by his sacrifice, and sanctifie them further by his Spirit, and confirm their right to everlasting life: and they are received, eaten and drunk by the Church, to profess that they willingly receive Christ himself to the ends aforesaid, (their Justification, Sanctification and Glorification) and to signify and solemnize the renewal of their Covenant with him, and their holy Communion with him, and with one another.]

35. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper containeth in it these three parts. 1. The Consecration of the Bread and Wine. 2. The Representation and Commemoration of the Sacrifice of Christ. 3. And the giving to, and participation by the Church. The Consecration hath chief respect unto God the Father: the Representation and

Commemoration to the Son as sacrificed : and the Giving and Participation, to the applying operations of the Holy Ghost. As it must first be the Body and Blood of Christ before it be sacrificed, and first offered in sacrifice to God, before it is offered for nourishment and salvation unto men ; so is it in the order of Sacramental representation.

36. The Consecration is performed by the Churches offering up the Creatures of Bread and Wine to God to be accepted to this holy use : and by Gods acceptance of them, as dedicated thereunto. The Churches dedication is expressed by the present action, and Gods acceptance is expressed by his command and promise, and the ministerial acception and benediction. The Minister in this action is the agent of the people in offering or dedicating these creatures unto God, and he is Gods Agent or Minister in receiving and blessing them.

37. In this dedication of the Bread and Wine to God to be the consecrated matter of the commemorative representative sacrifice, the Church acknowledgeth the three grand relations of God to his people.

1. We acknowledge him the Creator and Owner of all the Creatures.
2. We ac-
know-

knowledge him our Righteous Sovereign Ruler, whose Law we have offended, and who hath received the attonement, and whose Laws we do herein obey. And, 3. We acknowledge him our Father, or bounteous benefactor, by whom we are sustained, and whose love we have forfeited, and with whom we desire by Christ to be reconciled.

38. This consecration maketh not the Bread to be no Bread, or the Wine to be no longer Wine; nor doth it make any addition to, or change upon the glorified real Body of Christ; but it maketh the Bread to be Sacramentally Christs Body; and the Wine to be Sacramentally his Blood; that is representatively: as an Actor in a Tragedy is the person whom he representeth: or as in Investitures, a sword is the honour of Knighthood, or a key is the house, or a twig or turf is the land.

39. Because Christ was to be invisible to us, and the heavens must receive him till the restoration of all things, therefore as he hath sent his Spirit within to be his Agent in his members; so hath he appointed his Ordinances without, and especially this visible solemn Representation and Commemoration of his sacrifice; that our faith

might hereby be helped, and our souls might be raised to such apprehensions of his love and the mercy of our Redemption, as if we had even seen him crucified before our eyes, and this till his glorious return, when we shall enjoy him visibly in his glory.

40. As Christ in his Intercession, as our high Priest in the heavens, procureth and conveyeth his benefits of salvation upon the account of his sacrifice once offered on the Cross; so doth the Church in this Commemoration, present him unto God the Father, as the sacrificed Lamb, in whom they profess themselves to believe, and by whom alone they expect salvation, and all the blessings tending thereunto.

41. In this Commemoration the Minister is chiefly the Agent of Christ, in representing his voluntary offering up himself unto the Father in sacrifice for sin: And he is the Agent of the people, in that part of the Commemoration, in which they profess their Believing in a crucified Christ, and thankfulness for him, and dependance on him as their hope.

42. Jesus Christ having finished the work of Redemption, which he was to do on earth, in the days of his flesh, ascended and is glorified with the Father, and being
become

become the perfect head and treasure of the Church, hath in his Testament or new Covenant made a free gift of himself and life to all that will receive him as he is offered; and he hath appointed his Ministers not only to proclaim this gift unto the world, but also in his name to deliver it to the Church: And it is a great encouragement and comfort to Believers, that it is a Minister or Agent of Christ himself, that by his command, and in his name doth say to them [Take ye, eat ye, this is my Body which is broken for you.] And [this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, drink ye all of it]; Christ himself with his saving benefits, being herewith as truly offered to their faith, as the signs and representations are offered to their hands and mouths. Though it be still but (consecrated) bread and wine that doth represent; yet is it the very Body and Blood of Christ that is represented; and Christ himself as the Head of the Church, and fountain of our renewed life, and as our spiritual nourishment, that is truly given us, and received by us.

