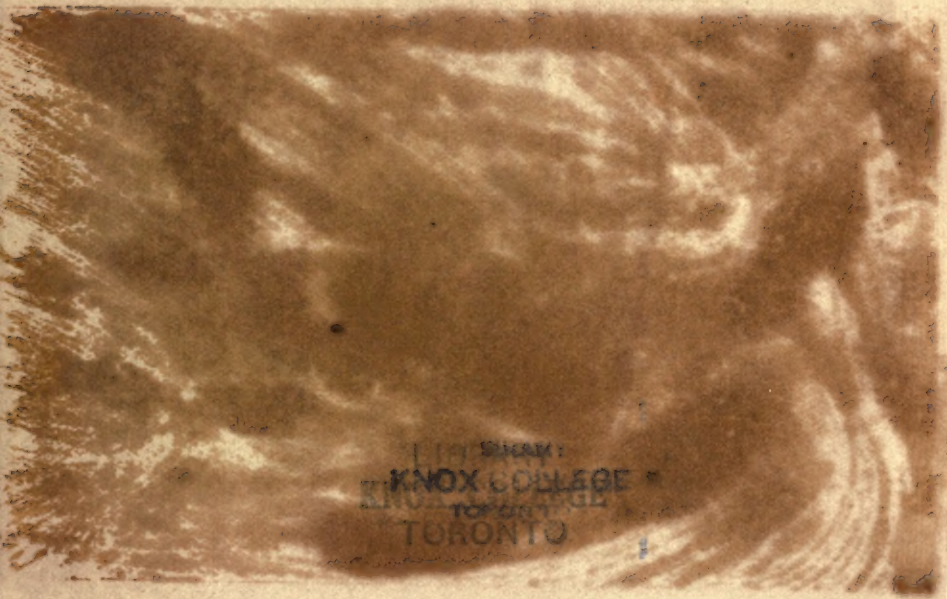




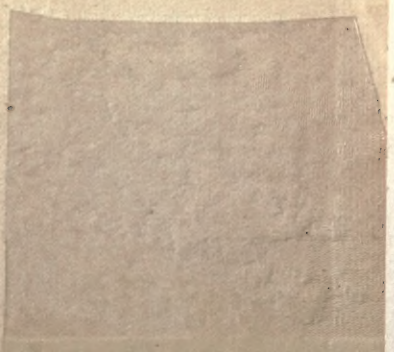
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MCMVII.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH  
AND  
FORMULAS OF SUBSCRIPTION

IN THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF GREAT  
BRITAIN AND IRELAND ESPECIALLY  
IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

*BEING A SERIES OF LECTURES DELIVERED TO STUDENTS  
OF CHURCH HISTORY IN THE OPENING DAYS  
OF SESSION 1906-7 (25th to 30th October, 1906)*

BY THE  
REV. JAMES COOPER, D.D.

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## CONFESSIONS OF FAITH AND FORMULAS OF SUBSCRIPTION IN THE BRITISH CHURCHES.

GENTLEMEN,

It has been my custom in my opening lecture to pass in brief review the Church History of the previous summer; and I feel that this year, in the six months which have run out since we last met, much has been happening outside Christendom, on its ever-advancing border, in what for ages has been its special territory, as well as within the narrower circle of our own part of the Church, which may well send us to reflection and to our knees—in thankfulness, on the one hand, to the Divine Pilot of the Church, and, on the other hand, in prayer and vigil lest, in our anxiety to conciliate men, we should be found unfaithful to Him whom we confess, with S. Thomas, *Our LORD and Our GOD*.<sup>1</sup>

Outside of Christendom, we have heard, once more, of the pride and pretensions of the hoary paganisms of the Further East. In the Nearer East our attention has been called to a portentous revival of Mahomedan activity. News from the various Mission Fields tell, if of inadequate resources, yet of wonderful achievements. In Europe the troubles in Russia cannot but be a source of grave anxiety to the rulers, and the lovers, of the venerable Church of that country; while, in spite of all the differences between us and the great Church of France, is it possible that we should be unsympathetic spectators of the struggle that lies before her if she is to maintain, in the face of an anti-Christian and rapacious legislature,—as she maintained against the Revolutionaries of 1791,—the government established in her, as she believes, by

<sup>1</sup> S. John xx. 28.

the LORD JESUS CHRIST? The Pope may be no politician; but his contention is that of a faithful Christian minister when he declares that the Church cannot have her constitution altered according to the whim of this government or that, and pronounces schism an evil more to be dreaded, and avoided, than any spoliation of earthly goods, or even expulsion from parsonage and church.

In England, the prolonged discussion of the Education Bill is serving, I hope, to remind us all of truths which have been too much forgotten, for example:—(1) that Christian education—the education I mean, which our LORD commands—is based on Holy Baptism: “*baptizing them,*” He says, “*and teaching them*”;<sup>1</sup> (2) that it involves the inculcation of certain practices (“*to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*”)—as well as the telling of certain facts,—and the formation, through creed and ordinance, by the aid of the HOLY GHOST, of a certain well-defined type of character; and (3) that it is, in consequence, the inalienable function of the Church, not of the State.<sup>2</sup> In the present divided condition of the Church in Britain, the only way seems to be to give time, and equal facilities, for all Churches to fulfil this part of their duty in the public schools; and for the Churches themselves to come together and see if they cannot find a working basis for re-union. It is not, I think, without a hopeful significance that, in June last, out of the midst of the English fray, there issued a memorable *Letter*, signed by leading men in all the Reformed Churches of Great Britain, calling us to penitence for our divisions, and to prayer for unity.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline contains, amid much of varying value, a sentence of gratifying interest to us: “In an age which has witnessed an extraordinary revival of spiritual life and activity the Church [of England] has had to work under regulations fitted

<sup>1</sup> S. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Till after the calamitous ‘Disruption’ of 1843 the Parish Schools and Universities of Scotland were essentially connected with the Church of Scotland, and formed part of her machinery. She protested against both being taken from her.

for a different condition of things, without that power of self-adjustment which is inherent in the conception of a living Church, and is, as a matter of fact, possessed by the Established Church of Scotland." We can offer no better prayer for the Church of England than that she should again have liberty to exercise this power, according to that first clause of *Magna Charta*, "The Church of England shall be free"; and that when her Convocations meet to deal with the matters referred to in the *Letters of Business* just issued to them, they may be guided by the HOLY GHOST to decisions that shall make at once for *the truth and peace*.<sup>1</sup> Who that has any notion of the value and the power of a noble sanctuary but must lament the destruction by fire of the great Abbey Church of Selby? Who that knows the spirit of the Church of England but must feel that the Primate's prophetic telegram "Resurgat," will, by God's help, speedily be justified?

