Alexander Henderson: The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland

Introduction

Alexander Henderson (1583-1646), the author of the following treatise, was one of the major architects of Scottish Presbyterianism. He was also its outstanding statesman, bringing diplomatic and political finesse to the national struggle against episcopacy and royal absolutism. In 1637 he raised the controversy over Laud’s Liturgy to a new and more sophisticated level by appealing to the Privy Council against its imposition. Along with Alexander Johnston (Lord Wariston) he drafted the National Covenant of 1638. In that same year he was the Moderator of the “Covenantering Assembly” in Glasgow, taking the lead role in deposing the bishops and lending gravitas to the whole proceedings. It was he, too, who drafted and negotiated the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, pledging the Scottish army to supporting the Parliamentary forces in the English Civil War in return for Parliament’s commitment to his own vision of a united (and Presbyterian) church of Great Britain and Ireland. He was one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly and though he took little part in its public debates he exercised considerable influence, not only on the Assembly but on the city of London, where crowds flocked to hear him preach. And as Chaplain to the King he did his utmost, though in vain, to save Charles I from the destruction to which he was being driven by his obsession with the Divine Right of Kings.

When Henderson died, Robert Baillie (another Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly), wrote, “He ought to be accounted by us and posterity the fairest ornament after John Knox of incomparable memory that ever the Church of Scotland did enjoy.” But though Henderson may have been pre-eminent among his contemporaries, he was certainly not alone. He belonged to the first generation of Covenanters, and that generation produced the greatest flowering of theological talent that Scotland has ever
seen: so much so that when people speak of “Scottish theology” it is, often, to this era they are referring. Among them were names now comparatively unknown, such as Boyd of Trochrigg, John Cameron, Hugh Binning, David Dickson, David Calderwood and Robert Baillie himself. But among them, too, were names still revered among all devotees of Reformed theology: James Durham, for example, and George Gillespie and Samuel Rutherford.

Baillie, Calderwood, Gillespie, Rutherford and Durham all wrote seminal treatises on Presbyterianism, the best known being Rutherford’s *Due Right of Presbyteries*, Gillespie’s *CXI Propositions concerning the Ministry and Government of the Church of Scotland* and Baillie’s *Historical Vindication of the Government of the Church of Scotland*.

Henderson’s *Notes on the Government and Order of the Church of Scotland* sets forth exactly the same polity, but his work is much more focused and succinct, and as a consequence much less polemical and controversial. Where Gillespie and Rutherford pursue their adversaries into every nook and cranny of their argument, Henderson focuses on essentials. As he himself indicates, he sets out not to explain the Presbyterianism of his day, but to describe it. The result is a fascinating snap-shot of Presbyterianism in action, but that action arises out of its genius, and that genius has never been better summarised than by Henderson (see p. 44): “Superiority without tyranny; parity without confusion; subjection without slavery”.

Henderson was born in the parish of Creich (Fife) in 1583. Around 1614, he was inducted to the parish of Leuchars. At the time, he was an Episcopalian, unwanted by the people and, by all accounts, a stranger to spiritual realities. Shortly afterwards, curiosity prompted him to go and hear Robert Bruce preach in a neighbouring church. The sermon changed the whole direction of Henderson’s life. He remained, however, in the relative obscurity of his parish until the signing of the National Covenant forced him into prominence. In 1638 he was translated to Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh; and a few months later to St Giles. His remaining years would be spent in the vortex of public affairs.

For all his influence and fame, this work on the government and order of the Church of Scotland is the only treatise Henderson ever wrote. It was composed to allay
English suspicions of Presbyterianism and to counter the misinformation which was being deliberately circulated, particularly in London. It was published anonymously, but we know from Robert Baillie’s *Letters* that Henderson was the author. We also know (this time from Wodrow’s *Letters*) that it was reprinted “at our late happy Revolution” (some time around 1690).

It would have been no mean legacy in itself. But Henderson’s real legacy was Scottish Presbyterianism; his monument, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Without his vision of a united Church of Great Britain and Ireland that document would not have been written.

Henderson died at Newcastle on 19th August 1646. All hope of a diplomatic solution to the conflict between the King and Parliament had gone; and Henderson died, said Baillie, of a broken heart. How far he saw into the future, we cannot tell. But after the years of Cromwellian occupation, and the later horrors of the Grassmarket and the Killing Times, the Church of Scotland would stand forth as “the kirk by law established”, governed and ordered as designed by its architect, Alexander Henderson.

The College is deeply indebted to its former Secretary, Christian MacIver, for her meticulous re-setting of this document. Only her labour and dedication have made possible its re-appearance in this convenient and readable form. I have added a few notes to remove some obscurities.

DONALD MACLEOD
THE

GOVERNMENT

AND

ORDER

OF THE

CHURCH

OF

SCOTLAND.

Numb. 23 and 24.

How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles O Israel: for this house full of silver and gold I would not curse, for how shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied.

Col. 2:5.

Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

Printed, Anno MDCXLI (1641)
To the Reader

My desires at this time to know and to make known to others the form of Government and order of worship used in the Church of Scotland, have brought these following lineaments to light. There come daily into my hands without my seeking; some one form of Church Government or other, as the diverse Authors, from their love to Reformation in their judgements did conceive: But I must confess they did the less relish with me that they were directions and models without the example of practise of any of the Christian Churches, and were *Abstract Ideas* of discipline in the minds of men and not *Disciplina in Subjecto*. One I had, titled *The forme of government used in the Church of Scotland*, but, being nothing but an Abridgement, and containing generals only, it did not satisfy. I found also many of the godly much wearied of the Prelacy, who yet bow their shoulder to bear, and couch down between the two burdens, because, being unacquainted with the Government of the Reformed Churches, they do not know what to choose, and fear (as to them who are in the dark is usual) they know not what. Such as these do rather suffer themselves to be led away with the policy of *Pacuvius* at *Capua*, which in such a case was commendable, then resolve to follow the faith of *Abraham* when the Lord called him, *Get thee out of thy Country, etc. into a land which I will shew thee*, *Gen.* 12:1. What he was to forsake, and the *Terminus a quo* of his removing, he did know; But whether he was to go and the *Terminus ad quem*, he did not know, resting assured that God would show it him. In our own affairs we may think the evil known to be better than the good unknown; But it holdeth not in the matters of God, nor when we speak of *Malum turpe* and *bonum honestum*, the evil of sin and the good of obedience. But as they who travel from the South to the North, losing the sight of the one Pole come in sight of the other, and as they go on the North Pole is elevated to them by degrees: so is it here, if men would once forsake and turn their back upon that which they know to be wrong, and would ask the way to *Zion* with their faces thitherward, the Lord would teach them his way.

I must confess that I give too much ear and audience to the misinformation of many (so may I call it now after true information) who would have made me to believe,
1. That the true government of that Church was Episcopal, and that beside the order of Episcopacy, there was nothing in that Church, but disorder, and confusion through the parity of their Ministers, άκουετ ούδες ούδεν ούδενος, that all did speak and no man did hear any thing of another.

2. That they had no certain rule or direction for their public worship, but that every man following his extemporary fancy, did preach and pray what seemed good in his own eyes. And

3. (which was to me an huge rock of offence) That they were enemies to Kings for no other cause, but that they are Kings: and, out of a desire of Anarchy, did prefer Democracy to Monarchical Government: Great crimes I can not deny, and much to be abhorred, for they are destructive of all Ecclesiastical and Civil Order, and do break both the staves of beauty and of bonds.

But upon trial I did remember that, if accusation were guiltiness, no party could be innocent, and found that it was nothing so as was alleged: for concerning the first, I called to mind the practise of a painter of old, who being desired to represent the body of Hercules, did express nothing of the lineaments of his face, stature or members, but did only make a resemblance of the Lion’s skin, which he was wont to carry about as the badge of his strength, and the Trophy of his honour. Episcopacy was never the face nor order of that Church. In the most part of their assemblies have they conflicted with it, and by the strength of God obtaining the victory both of old, and much more of late they may well number it among their spoils. The order of their Ministers each one standing in his own station, and none usurping over another, and the Subordination of their four kinds of assemblies, joining the consent and obedience of the people, are the face and strength of that Church. Against the second, the form of prayers, administration of the Sacraments, admission of Ministers, Excommunication, solemnising of marriage, visitation of the sick, etc. which are set down before their Psalm-Book, and to which the Ministers are to conform themselves, is a sufficient witness: for although they be not tied to set forms and words; yet are they not left at random, but for testifying their consent and keeping unity, they have their directory and prescribed order. No where hath preaching and the ministry more spiritual and less carnal liberty, the Presbytery and assemblies encouraging to the one and restraining from the other. And against the third, their Confession of Faith, the doctrine and prayers of their Church, their late declarations and remonstrances, and
what is contained in the conclusion of this Treatise, express as much respect and reverence to magistracy, as any Christian Prince will require.

I was also strongly drawn to the liking of that Church by the Testimonies given unto their Reformation by some of the most famous witnesses of this age.

One is of that worthy Scottish Martyr Mr George Wishart.