43. It is therefore unmeet for any but a lawful Minister of Christ, who is authorized hereunto, to administer this holy Sacra-

ment: both because no other are called to it in the holy Scripture, nor can shew any warrant for such an undertaking; and because it is very injurious to the comfort of the Church, when they know not that the person hath any authority to deliver them so great a mercy from the Lord, nor whether Christ will own his ministrations.

44. The Ministers must partake of this holy Sacrament with the Church: not as they are the Agents of Christ for the delivery of it, but as they themselves are his Disciples and members of the Church.

45. Before the receiving of this holy Sacrament we ought to examine our selves, that we may come preparedly with repentance for all known sin, and faith in Christ, and an humble feeling of our own necessities, and a thankful sense of the love of God expressed in our redemption by Christ, and a hungring and thirsting after him and his righteousness, and with an unfeigned love unto our brethren, and a high estimation of the union and communion of the Saints, and with a resolution to walk in holy obedience to God, in patient hope of the coming of Christ, and of the everlasting Kingdom, where we shall be perfectly in him united: which holy affections are also to be

be exercised in the time of our Communion in this Sacrament, and afterwards upon the review of what we have here received and done.

46. The Word and Prayer must be joyned with the Sacrament. The nature and use of it must be opened, and the people excited to the exercise of the duties before mentioned. Sin must be confessed and lamented, and mercy implored, and thankfully acknowledged, and the goodness of God, especially manifested in the work of our Redemption, must with the greatest admiration, alacrity and joy that we can attain to, be magnified and praised, till this unspeakable love of God in Christ hath drawn out our hearts in fervent love to him again. And it will be most suitable to this Eucharistical Ordinance, that the Church do sing some Psalm or Hymn of praise to God, for the mercies of our Redemption.

47. Those are to be invited to the Supper of the Lord that have these necessary qualifications, in some degree, and the rest to be acquainted with the danger of eating and drinking unworthily. Those only are to be admitted to the Table of the Lord that have the use of reason, and can examine themselves, and are members

of the Church, and have made a personal credible profession of faith and holiness, and are not justly, for heresie or any scandalous sin, removed from present communion with the Church.

48. The using or not using of forms of prayer in the administration of this Sacrament, is to be determined of, as aforesaid in the other parts of worship, according to the different abilities of Ministers, and state of the severall congregations, and other accidents that should weigh in such indifferent things. But as in the Administration of Baptism, it is ordinarily meetest and most safe; to use the expresse form of words which Christ hath directed us to, and the Church hath still used, *viz.* [I Baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost]: so in the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, it is safest and meetest that we use the words that Christ by his example hath directed us to use. As *Matth.* 26. 26, 27, 28. *Luk.* 22. 19, 20. *I Cor.* 11. 24, 25. *viz.* [Take ye, eat ye, this is my Body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me] and [This is the Blood of Christ, even of the New Testament (or this is the New Testament in the Blood of Christ) which is shed for

for many for the remission of sins; drink ye all of it in remembrance of him.]

49. As it is not unmeet for the Church at other times when they assemble, to make a solemn profession of the Christian faith and of holy obedience, to manifest their constancy therein; and to declare what doctrine it is that we assemble to profess, and to preserve it in the minds of all; so is it more especially meet, that at Baptism and the Lords Supper, when we are solemnly to renew our Covenant with the Lord, the Covenanters do renew this solemn Profession: To which end it is most safe to make use of the ancient forms of Confession, called, The Apostles Creed, and the Nicene Creed; and also to recite the Ten Commandments, with a profession of our consent to the terms of the Covenant with God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. To which if we (at least sometimes) adjoyn some fuller Explication of the Creed and Decalogue (such as is our Profession here before set down) it will not be unprofitable or unmeet. And in such manner it may all be managed, and such signs or expressions of consent required, as the Pastors shall judge meet for the attainment of the desired ends, with liberty for such variations, as are
necessary

necessary to prevent a dead formality.

50. At the dismissal of the Assembly, it is meet that the Pastor do solemnly bless them in the name of Christ, to which he is authorized as an act of his Ministerial Office.

51. Deacons are Church-Officers instituted by the Holy Ghost to be serviceable to the Pastors and the Church, by the distribution of the Creatures dedicated to the Church-Communion, and taking care for the supplying of the necessities of the poor, out of the contributions or stock of the Church.