In Scotland, and in our Church of Scotland—though we can think of neither as a thing apart: Scotland is part of the British Empire: the Church of Scotland were no Church at all were she not a branch of the one Vine of CHRIST—the most pressing question is, How shall she use the liberty accorded to her (as a Church Established) to reformulate her relation to the document, the *Westminster Confession*, which still is to remain the "public and avowed confession of this Church"; and (what lies behind that, and is of infinitely more importance) how shall the Church, while giving to her ministers a real measure of liberty in regard to "matters which do not," by her own acknowledgment, "enter into the substance of the Faith," continue to secure their distinct adherence to the fundamental verities? Towards the solution of this question (which concerns every one of us) I have thought that a brief *résumé* of the History of Confessions of Faith and Formulas of Subscription in the British Churches may be of some little service.

But even with so large a theme before me, I must spare a sentence for a more personal matter. The retirement of the Reverend Dr. Mackenzie of Kingussie involves far more than the severance of the tie which has bound him so long to

<sup>1</sup>Zechariah viii. 19.

loving and beloved parishioners. It means, I fear, the ceasing to operate of the most powerful agency we have had for finding recruits for the Holy Ministry throughout the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. For this very valuable part of his manifold labours, this hall, and all our halls, and the whole Church of Scotland, owe Dr. Mackenzie a debt of gratitude. Who will carry on the work which the failing strength of his fourscore years has compelled our honoured father to lay down? Have we no energetic clergyman who will take up his mantle, and, recognizing that the perpetuation of a Gaelic-speaking ministry is essential to the maintenance of religion in the Highlands, will set himself to continue and develop the work so well performed through many years by this truly patriotic pastor?

Coming now to my subject as announced, I remark, as a preliminary, that whatever else Christianity may be, it is certainly a Faith. It was this from its very first appearance among men; and all the Apostles speak of it as such. *The Faith of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the LORD of Glory,*<sup>1</sup> says S. James. S. John defines it the Faith *that JESUS is the SON of GOD.*<sup>2</sup> *Contend earnestly,* S. Jude exhorts, *for the Faith once for all delivered to the saints.*<sup>3</sup> As a Faith it was the inspiration alike of S. Paul's life and of his preaching: *the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*<sup>4</sup> *We also believe, and therefore speak.*<sup>5</sup> To the Corinthians he enumerates its articles, *which also ye received,* he says, *and wherein ye stand.*<sup>6</sup> And as the Apostles, so their LORD: *What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?*<sup>7</sup> was His question alike to friends and foes. To S. Peter confessing HIM the SON of GOD, HE answered, *On this rock will I build My Church;*<sup>8</sup> and when, after His mighty Resurrection, the time for building His Church arrived, HE wrote above its entrance-gate the Name which sums up His whole teaching concerning GOD:—*The Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. James ii. 1.<sup>2</sup> S. John v. 5.<sup>3</sup> S. Jude 3.<sup>4</sup> Gal. ii. 20.<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 13.<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 1.<sup>7</sup> S. Matt. xxii. 42.<sup>8</sup> *Ib.* xvi. 18.<sup>9</sup> *Ib.* xxviii. 19.

This Name is the doctrine of the Trinity. And since HE of whom we speak in it as the SON is HE whom we acknowledge also *the Man* CHRIST JESUS, and "HE is not two but one CHRIST," the doctrine of the Incarnation is essentially bound up with the doctrine of the Trinity. On every point as to both these doctrines the Church in her early days was questioned; nor was the ancient Empire overturned, or the evidents of the Apostolic tradition scattered, till in the Providence of GOD she had been led to state in terms the most explicit what exactly she understood by both. Amid a multitude of *forms of sound words* three attained a place pre-eminent, the baptismal "Apostles' Creed," the adoring confession of each grateful neophyte; the "Nicene Creed," the deliberate asseveration of the Church's fundamental doctrine, "Thus believes the Catholic Church"; and the "*Quicumque vult*" (the so-called Athanasian Creed), her solemn warning to every one who desires salvation as to the duty of holding, and the peril of denying, the truth as it is in JESUS.<sup>1</sup>

These "Three Creeds," as they came to be called, found acceptance throughout the Universal Church, and nowhere more distinctly than in the Churches of these islands. They were employed alike as tests of a right belief, and as psalms of praise to HIM whom they confess. But while they continued to express the very core of the Church's faith, there grew up around them in the Dark, and in the Middle, Ages such a crop of superstitions and abuses, that as soon as the light of reviving learning broke, it was seen that reformation was urgently required. The object of those whom we call *par excellence* the Reformers was not to make a new Church, but to cleanse the existing Church of these unwarranted accretions to the Primitive Deposit; and all the three great groups of the Reformers, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, when they were called upon to state their position, declared their firm adhesion in all points alike to the Ancient Faith and to the Ancient Creeds in which that Faith had been stated and defined. The Lutherans prefixed the Three Creeds to the *Augsburg Confession*; nor is it "permitted" to this day "to an evangelical preacher" in the National Church of Prussia "to promulgate

<sup>1</sup> S. Mark xvi. 16; S. John iii. 18, 19.