This Realm shall be illuminate with the light of Christ’s Gospel, as clearly as ever was Realm since the days of the Apostles. The house of God shall be builded in it, yea it shall not lack (whatsoever the enemy imagine to the contrary) the very top-stone; the glory of God shall evidently appear, and shall once triumph in despite of Satan. But alas, if the people shall be after unthankful, then fearful and terrible shall the plagues be that shall follow. History of the Church of Scotland, page 108.

Another of Beza.

This is a great gift of God, that you have brought into Scotland, together pure Religion and good order, which is the bond to hold fast the Doctrine. I heartily pray and beseech for Gods sake, Hold fast these two together so, that you may remember, that if one be lost, the other cannot long remain. So Bishops brought forth popery, so false Bishops, the reliques of popery, shall bring into the world Epicureism. Whosoever would have the Church safe, let them beware of this pest, and seeing you have timely dispatched it in Scotland, I beseech you never admit it again, albeit it flatter with shew of the preservation of unity, which hath deceived many of the best of the Ancients.

A third of the body of Confessions of Faith. It is the rare privilege of the Church of Scotland before many, in which respect her name is famous, even among strangers, that about the space of four and fifty years without schism, let be heresy, she hath kept and holden fast unity with purity of doctrine. The greatest help of this unity, through the mercy of God, was, that with the doctrine, the discipline of Christ and the Apostles, as it is prescribed in the Word of God, was by little and little together received, and according to that discipline so near as might be, the whole government of the Church was disposed. By this means all the seeds of schisms and errors, so soon as they began to bud, and shew themselves, in the very breeding and birth, were smothered and rooted out. The Lord God of his infinite goodness grant unto the Kings most gracious Majesty, to all the rulers of the Church, to the powers that are the Nurser of the Church, that according to the Word of God, they may keep perpetually that unity and purity of doctrine, Amen.

The fourth of King James of happy memory.
The Religion professed in this Countrey, wherein I was brought up, and ever made profession of, and wishes my son ever to continue in the same, as the onely true form of Gods Worship, etc. I do equally love and honour the learned and grave men of either of these opinions, that like better of the single form of policy in our Church, than of the many Ceremonies of the Church of England, etc. I exhort my son to be beneficial to the good men of the Ministry, praising God that there is presently a sufficient number of good men of them in this Kingdom, and yet are they all known to be against the form of the English Church. (Basildor. To the Reader).¹ And in the Assembly 1590 his Majesty praised God, for that he was born to be a King in the sincerest Church in the world, etc.

The fifth is of Brightman, our own Countryman, who joineth the Church of Helvetia, Suevia, Geneva, France, Holland, Scotland, all together into one Church, for the Counter-payn of the Church of Philadelphia, because, saith he, they almost live by one and the same laws and manner of Government, as touching any matter of moment. Neither doth the distance of place break off that society which the Conjoining of minds and goodwill coupleth together, having thus joined them into one Church, he subjoineth concerning it. Loth would I be to provoke any man to envy, or to grieve him with my words, yet this I must say there is no place, where the doctrine soundeth not more purely, the worship of God is exercised more incorruptly: where more faithfull diligence of the Pastors doth flourish, or more free and willing obedience is given by the people, nor yet where there is greater reverencing of the whole Religion among all orders. And afterward, Neither doth it onely keep the doctrine of salvation free from corruption, but it doth also both deliver in writing and exercise in practice that sincere manner of government, whereby men are made partakers of salvation, Revel. of the Apocal. Chap. 3:7.

To these may be added what upon the one hand is said by these of the separation in their first petition to King James, insert in their Apology to the Doctors of Oxford. We are willing and ready to subscribe to these grounds of Religion published in the Confession of Faith made by the Church of Scotland, hoping in the unity of the same Faith to be saved by Jesus Christ: being also like minded for and with other Reformed Churches in points of greatest moment. And upon the other hand, that the meetings of Ministers for interpreting Scripture, like unto their Presbyteries were allowed by Arundel, Hutton and Matthew, three Archbishops in England, and proved

¹ A reference, presumably, to James VI’s publication, Basilikon Doron (Edinburgh, 1599)
very profitable in the Northern parts for increase of knowledge both in Ministers and People.

But all these and the like testimonies were to me but like the saying of the woman of Samaria to her Countrymen, till I did more fully understand the constitution and order of that Church. Then did I believe, not because of their testimonies, but because I did see and know. And from that which I have seen and do now know when I have walked and gone round about that Church, when I have told the Towers thereof, marked well her Bulwarks, and considered her palaces, I may without offence affirm three things.

First, That God hath not dealt so with every nation, if envy would permit, I might say, any nation, as he hath dealt with them. Whereof no cause can be given but his own good pleasure, he showeth mercy, and maketh his Sun to shine on whom and where he will, and of him, and through him, and for him are all things.

Secondly, that it is no marvel if that Nation stand to the defence of their Reformation, had the Lord been pleased to bless us with the like at the time of our Reformation we would not have been so unwise as to make exchange of it with Prelacy, we would have forsaken all things rather than have forsaken it. It is more strange that any should have been found amongst them at any time to speak or to do against their own Church: But after you have with your reason and mind made a general survey of all societies there is none more grave, more dear than that which each one of us hath with his Country; Parents are dear, Children, Friends, familiars are dear; But our native Country alone taketh all these within her compass, for which what good man would doubt to die, could his death serve her for good? So much the more detestable is their barbarity, who have with all kind of wickedness rent asunder their native Country, and both are and have been exercised in overturning her from the very foundation. If a Patriot spoke so of his Country, a Citizen so of his Republic, what should the Christian born, baptised, and bred in Scotland think and say, if he have been born there not only to this mortal, but to that immortal and everlasting life. No children on earth have better reason to say, We are not ashamed of our Mother, and it were to be wished that the saying were reciprocally true.

Thirdly, having the pattern of all the Reformed Churches before us, and this example so near unto us, what need we to stand amazed, as not knowing what to choose; to abide that which we have been, is neither profitable not possible, to conjoin the two in one is but the mixture of Iron with Clay, and must needs make the distemper greater. It were well for us (and no other well for us can I see) that laying aside our high conceit of
ourselves, and the low esteem of other reformed Churches we would resolve to follow them as they follow Christ, and not to despise the government of Christ, because they seem to be but molehills; but to conform to them, because they are conformed to Christ, and to the pattern shown in the Mountain. What reciprocation of giving and receiving in matters of Religion, hath been between this and the Scottish Nation may be known by the words of Beda, but speaking in his own idiom, according to the grounds of popery.

Not long after the Monkes of the Scottish Nation, who lived in the land Hii, with the Monastries under their power were brought into the rite of observing of Easter, and of shaven Crownes. The Lord bringing it to passe (he should have ascribed it to another spirit). Which certainly was done by the marvellous dispensation of divine mercy, that because that Nation, who had the science of divine knowledge, did willingly and without envy communicate the same to the people of England; that the same Nation afterward should by the Nation of the English attain unto the perfect rule of living in these things which they had not before.
The Government and Order

Of

The Church of Scotland

A Description and not a Demonstration of the Church of Scotland is intended; *non jus sed factum*, their doing simply and not the reason of their so doing is desired: The delineation therefore of the face of that Church, without artificial colours and dispute of her comeliness and beauty, is nakedly expressed in two Parts: The one of her Officers, the other of her Assemblies.
The First Part

I. Of the Officers of the Church

Beside the ordinary and perpetual Officers, which are Pastors, Doctors, Elders, and Deacons, the Church of Scotland hath no others at this time, nor did at any time acknowledge any other: these being warranted by Christ and his Apostles, the extraordinary Ministers unto whom his will was revealed, and being sufficient for all the necessary uses of the Churches, as Exhortation, Teaching, administration of the Sacraments, Government, and distribution.

The Offices of Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets were extraordinary, and continued in the Christian Church, so long as by the Will of God, it was needful for the well of the Church; who although in regard of their order, degree, manner of ministration, and the places, which they did hold, which is called successio in gradum eundem. They have properly none to succeed them: yet in respect of their doctrine, holiness of life, and substance of their ministry, which is successio in caput, all faithful Pastors, lawfully called to their functions, are their successors: And in this sense not only their first reformers, who had somewhat extraordinary, but all their faithful Ministers since, who have laboured in the Word and Doctrine, for the planting, preserving and purging of Religion to the edification of the Church, and no other, are successors to the Apostles.

The Office of a Bishop consisting in power or priority above a Pastor, as having no warrant in the Scripture, as being a member of the wicked Hierarchy of the Pope (for, although this priority of Prelates had place in the Church before the Pope ascended to the top of his ambition; yet every corruption in doctrine, worship, but especially in government, which, since the mystery of iniquity began to work, is retained by the Pope, and by his authority is obtruded upon the Church, they conceive to be his) and as a cursed tree, which amongst them hath brought forth no better fruits, than heresy, and errors in doctrine, idolatry and superstition in worship, tyranny and persecution in Government, and lewdness, and profanity of life both in pastors and people; they have abjured and removed out of their Church, together with all the branches of that hierarchy, and all the offices, titles, dignities, and courts depending thereupon as may be seen in their confession of faith, books of discipline, and acts of assemblies of old, and of late.