52. The first day of the week is appointed or separated by the Holy Ghost for the holy Assemblies and publike worship of the Church and other holy exercises; and is herein to be improved to the honour of God, and the edification of our selves and others: and all other employments are therein to be avoided that any way hinder the holy duties of the day; except such as become a greater duty, upon the account of Piety, Justice or Mercy. That some stated
time

time be separated to the publike service of God and the benefit of our souls, is a thing that the law of Nature doth command; that this stated time should be at least one day in seven, the reason and equity (at least) of the fourth Commandment doth acquaint us: that this day should be every first day of the week, the Holy Ghost in the New Testament hath revealed to us; acquainting us with Christs rising on that day (which laid the foundation of the change) and of the Assembling of his Disciples on that day, and his owning their Assembly by his appearing to them, and teaching them, and blessing them, and giving them their commission and the Holy Ghost, *Joh. 20. 19, to 24.* The same they did the next first day, where he again appeared and owned their Assembly, and revealed himself unto them, *Joh. 20. 26, 27.* And that this was the practice of the Apostles and the Primitive Christian Churches directed by them, appeareth *Act. 20. 7, 8.* *1 Cor. 16. 1, 2.* so that it was called the Lords Day, as the last day before was called the Sabbath, *Rev. 1. 10.* And to put us out of all doubt of the matter of fact, and consequently of the meaning of these texts of Scripture; the certain Tradition and most

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Concordant history of the Church assureth us, that ever since the days of the Apostles, the universal Church in all parts of the world, hath constantly observed the Lords Day in Commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ: which it is not possible that they could have done, without contradiction and rebukes from the Apostles themselves or some of the Churches which they planted, if it had not been a certain truth. Those therefore that will be against the holy observation of the Lords Day, must either impudently deny the Testimony of all Church History and Tradition, which with one consent assure us that it was observed universally in the Christian Churches from the Apostles daies, as a thing by them established and practised; or else they must imagine that all the dispersed Churches through the world conspired in the teaching and practising of such an error without any known rebuke, wherein it had been most easie for any to have convicted them to be slanderers of the Apostles, or the Ages that were before them. Having therefore so much in Nature, in the fourth Commandment, in the New Testament, and the Doctrine and Practice of the universal Church, for our holy

holy observation of this day; it ill beſeems any Chriſtian to forſake all or any of theſe, and think now in the end of the world to find out the certain practice of the Apoſtles, better then all the Churches which they planted.

53. Seeing the Lords Day is purpoſely ſet apart for the celebrating of the memorial of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and ſo of the work of our Redemption (as the Sabbath was for the Commemorating of the work of Creation), the work of the day muſt be very much Eucharistical, and the Church ſhould be taken up in the thankful admiration of the myſterie and mercy of our Redemption, and in the affectionate praiſes of the Lord our Redeemer, and an aſpiring after the everlaſting Reſt, which he hath purchaſed, and promiſed, and prepared for us with himſelf.

54. Miniſters muſt not only perform the publike worſhip of God upon this day, but alſo exhort the people to improve the reſt of it in private, by prayer, and meditation, and holy conference, and calling to mind the Word which they have heard; eſpecially the Parents and Maſters of families, who muſt inſtruct their children and ſervants, and watch over them, and reſtrain them

them from the violation of the day, and call them to an account of the doctrine they have heard, and the duties to be performed.

55. It is lawful, and a duty on other daies also, according to our necessities and opportunities, to Redeem some time for the publike worship of God. And whenever the Pastors shall call the Church together, to hear the Word, or perform holy worship, it is the peoples duty obediently and gladly to attend, if greater duties do not prohibit them.

56. When great afflictions lie upon the Church, or any useful members of it; or when any great sins have been committed among them, it is meet that in publike by fasting and prayer we humble our selves before the Lord, for the averting of his displeasure. And on such occasions it is the Pastors duty to confesse his own and the peoples sins, with penitence and tenderness of heart, and by his doctrine and exhortation to endeavour effectually to bring the people to the sight and sense of their sin, and the deserts of it, and to a firm resolution of better obedience for the time to come; being importunate with God in Prayer for pardon and renewed Grace.

57. Upon

57. Upon the receipt of any notable extraordinary mercies, the Church having opportunity, should Assemble for publike thanksgiving unto God: wherein the Pastors should stir them up to the livelyest sense of the greatness of their mercies, and lead them in a joyful celebration of the praises of their bountiful benefactor. And it is lawful on these daies to express our joy in feasting and outward signs of mirth; provided that they be moderately and spiritually used, and not to gratifie our sensual desires; and that we relieve the poor in their necessities (which also on daies of Humiliation and other seasons we must not forget.)