another doctrine than that which is founded on the pure and clear Word of GOD and attested in the three chief Christian symbols—viz. the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds."<sup>1</sup> The chief Confession of the Reformed Churches is that known as the *Second Helvetic*. It cites in its Preface the "Imperial Edict" from the Code of Justinian concerning the distinction between those who are to be held for Catholics and Heretics respectively, and protests that, inasmuch as all its signatories are of the faith and religion specified as Catholic, "they shall be held not for heretics but for Catholics and Christians";<sup>2</sup> and its Eleventh Chapter contains the following:

"And, to speak many things in few words, with a sincere heart we believe, and with liberty of speech we freely profess, whatsoever things are defined out of the Holy Scriptures in the Creeds, and in the decrees of those first four and most excellent Councils—held at Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon—together with blessed Athanasius' Creed, and all other Creeds like to these; touching the mystery of the Incarnation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and we condemn all things contrary to the same. And thus we retain the Christian, sound and Catholic Faith, whole and inviolable, knowing that nothing is contained in the aforesaid Creeds which is not agreeable to the Word of GOD, and makes wholly for the uncorrupt (*sincera*) declaration of the Faith."<sup>3</sup>

The Anglicans—besides declaring in the Thirty-Nine Articles that these Three Creeds "ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture" (Art. VIII.)—retain the use of them in their Book of Common Prayer, which all their ministers are taken bound to use.

So that the *doctrine* of the Three Creeds is as *unquestionably part of the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches* as it is of the Church of Rome or the Churches of the East.

<sup>1</sup> *Ordination Service*, National Church of Prussia.

<sup>2</sup> For the use of this argument by divines of the Church of England under Elizabeth, see below, *sub anno* 1559.

<sup>3</sup> Schaff, *Creeds of the Protestant Churches*, p. 854.



I.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The first of the British Churches to feel the effects of the Continental Reformation was that of England; and an immediate result of this was that the Church of England, which hitherto had "no other formularies of faith than those of all Christendom; the Creeds, the primitive decrees,"<sup>1</sup> found itself in possession of its "First Confession," in the shape of *The Ten Articles* which Henry VIII. issued by "Royal Injunction" in 1536 under the title of "Certain 1536 Articles lately devised and put forth by the King's Highness's authority and condescended upon by the prelates and clergy of this his Realm in convocation." These Henry ordered to be "explained by the clergy to the people."<sup>2</sup>

The Reign of Edward VI. saw a great advance in the Reformation of the Church of England, and under him, in 1553, *Forty-Two Articles* were issued; the authorities intending 1553 that these should be offered for signature to all the clergy. A Royal mandate was given to this effect, but the King's death prevented its enforcement; and the accession of Queen Mary brought the restoration of Romanism.

Soon after the accession of Queen Elizabeth (1558),—1558 perhaps in the following year—"the Reformers or Evangelics, or at least those of them who preached before her, laid before her a long Declaration of their doctrines and opinions, which is," says Canon Dixon, "a document of some value. . . . It forms a link in the chain of English confessions, between the *Forty-two Articles* and the *Thirty-Nine*." It is professedly based on the *Forty-Two*, which its authors say they are obliged to "repeat against the slanders of those who called them heretics, and said that they who had preached before the Queen differed from their brethren":

"Most untruly reporting of us that our doctrine is detestable heresy, 1559 that we are fallen from the doctrine of CHRIST'S Catholic Church, that

<sup>1</sup>Dixon, *History of the English Church*, i. 411-420.

<sup>2</sup>Gee and Hardy, *Documents illustrative of English Church History*, p. 269.

we be subtle sectaries, that we dissent among ourselves, and that every man nourisheth and maintaineth his own opinion, that we be teachers of carnal liberty, condemning fasting, prayer, and like godly exercises."

They then proceed to the Declaration of doctrine, or Articles, "as true members of the Catholic Church of CHRIST, that is of the Church that is founded and grounded upon the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. . . . We condemn all old heresies of the Ebionites, Cerinthians, Marcionites, Valentinians, Arians, Manichees, Eunomians, Sabellians, Macedonians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and all such like, which withstand any article of these Creeds."

"These," proceeds Canon Dixon, "were the 'heresies,' to be distinguished from the modern misuse of the term. In language not inadequate they claimed the name which their adversaries denied them :

"And, therefore, according to the ancient laws of the Christian emperors, Gratianus, Valentinianus, and Theodosius, we do justly vindicate and challenge to ourselves the name of Christian Catholics : which emperors decreed that all they which according to the doctrine of the Apostles and Evangelists do confess one Godhead of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, under one Godly Majesty and Trinity, should have and enjoy the name of Christian Catholics."

Obviously, this is the contention which is soon to find expression on the Continent of the *Second Helvetic Confession* ; and it is interesting to note that in 1566 (the very year of the publication of that *Confession*), Archbishop Parker wrote to Cecil asking for a sight of this important document, "the Book of Articles" the Primate calls it, "which were subscribed by all the professors of the Gospel newly arrived from beyond the sea, which book was presented to the Queen's Majesty."<sup>1</sup>

Elizabeth shewed from the beginning of her Reign the line she was to take ; but for her first four years nothing was done 1561 by public authority, though in 1561 the Bishops issued *Eleven Articles* "containing definite statements of the leading principles of the Reformed Church," along with a declaration of faith "in the Holy Trinity, in the Canonical Scriptures, and in the Three Creeds"; . . . "and that the Book of Common Prayer was agreeable to the Scriptures, . . . Catholic and

<sup>1</sup> Dixon, *History of the English Church*, v. pp. 105-116, and Notes.

Apostolic, and most for the advancement of God's glory, and the edifying of God's people." <sup>1</sup>

In 1562<sup>2</sup>, the *Forty-Two Articles* of Edward VI. were <sup>1563</sup> brought before a "Convocation holden at London for the avoiding of Diversities of Opinions, and for the establishment of consent regarding the true Religion"; were redacted and reduced to *Thirty-Nine*; and were "agreed upon by the Archbishops of both provinces and the whole clergy."<sup>2</sup> They were *subscribed* by the Bishops of the Southern Province, and by the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of Durham and Chester, "who were probably appointed to act for the whole of the Northern Convocation."