In the beginning of their reformation they had no constitute Presbyteries, nor such provincial and general assemblies as they had afterward, and upon the other part they had superintendents, visitors of certain part of the
Country and Commissioners for Provinces: But they who desire to know
the constitution and condition of that Church, must distinguish between her
infancy, and her riper age, between her desires, designs, and endeavours, and
her attainments, proceedings and performances; for how soon it was possible
for them, presbyteries and assemblies, which from the beginning had been
intended, were erected and established; And no sooner was this brought to
pass, but superintendents and all others of that kind, which at first were of
necessary use in visiting the Country, and in planting of Churches, were
declared to be neither necessary nor expedient for the Church.

The Church of Scotland hath been disquieted and much troubled with
Episcopacy since the beginning, and at last by the ambition of vain men, by
the power and working of civil authority, and by the corrupt assemblies of
Ministers, had some footing, and was in end raised to a great height, and did
become a mountain. And yet the office of a Bishop was never received in
that Church. But when some Ministers, who in regard of their benefices
were called Bishops, had, by their own usurpation and the slavish disposition
of their brethren, obtained some degree and power over them, they did come
into England, and, without the consent or knowledge of the Church, received
consecration, and returning home, did consecrate others like themselves.

II. Of their calling

As no man ought to presume to enter into any office Ecclesiastical
without an inward calling from God, who only discerneth the intentions, and
desires of the heart, whether they be earthly or heavenly, wether they be set
upon the glory of God, and edifying of the Church, or upon the means of this
life; so are there none here admitted without the approbation and judgement
of men according to the rules of the Word, and the received order of the
Church.

This outward calling of the Officers of the Church doth consist in
Election and Ordination, after due trial and examination of their soundness
in religion, and godliness of life: For the better understanding of the order of
the calling of their Ministers, it is to be considered,

That in every one almost of their Classes, or greater Presbyteries, there
be Students of Divinity; whereof some, if they have opportunity of their
studies, do make their abode within the bounds of the Presbytery, and attend
the meetings thereof: Others, who are the greater part, stay at the
Universities, and in the time of vacation come home and wait upon the Presbytery.

The abilities of both the one sort and the other, are tried in private, before the Presbytery, and how soon they are found fit to come in public, they enter upon the exercise or prophecy with the Minister of the Presbytery, and at sometimes are employed and allowed to preach before the people: By which mean their gifts and abilities are known to the people, as their manners are manifest by their conversing amongst them.

Out of the number of these Proposants, or (as they call them) Expectants, the Pastor is nominated to the vacant place by the Eldership, and by the Minister, if any be, with the consent and good liking of the people, and if they can pitch upon none within the bounds of their own Presbytery they have their liberty to make their choice of an Expectant of good esteem and report in some other Presbytery.

The person thus known and nominated, is by the particular Eldership, named to the greater Presbytery, where he is examined of his skill in the languages, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, in his interpreting of Scripture, in the controversies of religion, in his gift of exhortation, in the holy and Ecclesiastical History and Chronology; And first of all, of his life and manner of conversation; wherein if he be found vicious or scandalous, he is not to be admitted to any other examination; Being thus examined, and found qualified for that charge, he is sent to the vacant place, that the people hearing him, may have the greater assurance of his gifts for edification.

After the people have heard him, some Minister of the Presbytery is appointed to preach to that people of the necessity of the Ministry, of the excellency of a faithful Minister, of the qualities of a Minister, and of the obedience due to the Gospel, or of some such Theme: And at the same time a public Edict is served, That if any person or persons, have any thing to object against the literature, doctrine, or life of such a man, why he may not be a profitable Minister of such a Parish, they shall appear before the Presbytery in such a place, and at such a time, that their objections may be tried and discussed.

Upon the day appointed, the Doorkeeper of the Presbyterian meeting, doth call three several times, if there be any to object against the person nominated, and if any thing be alleged against him by any of that particular flock, or any other to whom he is known, it is duly and equally pondered by the Presbytery, and if it be found to have any weight, or the case be doubtful, the ordination is suspended till a more perfect trial; otherwise if there be nothing but silence, they use to proceed.
So that no man is here obtruded upon the people against their open or tacit consent and approbation, or without the voices of the particular Eldership with whom he is to serve in the Ministry. But if the person nominated be a Pastor of some other flock, and his faithfulness known in his former charge, this process is spared, and his translation more speedily expede, if there be no impediments of another kind.

Upon the day appointed for accomplishing his election, and for his ordination, which is in due time made known to the Congregation, and agreed upon with them, a Fast is ordained to be kept, with more than ordinary supplication for the assistance and blessing of God, in a work of so great concernment: and one of the Pastors of the Presbytery is appointed to preach to that people of the mutual duties of Pastor and people. All which being done, the party, (who, during the time of the exercise of public worship, hath been sitting in a conspicuous place before the Pulpit, accompanied with the Elders, and some Ministers of the Presbytery) is called up, and demanded concerning his willingness and desire to serve the Lord Jesus, for the good of that people; with other questions of that kind; and the people also are demanded, whether they will receive him for their Pastor, and submit themselves unto his Ministry in the Lord. Both having declared their readiness and mutual consent, the Minister cometh from the Pulpit, and with so many of the Ministers present, as may conveniently come near, lay their hands upon his head, and in the Name of Jesus do appoint him to be the Pastor of that people, praying that from Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of the Father, and giveth gifts unto men, he may find the demonstration of the Spirit, and the power and blessing of God in his Ministry, to the comfort of that people. Thereafter the whole Eldership give unto him the right hand of fellowship. And last of all, the Minister goeth to the Pulpit, and concludeth the whole action with pertinent thanksgiving and prayers, a Psalm is sung, and the Assembly dissolved with the blessing.

By this it may appear that Pastors or Presbyters are not there admitted at large, without assignation to a particular flock, like Masters of Art, or Doctors of Physic. They conceive it to be as preposterous for Ordination to go before the Election of Ministers in the Church, as it is first to Crown a King or Install a Magistrate, and thereafter to choose him: next in the ordination of their Ministers they use none of the ridiculous toys, and apish conceits of Popery; but, according to the simplicity of the Apostolical and ancient Church, content themselves with Fasting, Prayer, and Imposition of hands; Prayer, to bring down a blessing upon the person on whose head the hands are laid, and Fasting, to make the prayer to ascend the more fervently.
This liberty of Election is in part prejudged and hindered by Patronages and Presentations which are still in use there, not by the rules of their discipline, but by toleration of that which they cannot amend, in the mean time procuring, that in the case of presentations by Patrons, the examination and trial by the Presbytery, is still the same. The Congregation, where he who is presented is to serve, is called, if they have ought to object against his Doctrine or life, after they have heard him, or that their consent may be had. And if he be found Reus ambitus, or to have gone about to procure a presentation, he is repelled, and declared incapable of that place.

No Pastor may thrust himself upon a flock, nor after his entry, desert his charge, or remove himself to another Congregation at his own pleasure. The Deserters, if any be, are appointed to be admonished, and in case of obstinacy, to be excommunicated. If a Minister, upon lawful and urgent causes, desire to remove from one Congregation to another, or if a Minister be called to another Congregation, for which he is more fit, or be called forth upon grave considerations for some public employment, tending to the common benefit of the Church; this is not done by private transaction, and particular agreement of Ministers and Congregations, but by the wisdom and authority of the Presbyteries or Assemblies of the Church; Nor is it done by them, but upon such reasons as should move that Church, wherein for the present he ministreth, to give her consent: for whose supply also, either a convenient course is presently taken, or the way of supply is seen to be easy.

The Minister thus removed from one Church to another, receiveth no new ordination, but by virtue of his first ordination he serveth in the place, unto which he is called and elected: Only at his admission one of the Presbytery, who is appointed to preach of the duty of Pastors and people, and to pray for a blessing, recommendeth him to the Congregation, who have before declared their willingness and desire to receive him, and the Congregation to his care and fidelity, and the Pastor, if any be, together with the Elders, with whom he sitteth before the Pulpit, take him by the hand.

Pastors and Ministers of the Word, through old age, sickness, or other infirmity being disabled to bear the weight, and discharge the duty of their Pastoral charge, do notwithstanding still retain the honour of their office, and comfort of maintenance during their lifetime. And they performing what they are able in teaching, government, visitation and catechising, others are joined with them by the Presbytery, and with the consent of the people to be their fellow labourers, and to undergo the main charge.

The same course of election and admission for substance, and inform according to the nature of their office, is observed in the calling of other Officers, as Ruling Elders, and Deacons: At the beginning, and where there
be none, the Pastor, with the gravest, holiest, and those of the soundest judgement, and best affection to Religion, do choose them with the consent of the rest of the people. And where particular Elderships are already constitute, the Pastor and the Elders who are now in office, do choose such as are to succeed those who are removed by death, or any other way, or by vicissitude are to relieve such as are now in place; and that the election of one or more at first, or afterward may proceed with the consent of the people, their names are published and made known to the congregation by the Pastors, that if ought may be objected against any of them, why they may not be received to the office of an Elder or Deacon, it may be examined, and, if it be found important, others may be chosen. When the day of their admission cometh, the Pastor having framed his doctrine to the purpose, calleth them up, and reminding both of them of their duty in their charge, and the people of their submitting themselves unto them, they are solemnly received with lifted up hands, giving their promises to be faithful.