58. It is not unlawful or unmeet to keep an anniversary commemoration of some great and notable mercies to the Church, the memory whereof should be transmitted to posterity.

59. In all the modes and circumstances of worship which God himself hath left undetermined, all Christians must take heed of making unnecessary things to be necessary, and laying the unity and peace of the Church on things indifferent, and laying snares for the consciences of others; but must leave much to the prudence of the particular

particular Pastors that are upon the place, to whom it belongs to fit such circumstances to their peoples state; and the Churches in such things wherein they may safely differ, must be left to their liberty: Long and sad experience having taught us, that the violent imposing of unnecessary things, is the engine of the Devil to tear the Church.

60. The marriage of Christians being a work of great concernment to themselves, and meet to be publikely performed, and accordingly to be sanctified by the Word and Prayer; it is convenient that it be solemnized by the Minister, or at least that he counsell and exhort them, and pray for a blessing on them: being first sufficiently satisfied of their capacity and necessary preparations. Herein he is to acquaint them with the Institution, Nature and Ends of their Relations; and the duties severally and joyntly by them to be performed; and the difficulties and temptations to be expected and provided for. Especially they are to be directed to live together in holiness, as the heirs of life, and to be very careful and diligent in the holy education of their children, and governing their families for the Lord; and to use the world as not abusing

abusing it, remembering their approaching separation by death. And he is to see that they solemnly enter into the Matrimonial Covenant, engaging themselves to conjugal fidelity to each other, until they are separated by death.

61. The Pastors of the Churches must not only Teach the people, and guide them in the publike worship: but also must faithfully Oversee them in private, endeavouring to know and watch over each member of their flock, preserving them from heresies, errours, and divisions: defending the Truth, confuting gainsayers and seducers; instructing the Ignorant, exciting the negligent; encouraging the despondent; comforting the afflicted, confirming the weak, rebuking and admonishing the disorderly and scandalous, and directing all according to their needs, in the matters of their Salvation. And the people in such needs should have ordinary recourse to them, as the Officers of Christ, for guidance and resolution of their doubts, and for assistance in making their Salvation sure, and procuring, maintaining or restoring the peace

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of their consciences, and spiritual consolation.

62. Those persons that are known to commit any gross and scandalous sin, should first by private reproof and admonition (unless where the notoriousness and heinousness of the crime doth presently call for publike reproof) be called to Repentance: And if they hear not the Reprovers, or will not Reform, the Church must be told of it: and therein it is most convenient, that the Pastors be first acquainted with the case (to avoid contention and confusion,) before it be brought into the publike assembly: And to that end it is convenient that there be stated meetings where the Pastors and some chosen members of the Church, (not as Officers, but the Deputies or Trustees of the rest) should in their severall capacities take cognizance of such offences; that so a unity and full correspondence may be held between the Pastors and the flock, and all things may be done advisedly, orderly, and concordantly: but where this cannot well be done, the Pastor or Pastors must do their work without it.

63. Those persons that by more private means will not be brought to necessary
Repentance

Repentance and Reformation, must by the Pastor be publikely reprov'd and admonish'd before the Church, and there called to Repentance by the opening of their sin, and the judgements of the Lord, and pleading with them those Gospel mercies and motives that should melt them into contrition. And if the success do not appear, it is ordinarily meet that the Church should joyn in prayer for the offender, that God would give him repentance unto life.

64. If after sufficient waiting in the use of these means, the offender still remain impenitent, it is the duty of the Church to reject him out of their communion. Wherein the Pastors must compassionately declare his offence and his Impenitency, and the judgements that God hath threatned to such, and the Laws of Christ commanding the Church to put such from among them, and avoid them, and have no company with them, that they may be ashamed, or to take them as Heathen men or Publicans: and must accordingly declare the person offending to be unmeet for Christian Communion, and charge the people to avoid him, and have no fellowship with him, and himself to forbear the Communion of Christians, binding him over to answer it at the bar of Christ.

Christ. Which sentence must be accordingly executed by the Pastors, in refusing him the Ordinances proper to the Church, and by the people in avoiding familiarity and communion with him, till he be restored upon his Repentance.