The Articles were then transmitted to the Crown for ratification, according to the law laid down in the Act of Submission of the Clergy (25 Henry VIII. cap. 19); and were published *in Latin*, with the Royal Assent, March, 1563.

There was some doubt, however, as to the force of the English translation of them which had been put into circulation. In the next Convocation, therefore, that of 1571, both <sup>1571</sup> the Latin and the English versions were reviewed, and a new Ratification was given by the Queen, which may still be read appended to them in the Prayer-Book :

"This Book of Articles before rehearsed is again approved and allowed to be holden and executed within this Realm, by the assent and consent of Our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God of England, France, and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, etc. Which Articles were deliberately read, and confirmed again by the subscription of the hands of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Upper-house, and by the subscription of the whole clergy of the Nether-house in their Convocations, in the Year of our Lord 1571."

In the same year was passed by Parliament the "Act <sup>1571</sup> for the Ministers of the Church to be of sound Religion," which provides

"that every ecclesiastical person, under degree of bishop, not instituted according to the form enjoined by Act of Edward VI., or that now in force, shall declare his assent, and *subscribe to, all the Articles of Religion which only concern the confession of the true Christian faith and the doctrine*

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Blunt, *Reformation of the Church of England*, ii. 381.

<sup>2</sup> *Book of Common Prayer* : Title of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

of the Sacraments, comprised in a book imprinted 'Articles, etc.,' and shall bring from such bishop or guardian of spiritualities, in writing, under his seal authentic, a testimonial of such assent and subscription."

The Act imposed penalties for refusing to subscribe, and for holding doctrine contrary to the Articles; and it enacted

"That no person shall hereafter be admitted to any benefice with cure, except he . . . shall have first subscribed the said Articles in presence of the ordinary, and publicly read the same in the parish church of that benefice, with declaration of his unfeigned assent to the same."—Act xiii. Elizabeth, cap. 12.

It is to be observed that the Thirty-Nine Articles begin, not, like the ancient Creeds, "I believe," or like the First Confession of the Church of Scotland (1560), "We confess and acknowledge"; but in the manner of a theological treatise, "There is but one living and true God, etc.," as the Westminster Confession also does, "Although the light of nature, etc."

The Act of Parliament of 1571 was so drawn as to require the acceptance of the doctrinal Articles alone, nor did it order any *precise form* of subscription; but Convocation insisted in its Canons that every minister should subscribe 1583 to *all* the Thirty-Nine; and in 1583 Archbishop Whitgift required subscription to his "Three Articles," whereof this is part:

"That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering bishops, priests, and deacons, containeth nothing in it contrary to the Word of God, and that the same may be lawfully used, and that [the minister subscribing] will use it . . . and none other": also, "That he alloweth the Book of Articles . . . and believeth all the Articles therein contained to be agreeable to the Word of God."

1604 In 1604, under James I., a series of Canons were put forth by Convocation and ratified by the Sovereign. Among them is Canon xxxvi., which runs,

"Subscription to be required of such as are to be made ministers:—No person shall hereafter be received into the ministry . . . except he shall first subscribe to these three articles following in such manner and sort as we have here appointed." Then Whitgift's "Three Articles" are given verbatim, except the one dealing with the Thirty-Nine Articles, whose terms are accentuated, ". . . that he acknowledgeth all and

every the Articles therein contained, being in number nine and thirty, besides the Ratification, to be agreeable to the Word of God." The Canon proceeds to prescribe a *Formula*:—"To these three Articles, whosoever will subscribe, he shall, for the avoiding of all ambiguities, subscribe in this order and form of words, setting down both his Christian and surname—viz.: *I, N. N., do willingly and ex animo, subscribe to these three articles above mentioned, and to all things that are contained in them.*"

The Canons of 1604 (as passed and ratified) were *in Latin*; but the English translation, made at the time, and printed by the King's printer, was regarded as authoritative.

The Great Rebellion (1642-1660) was very largely the 1642 uprising of a Puritan minority of the English people against the Book of Common Prayer and the government of the Church by Bishops. To provide a substitute, the Parliament summoned not the legal synods of the English Church, but a sort of Parliamentary Commission of Clergymen and Laymen selected by itself—"the Assembly of Divines at Westminster" with whom were associated a few legally constituted representatives of the Church of Scotland. This Assembly prepared the Westminster Confession, Forms of Church Government and Directory of Public Worship, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. To the last-mentioned it appended the Apostles' Creed; and alike in Catechisms and Confession it incorporated the whole doctrine, and almost all the language, of the Nicene and Athanasian symbols. The new formularies were laid before the Parliament, and in 1645 an Ordinance 1645 was issued by

"the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, for the more effectual putting in execution the [Westminster] Directory for Public Worship," with penalties on ministers for reading the Common Prayer-Book, or neglecting to use the Directory; but in England "the Confession of Faith never received full Parliamentary sanction."<sup>1</sup>

The Restoration of the Monarchy was accompanied by the Restoration of Episcopacy and the Prayer-Book, but there 1660 were many Royalists who wanted amendments upon both; and to consider these the King (Charles II.) summoned the Savoy Conference. It was not fruitless, though it effected

<sup>1</sup>Shaw, *History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth.*

little in the way of conciliation—mainly through the exorbitant, yet finical, demands of Richard Baxter and his friends; and Parliament proceeded to pass a stringent Act of Uniformity (13 and 14 Charles II. c. 4). The nation, tired of Puritan domination, was determined to exclude all leaven of it from the Church; but while this was the object of the Act, its effect was grievously to curtail the Church's liberty. It is not always remembered that it is an Act of Parliament which prevents ministers of other denominations officiating, even on occasions, in the pulpits of the Church of England, and shuts out from ecclesiastical preferment any Englishman who has not been ordained by the hands of a Bishop. The King has still the power (which was exercised in notable cases by James I.) of promoting a *foreign* Protestant in Presbyterian  
 1662 orders. The Act required a stringent declaration of assent to the Book of Common Prayer, to be read publicly in church by every person instituted to a benefice with cure, in these terms:

"I, A. B., do hereby declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled the Book of Common Prayer . . . and the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

The subject of Subscription to the *Articles* did not come within the province of the Act; and therefore the form ordered by Canon xxxvi. of 1604 remained in force. In practice, however, the subscriptions required by the terms of the 13th Act of Elizabeth and the 36th Canon were combined, the form generally used being as follows:

"I, A. B., do willingly and from my heart subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the United Church of England and Ireland, and to the Three Articles in the Thirty-Sixth Canon, and to all things therein contained."