III. The discharge of their duties in particular, and first of the Pastor

1. The order kept in Preaching

The Pastor is bound to teach the Word of God in season and out of season, and beside all occasional, and week day sermons, which in cities and towns use to be at least two days every week, the Congregation doth assemble twice on the Lord’s day, and for this end notice is given of the time by the sound of a bell. When so many of all sorts, men and women, masters and servants, young and old, as shall meet together, are assembled, the public worship beginneth with prayer, and reading some portion of holy Scripture both of the Old and New Testament, which the people hear with attention and reverence, and after reading, the whole Congregation joineth in singing some Psalm. This reading and singing do continue till the preaching begin; at which time the Minister having prefaced a little for quickening and lifting up the hearts of the people, first maketh a prayer for remission of sin, Sanctification, and all things needful, joining also confession of sins, and thanksgiving, with special relation to the hearers. After which, in the forenoon is another Psalm, and after the Psalm a prayer for a blessing upon the preaching of the Word. His text is ordinarily some part of that Book of Canonical Scripture, which in his judgement he conceiveth to be fittest for the times, and the condition of his flock. The Doctrine deduced, is explained
and confirmed by Scripture, and fitly and faithfully applied, all in such method, manner, and expression as may most edify the hearers.

After Sermon he praiseth God, and prayeth again for a blessing, joining earnest petitions for the Church Universal, and for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ, for all the afflicted Churches, for the Churches in his Majesty’s Dominions, for the Church of Scotland, Ministry and People, for the King, the Queen, the Prince, and their whole Royal Progeny, for all the members of that particular Congregation, as well absent in their lawful affairs as present, for all that are afflicted among them in body, mind or means. The prayer ended, a Psalm is sung, and the people dismissed with a blessing.

In the afternoon either the same order in all things almost, is followed in performing the parts of public worship, or some part of the Catechism is expounded, and thereafter so much time as may be spared is bestowed in Catechising some part of the Parish warned particularly to attend.

Beside the public means they have other three helps for edification, one is an ordinary course of Catechising on such days of the week, as are judged to be fittest by the Pastor and Eldership. Another is the visitation of families by the Pastors, and the Elders each one in his own quarter, for trying the manners of the people, whether they walk worthy of the Gospel, for setting and holding up religious exercise in families. And that the Pastor from his particular knowledge of the flock committed to him, may apply his doctrine, and pray the more pertinently in public. The third is, Examination of all sorts of persons, who are not known to have some good measure of knowledge, before the Communion. All these parts of the Ministry in public and private are performed more diligently, or negligently, according to the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the Minister, who hath according to his work, his praise, or censure at the visitation of the Church, by the greater Presbytery.

No Minister there, is suffered to be a non-resident, or to have the charge of more Churches. But if two small contiguous Parishes be united by the assembly, to make up a competent congregation, he Preacheth sometime in the one, and sometime in the other Church, as the people do desire, and the Eldership doth direct.

2. The order of Baptism

No other but the Pastor, who preacheth the Word hath the power of the Ministration of the Sacraments; and concerning Baptism it useth not to be hastened before some day of the public meeting of the Congregation, nor
delayed after, but upon necessary impediments, and is never ministered in private houses. Notice is given thereof in due time to the Pastor, and that by the father of the child, if he be not justly hindered, that a word may be spoken to him in season.

After Sermon on the week days, and after Sermon in the afternoon, on the Lord’s day, the Pastor remaining in the same place, where he hath preached, and having water in a large basin provided, with a fair linen cloth, in a convenient place, and in a decent manner, the father, or in his necessary absence, some other man, who is reputed godly, presenteth the child to be baptised.

The action is begun with a short and pertinent prayer; next, some words of instruction touching the Author, nature, use, and end of this Sacrament, the duties to be performed, in the one time, of the person to be Baptised, and of the parent or vice-parent. Thirdly, he that presenteth the child, maketh confession of the Faith into which the child is to be Baptised, and promiseth to bring up the child in that Faith and in the fear of God. Fourthly, the Minister being informed of the name of the child, Baptiseth the child so named, by sprinkling with water, into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Lastly, the Minister conclueth, as well the public worship, for that time, as the action, with thanksgiving for the Word, and Sacraments, and with prayer for a blessing, and with such Petitions, as he useth at other times after Sermon, and in end dismisseth the Congregation with the blessing.

3. The order of ministering the Communion or the Lord’s Supper

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is more frequently ministered in some Congregations, than in others, according to the number of the Communicants, and the Proficiency of the People in the way of Christ; and in some places upon one Sabbath, in other places upon two, or three Sabbaths, as it may be done most conveniently, which is determined by the Minister and Eldership of the Church.

None are admitted to the Lord’s Supper but such as upon examination are found to have a competent measure of knowledge in the grounds of Christian Religion and the doctrine of the Sacraments; and are able according to the Apostles Commandment, and profess themselves willing, to examine themselves and to renew their Covenant made with God in Baptism, promising to walk as becomes Christians and to submit themselves to all the Ordinances of Christ. The ignorant, the scandalous, the obstinate, and such as under censure, or public admonition in the way to censure, are
not admitted. Neither are strangers received, but upon sufficient testimony, or otherwise be very well known.

The Sabbath day next before the Communion shall be celebrated, public warning thereof is made by the Pastor, and of the doctrine of preparation, to be taught the last day of the week, or at least toward the end of the week; that the Communicants may be the better prepared, by the use of the means, both in private and public.

Upon the day of the Communion (notice being given after the doctrine of preparation, of the hours of meeting, which useth to be before the ordinary time observed other Sabbaths) a large Table decently covered, is so placed, as that the Communicants may best sit about it, and the whole Congregation may both hear and behold.

The Preface, prayers and preaching of that day are all framed to the present matter of the Sacrament, and the duties of the receivers; after Sermon immediately the Pastor useth an exhortation, and debarreth from the Table all ignorant, profane, and scandalous persons, which being done, he goeth from the Pulpit and sitteth down with the people at the Table, where the bread standing before him in great basins, fitly prepared for breaking and distribution, and the wine in large cups in like manner, he first readeth and shortly expoundeth the words of Institution, showing the nature, use, and end of the Sacrament, and the duties of the Communicants; next he useth a prayer, wherein he both giveth thanks, especially for the inestimable benefit of Redemption and for the means of the Word and Sacraments, particularly of this Sacrament, and prayeth earnestly to God for his powerful presence and effectual working to accompany his own Ordinance, to the comfort of his people now to communicate.

The Elements thus being sanctified by the Word and Prayer, the Minister sacramentally breaketh the bread, taketh and eateth himself, and delivereth to the people, sitting in decent and reverent manner about the Table, but without difference of degrees, or acceptions of persons; those that are nearest the Minister, having received the bread, do divide it from hand to hand amongst themselves; when the Minister delivereth the bread, according to the commandment and example of Christ, he commandeth the people to take and eat, saying, *Take ye, eat ye; this is the Body of the Lord, which is broken for you: Do it in remembrance of him.* After all at the Table have taken and eaten, the Minister taketh the Cup and drinking first himself, he giveth it to the nearest, saying, *This Cup is the New Testament, in the Blood of the Lord Jesus, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins; drink ye all of it, for as often as ye do eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.* All this time the Elders, in a competent
number, and in a grave and reverent manner, do attend about the Table, that all who are admitted to the Table may have the bread and wine in their own place and order of sitting, the Minister also, continuing in his place, after the giving of the Elements, doth either by his own speech, stir up the Communicants to spiritual meditations of faith, of the great love of God in Christ, and of the Passion of Christ, and to holy affections of love, joy, godly sorrow, thankfulness, and whatsoever may concern them at that time, or causeth be read the history of the Passion, or some other part of Scripture, which may work the same effect.

After all at the Table have received the Cup, they rise from the Table, and return in a quiet manner, to their places, another company cometh to the Table, and so a third and a fourth, till all have received in the same manner as the first, during which time of removing of the one, and approaching of the other, the whole Congregation singeth some part of a Psalm, touching the Passion, or the love and kindness of God to his people, as Psalm 22 or 103, etc.

After the last company hath received, the Minister rising from the Table, goeth to the Pulpit, where, after a short speech, tending to thanksgiving, he doth again solemnly give thanks unto God for so great a mercy, and prayeth as on other Sabbaths. The prayer ended, all join in singing a Psalm of praise, suitable to the occasion, and are dismissed with the blessing, before which none are to depart, unless in case of necessity.

The Communion being thus celebrated in the forenoon, the people meet again in the afternoon, at which time the Minister teacheth the Doctrine of thanksgiving, and closeth the public and solemn worship of that day, from which the people use to depart, refreshed with the grace and peace of God, and strengthened with new and fresh resolutions to serve the Lord.

4. The order of public fasting or humiliation

Sometimes the fast or humiliation is of larger extent, to be observed by all the Churches in the Kingdom, sometime more particular, of one or more Congregations. Sometimes the fast is kept one day only, sometimes all the days of the week; sometimes on the Sabbath only, especially in the Country Churches; sometimes upon some day of the week also, as in Cities or Towns. They neither make difference of days for humiliation, nor do they keep any set fasts or feasts: all is disposed and done, according as the occasions, and causes do press or require, as may serve most for the end intended, and may best ply with the opportunities, and necessities of the Congregation.
The Sabbath next before the fast, notice is given of the Causes of humiliation, and of the times to be observed, with earnest exhortation to the people to prepare themselves for afflicting their souls and extraordinary humiliation.