65. It must be a *credible Profession* of Repentance only that must be accepted by the Church either for the preventing of such a rejection, or for restoring the rejected. And usually when the case is heinous and notorious, or the Church hath had the publicke cognizance of it, they must also have publicke notice of the penitence of the offender; who should with remorse of conscience and true contrition confess his sin before the Congregation, and heartily lament it, and crave the prayers of the Church to God for pardon and reconciliation through Christ, and also crave an Absolution by the Minister, and a restoration into the communion of the Church: But because it much dependeth on circumstances of the case whether the Confession should be publicke or private, or in what manner made, it is therefore to be much left to the Prudence of the Pastors, whom the people in such cases are commanded to obey.

66. When a *credible Profession* of Repentance

penitance is made (whether voluntarily by the Converted, or upon the Churches admonition by the scandalous, or after excommunication) it is the duty of the Pastors to declare such Penitents in the name of Christ to be pardoned and absolved, and Ministerially to give them this Mercy from the Lord, in case their Repentance be sincere as they profess: And if the person were excommunicate, it is the duty of the Pastor to declare him again meet for the Communion of the Church, and require the Church to receive him with joy as a returning sinner, and not to reproach him with his falls, but to forgive him, as Christ forgiveth him; all which they are accordingly to perform; and the Penitent with Joy to receive his absolution, and to return to the Communion of the Church, and to a more holy careful obedient life.

67. When any by frequent Covenant-breaking, have forfeited the Credit of their words, the Church must have testimony of the *actual Reformation* of such persons, before they can receive their professions and promises as credible any more. Though yet there is so great difference here in persons and offences, that the particular cases must be much left to the prudence of the

Pastors that are present, and know the persons and the whole case.

68. So great is the necessity of the sick, and so seasonable and advantagious the opportunity, that Ministers should not negligently omit them, but in Love and tenderness instruct them, according to their several conditions : endeavouring the Conversion of the ungodly, and the strengthening of the weak, and comforting such as need Consolation ; directing them how to improve their affliction ; and helping them to be truly sensible of the evil of sin, the miscarriages and negligences of their lives ; the vanity of the world ; the necessity and sufficiency of Christ, and the certainty and excellency of the everlasting Glory : Perswading them to a pious, just and charitable disposal of their worldly estate ; and to forgive such as have wronged them, and to be reconciled to those with whom they have been at variance ; and believingly to hope for that life with Christ, which he hath promised to all that are sanctified by his Spirit, and comfortably to commit their souls to their Redeemer, and quietly rest in the Will, and Love, and Promises of God ; Resolving if God should recover them to health, to Redeem their time, and live as a people devoted

voted to his Glory. It is meet also that the Pastors pray for the sick, both privately and publikely when it is desired and thought fit.

69. The Burial of Christians should be decent and honourable, and though it be a thing indifferent in it self, whether Exhortations, Funeral Sermons or Prayers be then used, yet because the season is very advantagious for mens reception of holy instructions, it is convenient (at least when desired) that the Minister do take that season as often as he can, to mind people of their mortality, and the necessity of a speedy preparation for their change: so prudently managing all his Exhortations and Prayers, that the due end may be attained, and the abuse prevented as far as may be.

70. The lives of Christs Ministers should be conformable to their holy doctrine: and so exemplary in Innocency, Love, Humility, Meekness, Patience, Contempt of the world, crucifying the desires of the flesh, and in a zealous heavenly conversation, and in all works of Piety, Justice and Charity, within their power, that the mouths of the enemies may be stopped, and the people may learn, and be convinced and directed, even by
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their holy examples, and our selves may be saved, and the Christian Church and doctrine may be honoured, to the glory of the Holy Ghost and of our Redeemer, and our heavenly Father.

71. As we have all one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Faith, and Hope, and Love, one Covenant, and one Catholike Church, so should the Communion of Saints extend as far as their capacity and opportunities will allow. And as particular persons must Associate for personal Communion in public worship, so particular Churches should associate for such Brotherly correspondency and communion, as they are capable of, and their needs require; That by communicating the Truths and Mercies which they have received, and advising together, and by a brotherly collation of their apprehensions, and improvement of their several gifts, the unity of the Churches may be preserved, and discords and uncharitableness may be avoided, and the beauty and strength of the Churches maintained. And therefore the Pastors of the neighbour Churches (not excluding others that are fit) should meet as frequently, and at such times
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and places, as the ends and works of the Association do require.