1688 The Revolution of 1688 was effected with the aid of the Dissenters, and was followed by an effort for their "Comprehension" in the Church. The House of Lords accordingly passed a bill which would have limited clerical subscription to  
 1689 a declaration of submission to the present constitution of the Church of England, and a promise of conformity to its worship and government as by law established; but this bill

the Commons refused to discuss, on the ground that Convocation had not been advised with. When Convocation met, it would do nothing.

In the Eighteenth century, certain clergymen, of frankly Socinian views, got up an agitation and petitioned Parliament against any sort of subscription; but by a sweeping majority the House of Commons refused to receive the petition; and 1771 things continued as they were till, well on in the Reign of Queen Victoria, a Sermon and a Letter of Dean Stanley's again brought the question up. A Royal Commission was then appointed to consider the whole subject of oaths and declarations: it recommended a single declaration of assent to the Prayer-Book and Articles. An Act of Parliament passed in 1865 gave legal effect to this recommendation; and 1865 at the same time Convocation obtained leave from the Crown to revise the Canons so far as was necessary. An amended version of Canon xxxvi., made by the Convocations of Canterbury and York, was confirmed by Royal letters patent; and since that time the declaration of assent made by all candidates for orders, as well as by all persons admitted to any benefice, or licensed to preach, has run in these terms:

“I, *A. B.*, do solemnly make the following declaration. I assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the [United] Church of England [and Ireland] as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God: and in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments I will use the form in the said book prescribed, and none other except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority.”

In 1869, on the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the 1869 words in square brackets were omitted.<sup>1</sup>

It is said that the practical result has been to throw the Articles, with their more marked acceptance of the Reformation theology, into a secondary place, and to concentrate clerical training, and thought, rather on the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. Whether this is exactly what the promoters of the Act of 1865 desired may be questioned; but it is certainly a great good fortune for the Church of England

<sup>1</sup> Gibson, *Thirty-Nine Articles*, 61-64.

that not only does she possess in her Prayer-Book at once "a sound rule of faith and a sober standard of feeling in matters of religion"; but has both set forth in a form so beautiful, so simple, so venerable, and so pervaded with the spirit of piety and holiness. Her Liturgy, though not faultless, is a *decus et tutamen* for which she may well be thankful.

## II.

### ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The greater part of the eight hundred ministers who vacated the benefices of the Church of England because of the 1662 Act of Uniformity were Independents, but there were Presbyterians among them too; and after the passing of the Toleration 1689 Act these, or their successors, formed one of the "Three Denominations" which, engaging not to impugn the doctrine of the Trinity, received the recognition of the State, and were permitted to petition the Crown in a corporate capacity. But in England the Presbyterian organization had never been set up in its integrity; and laxity of discipline was speedily followed by laxity of doctrine, and this in regard to the most 1719 fundamental truths. In 1719 two Presbyterian ministers at Exeter who had adopted the Arianism then in fashion, were deprived for refusing to subscribe to the doctrine of Our LORD's Divinity; but the deadly infection spread, and at a meeting of the denomination in Salters' Hall, fifty-seven of its clergy, out of one hundred and ten, voted against requiring from ministers any subscription at all. The leading English Presbyterian at the time, Edmund Calamy, the historian, held aloof from the Salters' Hall Conferences, thus refusing to help the cause of the Faith; yet he saw quite clearly the inconsistency of the non-subscribers, who refused "on principle" to give among themselves precisely the same kind of testimony to their orthodoxy which they had given, as a condition of their Toleration, to the Civil Government. What can be the 1730 portion of a Church whose leaders have no courage to confess the Faith? Just eleven years after the Salters' Hall meetings,



Calamy was deprecating a discussion of the visible "decay of the Dissenting interest." The decay went on. "From that time the Presbyterians were little heard of as a distinct sect in England." Nearly all their ministers and trustees became Unitarian: so that in 1824, out of two hundred and 1824 six Unitarian meeting-houses, no fewer than one hundred and seventy had originally been Presbyterian. Only in the North of England, or where Scottish influence was particularly strong, did a few congregations adhere to the *Confession*, and the Faith, of Westminster. What we now know as "the English Presbyterian Church" is a recent organization. As becomes a fruit of the Evangelical Revival, it is orthodox, and its Formula is this:

"Do you sincerely own and believe, as in accordance with Holy 1890 Scripture, and will you faithfully teach, the body of Christian doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the other subordinate standards of this Church, and now more briefly expressed in the XXIV. Articles of the Faith approved by the Synod of 1890."

But nothing can more plainly demonstrate the vital necessity to a Church of explicitly confessing the doctrine of the Ancient Creeds than the history of Presbyterianism in England, except it be the parallel course of its experience in Ireland.

### III.

#### CHURCH OF IRELAND.

The Hymn of S. Patrick, called the *Lorica*,<sup>1</sup> and the very remarkable Creed preserved in the *Antiphonary of Bangor* 432-444 (*circa* 680),<sup>2</sup> are speaking witnesses to the Trinitarian and 680

<sup>1</sup> An English translation of this striking Hymn will be found in Todd's *Life of S. Patrick*. Prof. Bury favours its authenticity, and it is undoubtedly almost, if not quite, as old as S. Patrick's time.