In many places especially in Cities, Towns, and greater Villages, or where the people may conveniently assemble, the day before the fast, the doctrine of preparation to the fast is taught expressing the nature and use thereof for averting the wrath of God.

The days of the fast from morning to evening are kept holy unto the Lord in the nature of an Extraordinary Sabbath, with abstinence from meat and drink, from delights and worldly labours, with the exercises of reading the Law, plain preaching, interpretation, and particular application, deep humiliation and rending of the heart for sin, large, and hearty confessions of sin, fervent supplications, and earnest seeking of God, by prayer for pardon, with singing of penitential Psalms; after which they have many times found wonderful deliverances and extraordinary blessings from Heaven.

5. The order of marriage

Although marriage be no Sacrament, nor part of the Worship of God, yet they conceive that the Matrimonial conjunction of Christians and members of the Church is most conveniently solemnised in the face of the Congregation, with instruction out of God’s Word, of the Institution, use, and ends of marriage, and of the duties of married persons, and with blessing by the Minister, and with the prayers of the Church.

The parties are contracted before they be married, and before they be contracted, if there be any suspicion of their ignorance, they are examined in the grounds of Religion, and in their knowledge of the mutual duties, which they owe each to other. Notice also is given of the consent of Parents, or vice-Parents, and that neither of them is contracted before to any other party, nor any impediment from the degrees of Affinity, or Consanguinity prohibited. The contract and purpose of marriage is also published, three several Sabbaths before the same be solemnised, and if there be nothing objected to hinder their marriage, then are they solemnly married, in the face of the Congregation, before the ending of 40 days from the time of the contract.

They require for marriage the free consent of the parties come to the years of discretion, and the knowledge and consent of the Parents; they do not allow of the marriage of Infants, nor secret and clandestine contracts and
marriages, nor do they use any idle rites or superstitious Ceremonies, in the time of the Solemnisation.

6. The Order of Burial of the dead

Though Burial be no part of the Worship of God, nor of the work of the Ministry, yet they think meet that an honest and competent number of Christians accompany the Christian friends of the dead unto the Grave, that they may confer and comfort one another by the way, and to see the Burial done in a grave and decent manner, remembering that sin is the cause of death, that Christ hath overcome death and the grave, and that they who die in the Lord shall rise again to life everlasting.

Their Burials are without singing or reading, which the superstitious do conceive to be profitable for the dead; without Funeral Sermons, which do beget superstition and tend to flattery, make the Gospel to be preached with respect of persons, and are most pressed by such as do least regard Sermons at other times; and without Feasting, with affected shows of mourning, and any further pomp or Ceremony than civil differences and respect do require.

They conceive, for many reasons, that the places of the assembling of the people for the Word and Sacraments, ought not to be places of Burial, which is therefore forbidden, and, for the most part, is forborn in that Kingdom.

Registers are ordained to be kept, of the names and times of all that are baptised, of all that are married, and all that are buried.

IV. Of Doctors, and their Office, and of Schools

The Church of Scotland hath had no other Doctors, but Masters and Professors of Divinity, in Universities and Colleges, of which some use to be chosen to be Elders of particular Churches, and Commissioners to the National Assembly, and besides these the Teachers of more private and particular Schools.

They use to be examined and tried, both in their learning, and life, by the Presbytery, and their charge is not only to bring up their scholars in humane literature and liberal Arts, but also in Civil Conversation and good manners, but especially in the Grounds of Christian Religion, by way of Catechism.

As the Doctors of Colleges do keep the meetings of the Presbytery, and by course do prophesy or make the exercise with the Ministers, so also do the masters of private Schools for the greater part of them, who therefore are a part of the Seminary of the public Ministry, are numbered among the expectants, how soon they are enabled to enter upon the exercise and
sometimes are employed by the Ministers to help them in teaching and Catechising of the people.

The Universities also use to be visited by Commissioners delegated from the National Assembly, that there be nothing taught by the Professors and Doctors but what is sound and consonant to the Confession of Faith, and the received doctrine and order of the Church; and to see that both Masters and Scholars do their duties diligently, especially that there be no scandal nor corruption of manners. In like manner the more private schools are visited by the Presbyteries, poor scholars of good ingines and expectation are provided in a great part of their maintenance by places of the foundation of Colleges, which are appointed by the Founders, or Reformers, for that use, and others are maintained by Contribution of particular Churches within every Presbytery, which the Pastor or Elder bringeth unto them so soon as they are chosen by the Presbytery.

V. Of Elders and their Office

The Calling, Election, and admission of Elders is before spoken of. The number of Elders in every Parish is not definite, but doth vary according to the number and necessity of the people. In some parishes 6, in some 10 or 12, etc.

Such are chosen to be Elders as come nearest to the gifts and qualities required by the Apostle, and after they are chosen are at all occasions exhorted by the Pastor to be examples to the flock and to watch over them faithfully against all corruptions in religion and life. And as the Pastor should be diligent in teaching and sowing the seed, so are the Elders desired to be careful in seeing and seeking the fruits in the people.

The Elders do attend with the Pastor in Catechising the people, do assist him in visiting the sick, in admonishing all men of their duty, and if any will not hear them, they bring the disobedient before the Eldership; In causing the acts of the assemblies, as well particular as general, to be put in execution. But a principal part of their duty is to join always, with the Pastor in the particular Eldership, and in the other assemblies of the Church, as they shall be called, for exercising of discipline and governing the whole Congregation.

VI. Of the Deacons and their Office
What manner of persons the Deacons ought to be, the Scripture is plain, and such they make choice of as are so qualified, so far as may be. The form of their election is before expressed. Their number must be considered of according to the number of the poor and the proportion of the Congregation as we spoke before of the Elders.

Their main duty is to collect, receive and distribute, not only the alms for the poor, but the whole Ecclesiastical goods, which are not assigned and appointed for the maintenance of particular persons.

These duties they must perform at the discretion and by the appointment of the Pastor and Elders, for which cause, and not for government, they are to be present at the ordinary meetings of the Eldership.

The means for the maintenance of the poor are collected by the Deacons the first day of the week and other days of the public assembling of the people to the worship of God at the entry of the Church. And if this prove not a competency, then do the people either bring in their Charity on such days as are appointed by the Eldership, or are willing to be taxed, according as they shall be judged to be able. In some Cities and Parishes, where this order hath been carefully observed, none have been suffered to beg and none have lacked.

Their Ministers, beside their Glebe and Manse, are all provided to certain, and the most part, to competent stipends which are paid either in victual or monies, or in both. And if the charge of their family be great, and their children put to Schools or Colleges, they are helped and supplied by the charity of the people, which useth also to be extended, if need be, toward their widows and orphans, after their decease, of which the whole Eldership hath a special care.

Every parish almost hath some stock for the relief of strangers and for supply of the extraordinary necessities of their own poor. Hospitals have their own rents and the public buildings of the Church are upholden by the Patron and the Freeholders of the Parish, unto which, if any be unwilling, he is constrained by Law to pay his proportion.
The Second Part

I. Of the Assemblies of the Church, and first in General

No man here, were he never so eminent above others, for Piety, Wisdom, or Learning, or doth he never so much arrogate authority to himself, hath the reins of Church Government in his hands to determine, or to do what seemeth good in his own eyes. But all matters are advised, determined and judged with common consent in the meetings and assemblies of the Church, which for this end are of four sorts and degrees, which are commonly called by the name of Church sessions, or particular Elderships or Consistories; Presbyteries, or Classes; Provincial Synods, and National or General Assemblies.

Each of these assemblies hath a President or Moderator who beginneth and endeth with prayer; propoundeth matters to be treated; procureth them to be debated if need be in an orderly way that all may be heard and none interrupted unless he speak too much; gathereth the voices which are noted by the Clerk and pronounceth sentence, or if there be an equality, remitteth it to the greater Presbytery; each of them hath a Clerk, or a Notary; and a Register of all things debated and done by them, especially of such matters as may be of future use.

None of these assemblies, from the least to the greatest are to treat of matters pertaining to the civil Jurisdiction and Magistrate, but only of matters Spiritual and Ecclesiastical, that the doctrine and worship may be kept in purity, all things be done decently and in order in the particular Churches, and that all the members of the Churches may walk worthy of the Gospel.

The lesser and inferior assembly is subordinate to the superior and greater, so that if any person shall think himself wronged or distressed by the unjust proceeding of the inferior assembly, it is lawful for him to seek relief of the great providing it be done in an humble and peaceable way, and in the right order, by proceeding to the next greater assembly, and so of the rest, if need be, taking them in their subordination until either he be satisfied, or, which rarely cometh to pass, he ascend unto the highest of all.

In matters difficult or such as belong to superior assemblies, References from the lesser are ordinary, but nothing belonging to an inferior assembly is brought before a greater till, either it cannot be settled or be disorderly done by them, or some complaint arise. And in that case, so far as may stand with truth and peace, the greater assembly is careful to preserve the power and
authority of the lesser; and therefore matters belonging to inferior assemblies are commonly remitted unto them by the greater.

There, one Church were it never so great, hath not authority over another, nor is it governed by any extrinsical power; but all the particular Churches are of equal power and authority and are ruled and judged by themselves and their own intrinsical power in assemblies composed and consisting of their officers and commissioners from them.