72. Into these Associations such Pastors and Churches should be received that make a credible Profession of Faith and Holiness, and no other : And they that are Hereticks, or of scandalous ungodly lives, must after a first and second admonition, if they remain impenitent, be rejected and disowned by the Faithful Pastors and Churches.

73. Where the fixing of a stated President in each of these Associations is requisite for the peace and edification of the Brethren, it may well be yielded to : but however a special care must be had to prevent contentions and divisions : and therefore perverse disputings must be suppressed ; and proud, self-conceited, domineering persons, and such as are of fiery, turbulent, contentious spirits, and also subtile hereticks and dividers, must be watched against as the plague of the Churches, and all possible charity, humility, meekness, self-denial, and zeal for holy concord, must be exercised.

74. Those that through distance or impediments cannot, or through mistakes or peevishness will not joyn in such stated brotherly

therly Assotiations and Assemblies, are yet to be allowed the due estimation and affection of Brethren; and so much Communion as at a distance they are capable of, if they do but agree with us in a sound profession of the faith, and a holy conversation, and Ministerial fidelity in the main: but yet we must disown the sin of their dividing, or neglect, and as we have opportunity testifie against it.

75. These Churches that cannot hold local Communion with one another through differences that destroy not the Essentials of Christianity, should yet maintain a dear and tender Christian Love to one another, and profess their owning each other as Christians, and Churches of Jesus Christ, and should agree together upon certain just and equal Rules for the management of their unavoidable differences, so as may least prejudice charity and common good, and least harden the ungodly, or grieve the weak, or dishonour God, or hinder the success of Common, great and necessary Truths upon the souls of men; contriving and amicably promoting the Cause of Christianity, and every part of it, in which they are agreed; and should open their disagreements to the people as little as they can.

76. In cases of tolerable difference, as Ministers and People must maintain a special holy Love, and Communion as far as their differences will admit; so must they desire the well-fare and the Peace of one another, and not stir up hatred or persecution, against each other, by odious nick-names, or exasperating the Magistrate or people against dissenters; but should consent to the Liberty of each other, and help to take off unjust hatred, and to hinder all unmerciful violence or rigor against one another; And all of us should watch against and abhor that proud, self-conceited, domineering disposition that would make us censorious, malicious, or cruel against the weakest servants of the Lord.

77. Yet must we not under pretence of Charity, consent to any such noxious Liberty, as plainly tendeth to the wrong of the Church, and the poysoning of the souls of others; nor yet must we consent to the errors of the best. Though we are not the judges of the secrets of mens hearts, nor may not deal uncharitably with any, yet must not heretical self-conceited persons be tolerated in the obstinate dispersing of their errors, to the destruction or danger of mens souls, nor to reproach and speak
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against the weighty necessary truths of God : Nor should any be tolerated to kindle the flames of uncharitableness and contentions in the Churches, by railing, reproachful language against the tolerable dissenters : But a healing, merciful, and profitable, and not a destructive Toleration should be promoted.

78. The Pastors of the Churches of Christ have the power of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, but not of the Temporal sword on earth : And though we determine not whether in cases of Necessity, it be lawful for Pastors to be also Magistrates ; yet it is certain that without Necessity it should not be allowed (their work requiring all their time and strength) and that as Pastors it belongeth not to them ; But as the Magistrate is the appointed officer of God, to Govern even Churches, Pastors, and People, in the way of outward force, and Pastors are his Officers to govern them by Spiritual Conduct ; so must we be so far from desiring to usurp a secular power, that we should still advise the Magistrate to keep the sword in his own hand, and to take heed of putting compulsive power in the hands of Pastors, or enabling them to execute their passionate displeasure against their brethren :

thren; And as the Magistrate must not usurp the Pastors office, but only see that we perform it our selves, and punish us if we do not; so must not the Pastors usurp the Magistrates office, but humbly and modestly teach and advise him from the word of God, and reprove him, and threaten him, and in cases of extremity denounce the Wrath of God against him, and bind him over to the Tribunal of Heaven, to answer for his obstinate impenitent contempt; and then leave all the matter to that bar, and patiently suffer if we be persecuted by him; Not doing any thing in the management of any of our work, without a due respect and reverence to his Authority, and a care of the common good that dependeth on his honour, but remembering what is meet for him to hear, and for us as Messengers of Christ to speak.