<sup>2</sup> The *Antiphonary of Bangor* (Henry Bradshaw Society's edition). Bp. Dowden, who gives the text in full, remarks: "There is something very striking in the emphatic assertions with the recurrent phrases, 'I believe in Jesus Christ . . . God Almighty,' 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, God Almighty'; while the phrase 'of one substance,' ordinarily applied to the

Christological orthodoxy of the ancient Irish Church; which, 1172 by the Synod of Cashel, was conformed to the Church of 1566 England. At its Reformation in 1566, the English *Eleven Articles* of 1561 and the English Book of Common Prayer were set up by the joint authority of the English Deputy and 1615 the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland. In 1615, the Irish Convocation drew up and issued, as a statement of the doctrine of the Irish Church, One Hundred and Four Articles—very Calvinistic in tone; but when Strafford was Deputy under 1633 Charles I. the Church of Ireland adopted the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. The Church of Ireland 1869 was disestablished in 1869. She requires the following

DECLARATION FOR SUBSCRIPTION.

I, A. B., do hereby solemnly declare that—

(1) I approve and agree to the Declaration prefixed to the Statutes of the Church of Ireland, passed at the General Convention in the year of Our Lord, One thousand eight hundred and seventy.

(2) I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the Doctrine of the Church of Ireland, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments I will use the form in the said Book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be allowed by the lawful authority of the Church.

(3) I have not made, by myself or by any other person on my behalf, any payment, contract, or promise of any kind whatsoever—save that I will faithfully perform my duty—touching or concerning the obtaining of [the Sacred Order of . . . , the Chaplaincy of . . . , the Curacy of . . . , or the Benefice of (each to be specially stated by each Declarant;)] nor will I at any time hereafter perform or satisfy, in whole or in part, any such payment, contract, or promise made by any other person with or without my knowledge or consent.

(4) I declare that I do not hold office as an Incumbent, Rector, Vicar, or Licensed Curate, elsewhere than in Ireland, and that I do not hold any other Ecclesiastical Office which I have not made known to the Bishop of . . .

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Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, is here applied to the Third Person in the form of 'having one substance with the Father and the Son.' There is no faltering in this Creed's assertion of Catholic theology" (*The Celtic Church in Scotland*, pp. 213, 214). It may be added that if the Irish Church, in 680, might alter the *form* of the Creed, *provided it retained all the doctrine*, so might the Westminster Divines in 1647.

(5) I will render all due reverence and canonical obedience to . . . Archbishop (or Bishop) of . . . , and his successors, Archbishops (or Bishops) of . . . , in all lawful and honest commands.

(6) I promise to submit myself to the authority of the Church of Ireland and to the Laws and Tribunals thereof.

<i>For Ordination.</i>	<i>For License.</i>	<i>For Institution.</i>
I subscribe the above Declaration to be admitted to the Holy Order of . . . This . . . day of . . .	I subscribe the above Declaration to be licensed to the Curacy of . . . This . . . day of . . .	I subscribe the above Declaration to be Instituted to the Benefice of . . . This . . . day of . . .

*N.B.*—The above forms, “I subscribe, etc.,” are to be written out afresh on the Roll for each Declarant, or batch of Declarants.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV.

##### THE IRISH PRESBYTERIANS.

Presbyterianism was introduced into Ireland in 1642 by 1642 some ministers from Scotland who accompanied, in the capacity of chaplains, the Scottish soldiers sent to aid in the suppression of the Irish Rebellion. These men found a ready audience among the Scottish settlers in Ulster. The success of Oliver Cromwell meant the overthrow of Episcopacy in Ireland; and the Presbyterians too, as also favourable to the principle of Monarchy, were exposed under him to certain disabilities.

In 1659 the more moderate Puritans of Ireland, “alarmed 1659 at the increase of the Anabaptists and other sectaries” entered into an “Agreement and Resolution . . . for furthering a real and thorough Reformation according to the principles of GOD’S Word,” and resolved in favour of

“I. Public catechising of the younger and weaker sort on the LORD’S Days in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

“II. A public confession of faith by the older members. This was to include a statement that they received the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God, and that they resolved to be guided by them as their rule

<sup>1</sup>Supplied by the Very Rev. the Dean of S. Patrick’s, Dublin.

of faith and life; *that they still retained the Apostles' Creed*, and that they received and held fast the Westminster Confession of Faith.

"III. Laying aside 'the antiquated Service-Book,' and to be guided in their public services by *the Westminster Directory for God's Public Worship*."<sup>1</sup>

The two remaining Articles show an attempt to combine Presbyterian and Congregational usages—to the weakening of  
 1691 both. In 1691, John Emlyn (often, if not quite correctly, described as the first Unitarian minister in England) accepted a call from the Presbyterian congregation in Wood Street, Dublin. "His preaching," we are told, "was popular, avoiding controversial subjects, but puritanical in tone";<sup>2</sup> and it was  
 1702 some time ere his congregation discovered his "omissions." These were suspected in 1698, and in 1702 he owned his heresy. He was tried for blasphemy, found guilty, and imprisoned. Immediately before his release (1705) the Presbyterian Synod  
 1698 of Ulster—which had resolved in 1698

"that young men, when licensed to preach, be obliged to subscribe the Confession of Faith in all the articles thereof, *as the Confession of their faith*,"

enacted

1705 "That such as are licensed to preach the Gospel subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be the confession of their faith, and promise to adhere to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church, as also those who are licensed and have not subscribed be obliged to subscribe before their being ordained among us."