II. Of Particular Elderships in Parishes

The particular Eldership or Church-session consisteth of one or more Ministers and of Elders so many in number as the proportion of the Congregation doth require, who ordinarily do meet once in the week.

The Deacons are always present with the Elders, not for government, but that they may make known the case and necessities of the poor and may consult and receive direction for their supply.

The Minister of the parish is always moderator of this Meeting and if there be more Ministers than one, the moderator is either chosen or they do moderate by course, providing that none be moderator while any matter is treated which concerneth his own particular.

The matters treated by this eldership are such particulars as concern the worship of God in that Church, as, what days of the week are best for assembling to the public worship, if it may be had and be thought necessary, what hours on the Lord’s day before and after noon, which are variable according to the length or shortness of the day, in summer and winter, what times are fittest for public Catechising, and for visiting of particular families, how often, and at what times the Lord’s Supper is most seasonably ministered: all which are proper for keeping of order in that Church, and cannot be so fitly determined by a superior assembly; the Elders also do here delate scandalous persons and bring them to public repentance according to the form prescribed in the greater assemblies. But if there be any doubt or difficulty, or if the offences and scandals be great and heinous, or if the delinquents add obstinacy and impenitence to their fault, then are they warned to appear before the greater Presbytery there to receive order for their censure, or to be sent home again to give satisfaction, or to make their repentance in their own Church where they have given offence, and where the fault was committed. For example, a man behaving himself scandalously with a woman, both unmarried and single persons, is first

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2 Take formal proceedings against.
admonished and rebuked; if fornication appear, he is called before the Eldership, brought to the sense and confession of his fault and ordained to make his public repentance according to the order of the Church and to abstain from all scandalous behaviour afterward. But if he prove obstinate, he is convened before the greater Presbytery, the matter is examined, and either he promises to give obedience to his own Eldership, or in case of continued obstinacy, the censures of the Church proceed against him. But if there be a scandal of adultery or murder, the noise and scandal whereof is far spread, and filleth all men’s ears round about, the parties are brought before the greater Presbytery and the particular Eldership doth before prepare the parties for their appearance before the Presbytery.

The same faults which are brought before the particular or greater Presbytery in an ecclesiastical way are also punished by the civil magistrate, and the pecuniary mulct or penalty is given to the Deacons to be kept in the Church treasure for the benefit of the poor or other pious uses.

Nothing useth to be done by the lesser or greater Presbytery in ordering the public Worship, in censuring of delinquents or bringing them to public repentance, but according to the settled order of the Church, and with express or tacit consent of the congregation, and if there be any new emergents that cause doubting or hesitation, the matter is remitted to the greater assemblies of the Church.

III. The Order of Excommunication

All baptised persons, when they come to age and discretion, are not admitted to the Lord’s table; but such only as either upon examination are found to have a competent measure of knowledge in the principles of Religion, do profess that they are believers and do live unblameably, or coming from another Congregation bring with them sufficient testimony that they are such, or are otherwise well known and approved.

The Minister and Elders use all means in private and public to bring all others within the parish to knowledge, faith and holiness of life, that they may be fitted for the Lord’s Table.

But this not admission to the Communion is one thing, and excommunication of heinous or obstinate offenders is another thing very different.

In case of obstinacy and wilful impenitence, even when the offences are not so great and scandalous, they proceed to excommunication, but with great meekness, longsuffering, and by many degrees, the censure being so weighty, and they desirous to gain the sinner to repentance.
If any person walk unworthy of the Gospel, or commit any trespass, he is (unless the scandal be public and notorious) admonished first secretly by one, next by two or three more. And thirdly, if he contemn both, then according to the order prescribed by our Saviour, *Mat.* 18, the matter is brought before the Minister and Elders where he is accused both of the trespass and of the contempt. If he cannot yet be brought to repentance, then is the matter in some measure made known unto the Congregation, and he called before the greater Presbytery; where if he give signs of his repentance, he is remitted to satisfy his own session. But if he persist in his obstinacy, then by the Ordinance of the Presbytery, the particular eldership is to proceed against him with the censures of the Church even to excommunication.

The matter being thus heard, known and judged and the whole process revised by the greater Presbytery, the next Sabbath without delay, the trespass and order of admonitions are declared to the Congregation, and the person without specification of his name, admonished yet to satisfy: which if he still refuse to do, the next Sabbath his name with his offence and contempt, are published, if he yet continue obstinate, then the next, which is the third Sabbath, is he charged publicly to satisfy for his offence and contempt under the pain of excommunication. If now he offer himself to the particular Presbytery, then do they at the appointment of the Presbytery, give order for his public repentance, the removing of the scandal, and his reconcilement to the Church, otherwise the Minister proceedeth in this order.

The Sabbath after the third public admonition, the Minister with consent of the Eldership, is to make known to the Congregation that such a person is to be excommunicated, warning all that have any thing to object against it that they appear the next session day: and for the present, that the whole Congregation pour forth their supplications that God would grant him repentance and to come out of the snare of the devil. If nothing be objected, or if none for him witness any appearance of repentance, then is the danger of the person, and the weight of the sentence laid open the next Sabbath, and he the second time prayed for publicly. If at last upon the next Sabbath there be no sign of repentance, then is he prayed for the third time, and there being no mean unassailed, nor remedy left to reclaim him, he is struck with the terrible sentence of excommunication, with calling upon the Name of God to ratify the sentence in Heaven, and the people warned to hold him as an Heathen or a Publican and to shun all communion with him, except in natural and civil duties to be still performed by such as are bound. It is to be

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3 No means left untried
understood that where the crimes are such that they cry to the heavens for revenge, waste the conscience, and by the law of God deserve death, and the transgressor certainly known, the process may be more summary and excommunication more hastened, as on the other part of absolution, the time would be longer and the trial of repentance more exact.

After excommunication, he is permitted to come to the preaching of the Word, yet so as it may appear that he cometh as one not having communion with the Church. Neither is he debarred from private counsel, instruction, admonition, and prayer, that in end his spirit may be saved. If after excommunication the Eldership find the signs of repentance, as the good life and behaviour of the excommunicate, declaration of the grief of his heart, and his humble submission to the order of the Church, in all things that may reconcile him to God and his people, they shall with joy of heart make it known to the Congregation by the Minister, that they may also have joy over their brother repenting: or if they have ought to object against the truth of his repentance, they may give notice thereof at the next meeting of the Eldership, where if nothing be alleged against him, after he hath obeyed the injunctions of the Eldership for his further humiliation and the better trial of his repentance, he is either brought before the greater Presbytery, as all other penitents for great crimes, or by relation from his own Eldership, is to give them satisfaction in the signs of his repentance that he may be absolved.

As all public penitents are received, so is the excommunicate absolved in the face of the Congregation, before whom being brought by the Elders at the time appointed, he maketh free confession of his sin and mourneth for it, crieth to God for mercy, seeketh to be reconciled to the Church and promiseth new obedience; with which all being satisfied and willing to receive him into their common and mutual consolation, the Minister who preacheth for that time pronounceth him upon his repentance to be absolved in the Name of Christ from his sin, and free of the censures of the Church, and have right through faith to Christ and all his benefits and ordinances, praising God for his grace and praying that he may be fully accepted to his favour, loosed in Heaven, and hear the voice of joy and gladness.

After the sentence of absolution, the Minister speaketh to him as to a brother exhorting him to watch and pray, or comforting him if he have need, the Elders embrace him and the whole Congregation keeps communion with him as if he had never offended.

As the Presbytery excommunicateth profane professors, so doth it also depose Preachers if they be teachers of corrupt Doctrine, if their lives continue scandalous after admonition, if they be busy in rending the Church asunder by schism and division; if they be given to blaspheme, profanation
of the Lord’s day, simony, perjury, drunkenness, fighting, or any other sin for which, whether in respect of the greatness of the sin, or by reason of the contempt and obstinacy when the sin is not so great, private persons are excommunicated; and although they be upon their repentance absolved from the sentence of excommunication, yet in some cases especially where the crime inferreth a perpetual infamy, are they never readmitted to the Ministry, except upon the unanimous and most earnest desire of the whole Church where they served before.

IV. Of greater Presbyteries or Classes

The Presbytery or Classical meeting doth consist of particular neighbouring Churches in such a circuit as may conveniently meet together to the number of ten, sixteen, twenty, or so many as the vicinity of the places and parishes may well accommodate.

It is supposed that the whole particular Elderships cannot well assembly in one place ordinarily, neither is it necessary. There be therefore beside the Minister or Ministers of the Congregation who are supposed to be perpetual members of the Presbytery, some of special note chosen out of the Elders and by them, who receiving from them commission, may represent the whole; from each particular Eldership, one of the Elders with the Minister or Ministers repaireth to the place of meeting so that the members of this Presbyterial meeting are all the Ministers within the circuit and one Elder delegated from each particular Eldership.