79. Those Churches of several Nations that through distance and diversity of secular Governours, are incapable of personal or local Communion with others, should yet consent as neer as may be in their holy professions, and practises; not tying each other to any of their unnecessary modes or forms, nor uncharitably censuring any tolerable dissenters, but owning those Churches that agree with them in the great
and

and necessary things, & holding such correspondence with them by Messengers, as shall be needful to the promoting of their Unity, Love and Peace, and of the Gospel and common cause of Christ, and the defence of each other against the common enemies of those, as emergent occasions shall require and direct them.

80. To the aforesaid uses, the Councils or Synods of Pastors are lawful and convenient in cases that require them, where the Pastors of several Churches and Nations may deliberate and determine in order to their Unity, of Doctrines and Practices to be Agreed in, and may strengthen the hands of one another. But yet, the Canons of such Councils are rather Agreements, then proper Laws, to their several members or absent Brethren; and bind in order to Unity and Concord by vertue of those General Commands that require us to do the work of God in such Unity and Concord, and not by vertue of any proper superior Regimental power, which that Council hath over the particular Bishops of the Churches of Christ. And as for General Councils, as we should to the forementioned ends regard and honour them above all other, if really such were lawfully assembled; so in this enlarged

enlarged and dispersed state of the Militant Church, we may easily see, that full and proper Universal Councils, are neither the Stated Governors of the Universal Church, nor necessary to its well-being, no nor Lawful to be attempted, as a Course that would certainly destroy or grievously wrong the Churches, by the death and long absence of the Pastors, through so many hundred and thousand miles travail, and so long attending, which the state and work of proper Universal Councils will require: Yea the said distance, with the age and weakness of the Pastors, and the different languages, and the poverty of many disabling them from such tedious voyages and journies, and the dissent of the Princes (many of them Heathens, Infidels, Mahometans) under whose Government they live, or through whose dominions they must pass, these with many the like Impediments do make a true Universal Council (like an Universal Parliament or Senate) to be so far from necessary, or desirable, as to be Morally Impossible, or next to Impossible, as to be the very Being of it.

The way that God hath appointed for Church-Government and deciding controversies, is, 1. That Princes and Magistrates govern

govern by the sword or force, and judge who are fit to be Punished by the sword (And though most Princes on the earth by Infidelity have made themselves incapable of this part of the work of their Office, yet cannot that disoblige them from the Commands of God, or free them from his punishments for not performing them, nor make the Office of Magistrates another thing, nor disable Christian Princes and Magistrates, or disoblige them who have not made themselves incapable.) 2. That these Princes and Governors of several Nations, do hold a Loving Christian Correspondency, for the management of their affairs, and Government of the Churches under them, so as may be most to the advantage of the Cause of Christ, and the union, strength and defence of Christians; (The General Rules, and Ends of their Trust and Power, do oblige them to hold such Assemblies by their Messengers as are needful for their Agreement and the Unity and Safety of the Churches under them, as well as they oblige Pastors to such necessary correspondencies.) 3. That the Pastors of particular Churches be the Governors of those Churches by the word and holy Discipline (not having the power of the sword or violence)

and

and that they Judge who is fit or unfit for Communion with that Church which each or any of them over-see, and who is to be thence Excommunicated, or there Absolved.

4. That these Bishops, Pastors, or Elders of particular Churches, should hold Communion among themselves with all their Brethren of other Churches, as far as their natural capacity will allow, and the need or benefit of the Churches require it: and that they handle in common the causes that belong to all in common, and settle and maintain Agreements for the Unity and Communion of the Churches: And they are Judges (as Associate) who is to be received into their Associate Communion; and who to be excluded from it; and what Pastors or Churches they should hold such Communion with as they are capable of; and which they should admonish, or renounce.

5. The Christian people have allowed them a Judgement of Discretion, by which they must prove all things, and hold fast that which is good: and must discern and obey the Lawfull commands and directions of their Magistrates and Pastors.

6. And as Men have thus their several shares allotted them in Government, Judgement, and decisions, limitedly, and not Absolutely Judging, even

80 *The Office of Christs Ministers, &c.*

to the Execution which belongs to their several Judicatures : So the Finall Absolute Judgement, and Decision of all Controversies and Causes, is reserved to the dreadful Tribunal of the Lord, to which we may make our last Appeal, where all the world shall be judged in Righteousness, and all the Judgements of men be themselves Judged, and Truth and Error, Good and Evil, Right and Wrong will be more perfectly manifested unto all; and it shall be irreversibly determined by Jesus Christ, who shall go into Life Everlasting, and who to everlasting punishment.

Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly.