On the other hand, Irish Presbyterianism found its Calamy in the "gentlemanly" preacher, Joseph Boyse, who, only after his colleague's heresy was manifest, came forward with a word in favour of the Truths that colleague had ignored; and then (under the aegis of this belated utterance) gave his support to the party of the non-subscribers! Boyse, it turned out, was himself a Pelagian; and he was the real teacher of Francis Hutcheson, whose shallow optimism was to work spiritual havoc alike in Ireland and in Scotland. The leaven spread: "the spirit of theological enquiry led to the formation of a

<sup>1</sup> Irwin, *History of Presbyterianism in Dublin*, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*, xvii. 357.

ministers' Club, known as the Belfast Society, which ultimately became the parent of the non-subscribing body"—*i.e.* Unitarians who called themselves Presbyterians, and, in a way, formed part of "the Synod of Munster" and the "Synod of Dublin."

What happened in the Synod of Munster? It counted at one time twenty-seven congregations, mostly of English Puritan origin. With Emlyn's preaching, a "time of deadness came upon the Synod of Munster. The majority of its congregations became extinct." A few lingered on in an impossible and ruinous alliance, till at last "in 1840 the discordant 1840 elements separated, and *four orthodox ministers and congregations formed the Presbytery of Munster.* Later on this Presbytery had eight congregations.

"The Presbytery of Munster was received into the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 1854. 1854

"As the Presbytery of Munster was a non-subscribing body, holding property as such, elders and ministers were required to write out and present the following declaration:—

"I do hereby declare that I do believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as received by the Church of Scotland in the year 1647, and by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I declare it to be the confession of my faith."

This was the form adopted in 1854, and it has continued in force ever since.

The history of the Synod of Ulster for well-nigh a century and a half is one continual contest between two incompatible elements. We have seen the orthodoxy of the Synod in 1705; but, if Unitarianism could not yet be professed without forfeiting the benefit of the "Toleration" which the Govern- 1689 ment of William III. had secured in Ireland, as in England, for all who did not "verbally, or in writing, deny the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as set forth in the Thirty-Nine Articles," there were evidently some in the Ulster Synod who had no great love to truth for its own sake. Therefore, in 1716, 1716 subscription to the Westminster Confession was required "as the ground on which Toleration should be sought and accepted"! In 1720, the Synod adopted the so-called 1720

“Pacific Act,” which in the same breath professed adherence to the Westminster Confession, extended the Act of 1705 to all intrants to the ministry, though licensed and ordained elsewhere; and “legalized the practice of receiving explanations of objectionable phrases.”

1721 In 1721 a motion was made and carried that all the members of Synod who are willing to subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith, according to the terms of the Pacific Act, be allowed by this Synod to do it.

Charitable declarations were made by both parties in the Synod and approved by Synod.

The great majority of the members of Synod signed the following formula:—

“Reserving to ourselves the benefit of the Pacific Act, we believe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be founded on the Word of God, and therefore as such, by this our subscription, we do own the said Confession as the confession of our faith.”

1722 In 1722 five resolutions were adopted:

1. Declaring Articles of Faith only in Scripture words not sufficient.
2. Synod resolves firmly and constantly to adhere to the Westminster Confession of Faith as being founded on the Word of God and agreeable thereto.
3. To maintain Presbyterian government and discipline.
4. Expresses desire to exercise Christian forbearance towards non-subscribing brethren.
5. Exhorts people to adhere to pastors as far as their conscience will allow.

1725 In 1725 membership of Presbyteries was re-arranged, so that all non-subscribers were placed in one Presbytery—the Presbytery of Antrim.

1726 In 1726 non-subscribers were excluded from ministerial communion with subscribers in Church judicatories as formerly.

1734 In 1734 it was resolved that Presbyteries, when reporting, should say “Subscribed the Synod’s formula,” and not “Subscribed according to order.”

1735 In 1735 the formula was set forth as follows:

“I do believe y<sup>o</sup> Westminster Confession of Faith to be

founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and therefore as such, by this my subscription, I do own y<sup>e</sup> said as confession of my faith."

In 1749 some Presbyteries said they had not the formula. 1749 Ordered that a copy of Synod's formula be transmitted to each Presbytery, to be subscribed by "all intrants to the ministry at their being licensed, ordained, or installed."

In 1781 it was found on inquiry that the Presbytery of 1781 Armagh did not require subscription to Westminster Confession of Faith on part of those licensed to preach. Synod deferred consideration of question as to whether rule requiring subscription should be continued or set aside.

In 1782 it was found on inquiry that subscription was not 1782 generally insisted on.

Resolved: "If no one moves for a repeal of the rule requiring subscription, then the rule remains in full force." And as no one moved for its repeal the rule continued.

In 1783 the words "in full force," in resolution of last 1783 year, were erased, and "as usual" inserted in their place.

In 1784 the words "as usual" in resolution of 1783 were 1784 left out, and the minute made to read: "That the rule requiring subscription was unrepealed."

In 1828 certain overtures, which had for their object the 1828 exclusion of Arians from the ministry, were adopted [Dr. Henry Cooke carrying a resolution declaring adherence to that statement in the Shorter Catechism: "There are Three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one GOD," etc.] These overtures did not, however, insist on subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Some months afterwards a number of ministers and elders who held Arian views drew up a Remonstrance, in which they stated that if these overtures were not repealed they should be obliged to withdraw from the Synod and form a separate association.

In 1829 the overtures were confirmed, and the Remonstrants 1829 withdrew and formed the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster.

In 1832 an overture was adopted requiring candidates for 1832 license or ordination to sign the following formula:

“I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith.”

In case a candidate should take exception to any phrase or phrases of the Confession, he was to be at liberty to explain in writing such phrase or phrases, and explanations, if satisfactory, were to be accepted, but every such case was before license or ordination to be fully reported for the judgment of the General Synod.

1835 In 1835 a declaratory overture was carried, requiring unqualified subscription to Westminster Confession from all candidates for license or ordination. Formula:—

“I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith.”

1840 This paved the way for union with the “Secession Synod”; for the Scottish Seceders of 1733 had been making headway in Ireland from 1746. As in Scotland, they became divided into Burgher and Anti-Burgher; and as in Scotland, the Burgher and Anti-Burgher Synods united, forming the Secession Synod.