None of the Ministers are permitted to be absent unless they be detained by necessary impediments or extraordinary employments. And therefore the day of the meeting of the Presbytery may not be destinate to ordinary preaching. Nor are they to wait that day upon solemnising of marriages. The names are called by the Clerk, and the absentee are noted and examined the next day upon the reasons of their absence; and if any happen to absent themselves many days without reasonable causes, they are set apart and censured as guilty of the contempt or neglect of the order of the Church. But the Elders are not so strictly tied to ordinary attendance; but if there be any matter of great weight to be handled, they are all warned to be present. And if he who was formerly Commissioner may not assist, another Commissioner in his place may be chosen by the Eldership.

It is permitted to the expectants having entered before upon the public exercise or prophesy to sit by the Ministers and Elders in the meeting of the Presbytery and to give their judgement of the doctrine, but they have no voice when matters of doctrine or discipline are debated. And in the
handling of some matters which are thought fit to be concealed and kept secret, till they be by common consent published, they use to be removed.

Because the whole discipline in a manner is in the hands of the Presbytery, they are to meet once a week or fortnight upon a certain day and in a certain place, but in some places, through the length and depth of the way in winter, they do not meet so often.

The subject and matters treated in the Presbytery are all the Ecclesiastical matters of weight, which concern the particular Churches there represented, as the examination, ordination, suspension, and deposition of Ministers; scandals of Ministers in doctrine, life, or any part of their calling; the discerning of excommunication, references, and appellations from particular Elderships and the amending of any thing that hath been negligently or weakly done by them; the answering also of questions and requests from other Presbyteries, Churches, or persons, or sending of Commissioners in some cases to other Churches or Presbyteries, whether to admonish or advise them, or to seek counsel from them, but so that they have no authority without the limits of their own consociation.

The Ministers and Elders who are Commissioners, together with the expectants and others who are pleased to be present, meeting in the place, and at the day and hour appointed, which useth to be one half-hour after nine o’clock in the forenoon, whereof warning is given by the sound of a bell, that so all the affairs of that day (unless there be somewhat extraordinary to hold them longer) may be expedited against mid-day, do begin with prayer, and proceed to the textual interpretation of Scripture, which is done by the Ministers, each one in his own place by course, or by the expectants, whose names are set forth in a table, or written in the Register of the Presbytery for that end; after the first speaker, some other who followeth in order, and is also appointed by the Presbytery the day before, speaketh in the second place, collecting some doctrines one or more upon the text expounded and showing the use thereof. The second speaker having ended about eleven o’clock, the exercise is closed with thanksgiving by him who spoke first. The matter of each day’s exercise is some portion of that particular book of the Old or New Testament agreed upon in the Presbytery: once every month some common place or controversy is handled, unto which the exercise giveth place for that day. The ground is read in Scripture; the state of the question propounded, the arguments for the truth pressed and vindicated from the Sophistication of the adversaries; but the arguments contra are left to be proponed in the Presbyterial meeting by such Ministers as are called by

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the Moderator to dispute upon the propositions, or *Theses* exhibit, the day of
the meeting next before, by the controverser, and are propugned\(^5\) by him, the
Moderator being *praeses*\(^6\) of the disputation. That the Presbytery may go
through all the controversies, they have also a table wherein they are all
digested in order, so that each Minister or expectant knows a month before
what is next to be treated.

The exercise or common head of controversy ended in public, the people
depart, and the Ministers and Elders with others, who are permitted to be
present, go to the private place of their meeting where all being set in order,
and the Moderator having begun with prayer, the doctrine delivered in
public is examined and each one of the Presbytery and expectants, either
approveth, or in charity and soberness of spirit, propoundeth his doubt
against any point spoken of, which being done, the speakers for that day are
called upon (they being apart at this time) their interpretation and doctrine
approved, and they encouraged or (if there be cause) they are in a brotherly
manner admonished. The doctrine censured (for this they call the censure of
the doctrine) the matters before mentioned to be the subject of the
Presbyterial jurisdiction, are propounded, modestly debated, and either
concluded, or taken to further deliberation, or remitted to the Synod, and so
the meeting concluded with prayer. The Moderator either continueth in his
place between one Provincial Synod and another, or for a shorter time, but
they think it not fit to change the Moderator at every meeting.

The Presbytery also do visit the several Churches within their bounds,
either by holding their full meetings at the Churches, or by sending their
Commissioners thither, that they may see how the ordinances of Christ are
used and obeyed, by the Minister, Eldership and all the Congregation, and
that if any thing be amiss, it may be rectified.

V. *Of Provincial Synods*

The whole Kingdom is by the wisdom of the General Assembly so divided
in Provinces as the Ministers and Elders may, for vicinity of place, best meet
in Provincial Synods, with respect to the Episcopal Dioceses, the particular
Churches whereof are so far cast asunder in Scotland that they cannot
conveniently join in Provincial Synods.

The Provincial Synod is of the same constitution with the Presbytery and
doth consist of all the Ministers, and one Elder having commission, as
before, from each particular Church within the province.

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\(^5\) Defended

\(^6\) Chairman, Presiding Officer
It meeteth ordinarily twice a year, but the place and the time of the meeting are chosen according to the convenience of the Churches of the province and as the exigency of their affairs doth require. The Moderator of the former Synod, openeth the Synod with a Sermon fit for such an assembly; and after the Sermon setting himself down in his place with the Clerk of the Synod (who for the most part is one of the Ministers chosen by plurality of voices) beginneth with prayer, causeth the names of the Ministers to be read, who not only answer for their own presence (the absent being noted) but also give up the names of the Commissioners from the several Churches which are written down by the Clerk, and their commissions also read, if need be, and proceedeth to the choosing of a new Moderator.

The Moderator is thus chosen. A list is made by the former Moderator of four or five of the most able men for wisdom, authority and dexterity for such an employment which is approved by the consent of the Synod. And if any member of the Synod be pleased to add any other so qualified to the list, his name is joined with the former, and out of this list the Moderator is chosen by the suffrages of the Ministers and Elders and set in the place of the former Moderator.

The new Moderator first of all calleth for the Registers of the several Presbyteries, and putteth them in the hands of the Ministers of other different Presbyteries to be revised and examined, that by the Records it may be known how they have kept order and performed what hath been recommended unto them by the preceding Synods. And what and how matters have been treated by them at every session, that they may be censured or allowed, which upon the report of the revisers is accordingly done in the face of the Synod.

If there be any references from the Synod before, they are first debated and determined, and thereafter new matters are brought into deliberation. What was obscure or difficult for the Presbyteries, or might concern them all in common, is here resolved and ordered, what hath been done amiss is redressed. And if any difficulty arise which doth not fall under some Church constitution, it is referred to the national Assembly.

Before the assembly be dissolved, each Presbytery is set apart by course and enquiry made from the rest if there be any known scandal, fault or negligence amongst them, that it may be in a brotherly manner censured, like as upon the day of the meeting of the Presbytery next going before the Synod; all the members of the Presbytery suffer the like enquiry each one apart by all the rest.
As the Moderator beginneth and endeth every session before and after noon with prayer, so doth he somewhat more solemnly close the Synod with some pithy and pertinent exhortation and hearty thanksgiving and prayer unto God.

All matters, where these Synods are ordinarily kept, are with such diligence exped that the Ministers (none of them having above a short day’s journey, and Tuesday being usually the first of their meeting) may return to their charge against the Lord’s day, having notice of the day and place of the next following Synod and carrying with them such acts as are necessary that they may be made known to their particular Elderships and Congregations. And thanks may be given in every Congregation for the good proceedings of the Synod and for the liberty of the Churches.

These Synods are not always held at one time, and therefore if there be cause, some Commissioners are sent from one Synod to another, for their judgement and advice in matters of difficulty, which is reported at the following Synod for their further resolution and that so far as is possible there may be a conformity in all things.

VI. Of National Synods or General Assemblies

The National Assembly meeteth once in the year, and the time of the following Assembly agreed upon before the rising of the former, or oftner pro re nata, concerning which some Ministers have commission and warrant from the Assembly to give timely advertisement to the Presbyteries for choosing and sending their Commissioners.

This great Assembly useth to be honoured with the King’s Majesty’s presence either in his royal Person, or by his High commissioner, who doth all the parts of a Supreme Civil President. In a peaceable ordering of the whole proceedings of so frequent and holy a meeting, that all men’s reasons and voices may be heard, and in acquainting himself with the grounds of every constitution that shall be agreed upon, that by his Princely authority they may be observed, and, if need require, the sanction of the Civil Law may be added, for which end also certain Commissioners from the Assembly are sent to attend the Parliament.

It doth consist of Commissioners from the Presbyteries or Classes, three Ministers and one Elder from each Presbytery, who are chosen by the voices of the Ministers and Elders sent from the particular Elderships, and of one

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Commissioner from the Church session of every royal Burgh, that there may be some proportion and equality. Others also are permitted although not to voice, yet to hear, propound and debate, provided that they first obtain leave of the Moderator: and that it may appear to be done *animo aedificandi, non tentandi*.

The first day of the Assembly is kept with a solemn fast and humiliation, wherein the whole City or Town, which is the Seat of the Assembly, useth to join with powerful preaching and earnest prayers from morning till night.

The particular Churches also throughout the Kingdom, upon the days of their public meeting, pray to God for his direction, assistance, and blessing unto the Assembly, that they may be led into all truth and all the Churches be refreshed with the sweet fruits thereof.