Novemb. 16.

1658.

THE Author thought it not unfit here to annex the Description of that Order and Discipline which is exercised by him, with his Assistant fellow-Pastors, in the Parish-Church of Kederminster; in Association with many Pastors of those parts, who have Agreed to exercise so much of the Ministerial Office, as by the Consent of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational, belongeth to them. Which being published, 1. May prevent mens injurious mis-reports of our Associations, and Discipline, which they may be drawn to by fallacious fame. 2. And may be an example for those Churches that by the Magistrates are left at liberty, to worship God in that Communion and Order which they judge most agreeable to the Word of God, and the Univerſal Consent and Practice of the Primitive Church.

The Order and Discipline of this
Church, agreeable to the Word of
God.

I. **W**E are willing to Teach all in our
Parish, the doctrine of Life, that
are willing to learn: And desire them all to
hear the Word publikely preached, and to
come to us to be Catechized or Inſtructed.

II. We own all those as visible Christians
G 2 and

and members of the Universal Church, that make a credible Profession of Christianity, and destroy it not by Heresie, or ungodly lives.

III. So many of these as also Consent to hold Communion with this Church as members of it, submitting to the Ministers and Discipline of Christ, we shall esteem our flock and special charge, and faithfully perform the duties of our Office for their good, as we are able.

IV. We desire that all the *Youth of the Parish* will learn *the principles of the Christian Religion*: and as soon as they *understand it*, and are *heartily resolved to give up themselves to God in Christ through the spirit*, and to lead a holy life, that they will come and acquaint us with their *Faith and Resolution*; and before the Church will make a solemn Profession thereof, and *give up themselves to God in the personal owning their Baptismal Covenant*; either reciting the fore-going Creed or Profession, or, if they are unfit for publike speaking, by *Consenting* when we propound it to them; or by any other fit expressions. That so we may publikely pray for their confirmation;

tion; and if they Consent also to hold Communion with this Church, we may know them as our Charge, and Register their names.

V. Those Parishoners that desire us to Baptize their children, or to be themselves admitted to the Lords Supper, and are not members of this Church, (because they will not), we desire to come to us, some dayes before; that so we may be satisfied of their *Faith and Life*: And if they *seem true Christians*, and either bring a Certificate that they are members of *any other Church*, with which we are to hold Communion, or shew that it is not *from ungodliness* that they refuse to live under Order and Discipline, we shall Baptize their children, and occasionally admit them to our Communion. But if they *are scandalous*, we shall require them *first* to Profess their *serious Repentance*: And if they *return to scandal*, we shall after stay till we see their Reformation (or of one of the parents in case of Baptism.)

VI. If any member of this Church do differ from us about the *gesture* in the Lords Supper (or *any such Circumstance*) we desire

fire them first to come to us, and hear our Reasons : and if we cannot satisfie them, we will not hinder them from receiving it in any decent gesture they desire.

VII. All members of the Church must ordinarily hold Communion with it, in the Lords Supper and all Ordinances : and if a Brother grossly offend, they must orderly and prudently admonish him ; and if he hear them not, tell the Church.

VIII. Once a Moneth we have a meeting of the Magistrates, Ministers, Deacons, and above twenty persons chosen annually by the Church, as their Trustees or Deputies : Here the offendours must be accused, and heard, and dealt with, before the case be opened in the Church. And any that are justly offended with any member, may have Church-Justice. (The Magistrates presence being only *ad melius esse*) and the chosen Trustees or Deputies being no Ecclesiastical Officers, nor pretending to Divine Institution as such : but only the fittest of the people chosen to do those things which belong to the people (who cannot all so frequently meet) and having no authoritative ruling Votes.

IX. Those

IX. Those that Repent not upon publike *Admonition*, must be cast out of our Communion, and avoided as Heathens: But those that are Penitent, must be Absolved, and lovingly received.

X. If any of our People be offended at any thing in our Doctrine or Life, we desire them before they vent their offence behind our backs, to come and lovingly tell it us, and hear us speak. And if we do not satisfie them, we desire them to open the matter before the Ministers of this Association, who are here Assembled every Moneth. And we shall before them, be responsible, for our Doctrine, our Administrations, and our Lives. (As we are also willing to be to the Magistrate, who only hath the power of the sword, even over the Pastors of the Church, and whom in all things Lawful we must obey, and not resist.)

FINIS.

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Handwritten signature or name, possibly "J. W. ...".

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