The next day the Moderator of the preceding Assembly beginneth with prayer, causeth the Clerk call the Presbyteries and take up the names of the Commissioners, Ministers, and Elders who give in their Commissions which being read, examined, and allowed, they proceed to the choosing of a new Moderator, keeping the same order which is set down before in choosing the Moderator of the Provincial Synod.

The new Moderator calleth for the Records of the Synods and by the voices of the Assembly chooseth a Committee for perusing and trying them; a Committee for the bills, complaints, and petitions to be presented to the Assembly, and such other Committees as are ordinary for preparing of weighty matters for the Assembly, and for cutting off idle and impertinent things that the dispatch may be the more speedy and easy when they shall be brought to open debate and voicing; all references from Synods, appellations, grievances, complaints, petitions, are here examined and answered; Acts and constitutions for all the Churches are agreed upon with common consent, and if there be any considerable contradiction, and the doubts and scruples, which are made be not satisfied, matters are remitted to further deliberation till the next Assembly; course is taken for planting of Churches, with able Ministers, that the Gospel may be spread through the whole Nation; Rules are set down by which the inferior assemblies shall be directed in all their proceedings; all means used that the Church be not wronged, neither by confounding the Civil and Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, nor by the abusing or introverting the patrimony of the Church.

The Commissioners of each Presbytery do carry home with them a true copy of all such acts as do concern all the Churches, that they may walk by one and the same rule.

The Moderator giveth forth Summons signed with his own hand, and the hand of the Clerk, for citing of persons in the name of the Assembly to
compare before the next meeting thereof, with certification of the censures of the Church in case of disobedience.

The Conclusion

In the authority of these Assemblies Parochial, Presbyterial, Provincial and National, and in the subordination of the lesser unto the greater, or of more particular Elderships to the larger and general Eldership, doth consist the external order, strength and steadfastness of the Church of Scotland, which is lovely and comfortable to all fearing God, whether Pastor or professors, and hath been very awful and terrible, as an Army with Banners, to all Papists, to all Heretics, Schismatics, Hirelings, and all ungodly persons: as upon the one part they break not the bruised reed nor quench the smocking flax, but do cherish and labour to bring to ripeness and use, the grain of mustard seed in sincere beginners and the smallest talent in Preachers having the zeal of God: So upon the other part, no scandal of proud sinners escapeth censure, no heresy or error is sooner hatched, but is either presently spied out and crushed by some of the inferior assemblies, or, if it be kept on foot and gather strength, it is quite suppressed and extinguished in the General Assembly which meeteth once in the year, and never suffereth such bastard births to grow to be one year old, which is a true and main cause why no sects nor errors have appeared in the reformed Church of France, and in the Churches of Scotland, and of the Low-Countries, so long as they enjoyed the liberty and happiness of the assemblies, which they did no sooner by the mercy of God recover, but immediately at their brightness, the mists and mildews gathered before were scattered and evanished. And as, by the order and power of these assemblies, foxes are taken that they spoil not the vines, and gangrenes are prevented that they spread not against truth and unity, all sorts of lewd and wicked men are discouraged and put to shame: so is there excited among the Godly Ministers an holy emulation by acquaintance, conference, and by perceiving the gifts one of another, which maketh them return from the Assemblies with a mean and humble concept of themselves, and with new and strong resolutions for greater diligence in their studies, and faithfulness in every Pastoral duty, to the common benefit and edification of all the Churches; all the Ministers are made more wise in matters of Government; and all the Congregations are affected with reverence to what is required of them by their particular Elderships, as having the consent and approbation of the whole Church. Many such fruits are reaped of these Assemblies, which without them no particular person or congregation can have any ground to hope for or expect.
They have no Archbishops, Diocesan Bishops, Suffraganes, no Chapters, no Curates, dumb nor idle Ministers, no hirelings, non-residents, nor pluralists, no Deans nor Arch-Deacons, no Chanthers, Sub-chanters, nor Treasurers, no Chancellors, Officials, nor Apparitors, no Canons, Peti-canons, Prebends, Singing men nor boys; And yet without these and the like, they have practise and use of all the ordinances of Christ; all matters Ecclesiastical determined, remitting questions of tithes, marriages, divorcements, etc. to the Civil Judge to whom they properly do belong, and all petitions, complaints, and Church grievances heard and redressed, which they esteem as the sweet yoke of Christ, and think it a great ease both to their consciences and estates to be free of such bundles and burdens of trash and superfluities. They conceive that to erect Presbyteries, Synods, and National Assemblies, and still to keep Prelates and the members of that Hierarchy is, in the matter of Church government, not unlike the Popish adding of traditions to Scripture in the rule of faith, or works unto faith in the point of justification, etc. additions to Christ’s institution, being not only in respect of their author humane inventions, and for any use they can have idlements, vanities, and follies; but that they do also corrupt the purity, and eat out the life of the ordinances of Christ.

Here there is a superiority without tyranny for no Minister hath a Papal or Monarchical Jurisdiction over his own flock, far less over other Pastors and over all the Congregations or a large Diocese. Here there is a parity without confusion and disorder, for the Pastors are in order before the Elders, and the Elders before the Deacons; the Church is subordinate to the Presbytery, the Presbytery to the Synod, and the Synod to the National Assembly. One Pastor also hath priority before another for age, for zeal, for gifts, for his good deservings of the Church, each one honouring him whom God hath honoured, and as he beareth the image of God which was to be seen amongst the Apostles themselves. But none hath power or jurisdiction above others: even as in nature one eye hath not power over another, only the head hath power over all, even as Christ over his Church. The same may be seen in the Commonwealth, and in some of the offices of the Roman Church itself. And lastly, here there is a subjection without slavery, for the people are subject to the Pastors and Assemblies, yet there is no Assembly wherein every particular Church hath not interest and power; nor is there anything done but they are, if not actually, yet virtually called to consent unto it.

As they have done and suffered much for vindicating and maintaining the liberty of their Religion, that what belongeth unto God may be rendered unto

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8 This should probably be read as, “and other additions to Christ’s institution …”
God; so do they desire that according to the rule of righteousness each man have his own, and above all men, that the things which are Caesar’s be rendered unto him, and to give him that which is God’s were a wronging both of God and Caesar. They have ever been willing to taxes and to pay subsidies above that which they were able. They join with the inward reverence of their hearts, external honour and obedience in all things lawful. They pour forth their prayers to God in private and public for all blessings spiritual and temporal upon his Royal Person and Government, and upon his Progeny; and for the same blessings upon the Queen’s Majesty, especially that God by his Spirit would give unto her the knowledge and love of the truth. They long for her conversion as an happiness to herself, and a means of great happiness to the King, to their Children, and to all their Subjects. And, that the Lord may answer their prayers, they think it incumbent to the Church of England, nor can any bond whatsoever oblige them to the contrary, to use the best and most powerful means, and would most willingly in all humility, love and respect, join their endeavours for that blessed end. And as they thus present their best desires and prayers, so are they ready to sacrifice their lives to God for his Majesty’s good, and in their hearts are grieved that their loyalty, which they account their no small glory, should have been called in question.

Neither is this all. But moreover they do acknowledge that his Majesty, as supreme Magistrate, hath not only charge over the Commonwealth, but doth watch and hath inspection over the Church and Church matters, but in a civil way. *Vos Episcopi in Ecclesia* (saith Constantine) *Ego extra Ecclesiam Episcopus à Deo constitutus sum.* And therefore that he is, by his high calling and place, *Custos utriusque tabulae,* to command the precepts of the first table as well as of the second table to be obeyed: that he is *Vindex Religionis* by his sword, as the Spirit of God in Scripture is *Iudex*, and the Church is *Index:* That he hath power to turn the constitutions of the Church into laws, and to confirm them by the civil sanction in Parliament: That he may constrain all his subjects to do duty in matters of religion, and may punish the transgressors: That when debates arise about Religion, he hath power to call the Assemblies of the Church to be present and civilly

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9 “You are the bishops in the church. I have been appointed by God a bishop outside the church.” This corresponds, in essence, to the later distinction between authority *in sacris* and authority *circa sacra.* The Christian magistrate has authority in his own civil sphere in connection with the general well-being of the church and the promotion of a Christian society. But he may not interfere in the internal administration of the church. That is the responsibility of those who are bishops/presbyters in the church.

10 Both tables of the Law

11 The King is the defender of religion, the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture is the judge and the church is the announcer or informant (who declares the mind of the Spirit). It is in this last sense that the church possesses the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with the power of binding and loosing (Matthew 16.19)
preside in them and to examine their constitutions, that he may discern of them both as a Christian caring for his own soul, and as supreme Magistrate watching over his people: and that he may do all things which can prove him to be a kind and careful nursing Father. They account all that is vomited out to the contrary, [as, that they liked Anarchy better than Monarchy, and that they would turn a Kingdom into a democracy,] to be but the fictions and calumnies of the malicious enemies of God and his truth; not unlike the lies which were devised against the Christians of old: their consciences, their words, writings, and actions, even then when the world did put the worst constructions upon them, were witnesses of the integrity of their hearts. They do still hold that there can be no antipathy betwixt one ordinance of God and another. By him Princes do reign, and he hath also appointed the Officers and Government of his own house. They do desire nothing more than that the Son of God may reign, and that with and under the Son of God, the King may command, and they, as good subjects to Christ and the King, may obey.