This Secession Synod required unqualified acceptance of the Confession of Faith; but the Minutes of the Secession Synod have been lost, and their formula is not now recoverable.

This union of the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod in 1840 formed “The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.” The record of this Church, in regard to the point before us, is as follows:

1841 In the Assembly’s Book of Discipline of 1841 the following question was asked at ordination of elders, licensing of candidates for ministry, and ordination of ministers:

“Do you believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as received and approved by the Church of Scotland in the Act of 1647 prefixed to the Confession, to be founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such do you acknowledge it as the confession of your faith?”

Candidates for license and for ordination were required to sign the formula of subscription, which was same as that of Synod of Ulster in 1835.



In the next Book of Discipline (1859) the following statement occurs in Chap. II. sect. 3: "The Confession is to be received as approved by the Church of Scotland in her Act of 1647, and with this declaration—That in the judgment of this Church subscription to the Confession does not imply the belief that the civil magistrate has any right to require or enforce, by civil penalties, adherence to ecclesiastical formularies, or conformity in religious worship."

The following question is to be asked at ordination of elders, licensing of candidates for ministry, and ordination of ministers:

"Do you believe the Westminster Confession of Faith as described in the Book of the Constitution and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (Chap. II. sect. 3), to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such do you acknowledge it as the confession of your faith?"

No change was made in formula of subscription.

The next edition of the Book of Discipline (1868) follows 1868 word for word the edition of 1859.

In the present Book of Constitution and Government the formula of subscription is as follows:

"I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith as described in the Book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (Chap. II. par. 20), to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith."

*N.B.*—Chap. II. par. 20 is same as Chap. II. sect. 3 in editions of 1859 and 1868.<sup>1</sup>

It is "not yet eighty years since, in 1829, the Remonstrants (or Unitarians) separated from the orthodox among the Irish Presbyterians. They carried with them some of the ablest and most learned of the ministers, and many of the wealthiest and best educated laymen. To-day Unitarianism has almost disappeared. On the other hand, the Irish Presbyterian Church, immediately after making undoubted acknowledgment of the Divinity of Our Blessed LORD, entered on a period of

<sup>1</sup> For the history of the law of Subscription among the Irish Presbyterians, I am indebted to the Rev. Dr. Love, Clerk to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

marked spiritual progress. In the ten years following this declaration of belief in the Trinity, eighty-three new congregations were formed, while the Church undertook Foreign Missions, Missions to the Jews, and Home Missions, enterprises that had never before been thought of in Presbyterian Ireland.”<sup>1</sup>

## V.

## THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

## A. PRIOR TO 1560.

The Church of Scotland, from the very beginning of her history, held the Nicene Faith. She held it in the days of 397 her first Apostle, S. Ninian. “To him alone of all British saints,” says Dean Stanley, “a coeval monument still points in unmistakeable characters”—the tombstones at Kirkmadreen of his fellow-labourers. And these tombstones bear upon their surface emphatic evidence that, in days when Arianism was still powerful, the “holy and eminent priests” whom they commemorate, held the faith of JESUS CHRIST, the Eternal SON, the Alpha and Omega, crucified for our salvation.<sup>2</sup>

567 In its next, or Columban, period—however it might differ from its Anglian and Continental sisters in such matters as the calculation of Easter and the proper shape of the clerical tonsure,—the Scottish Church was eminently Scriptural<sup>3</sup> and orthodox in matters of faith. The *Altus* of S. Columba and all the recorded utterances of our Celtic saints are decisive on this point. The most eminent of the early Anglian Churchmen, S. Wilfrid, bore express testimony to the fact at a 680 Roman Council.<sup>4</sup> Amid the obscurity which, throughout the

<sup>1</sup>Speech by the Rev. S. Marcus Dill, Alloway, at the Annual Meeting of the Scottish Church Society, May, 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Stanley, *The Church of Scotland*, p. 25; Dowden, *The Celtic Church in Scotland*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, iii. 140: “Wilfridus . . . pro omni Aquilonali parte Britanniae et Hiberniae insulisque, quae ab Anglorum et Brittonum necnon Scotorum et Pictorum gentibus colebantur, veram et Catholicam fidem confessus est.”

four succeeding centuries, envelops our National Church, three voices alone are audible which tell us as to its belief. The *Book of Deer* includes the Apostles' Creed in its singularly beautiful little office for the Communion of the Sick. The *Litany of Dunkeld* invokes the Three Divine Persons singly and then together. At the Council of Scone, on the occasion which gave to the spot where so many of our kings were crowned its appellation "the Mount of Belief," we read how Constantine the King and Kellach the Bishop swore together with the Scots to keep as well the laws and customs of the Faith (*leges disciplinasque Fidei*) as the rights (*jura*) of the churches and the Gospels.<sup>1</sup> S. Margaret found sloth in the Church of her husband's realm, but no heresy. 850 881-893 906 1069-93

If in the age immediately preceding the Reformation, the condition of the Church in Scotland—in regard alike to the morals of its clergy and the abuses which abounded—was far worse than that of the Church in England, yet amid all these it could put forth a *Catechism* (Abp. Hamilton's), unreformed indeed, but in essentials sound, and in parts singularly wise and beautiful. Its Second Part, "quhilk is the exposition of the XII. Artikils of the Crede," contains hardly anything that our Reformers could object to, and has several expressions which resound in their preaching. "The Crede," it says, "is devidit into III. principal partis, according to the faith, quhilk we aucht to have in the blissit Trinitie, the FATHER, the SONNE, and the HALY SPREIT, thre personis and ane GOD."<sup>2</sup> 1552

Our Scottish Reformers, even the most extreme of them, never dreamt of abandoning any article of the truly ancient and Catholic Faith. Their object was to bring these out, and make them prominent. At first they seem to have symbolized entirely with their brethren in the Church of England. Anyhow the *Second Prayer-Book of Edward VI.*, ordained by Act of Parliament for England in 1552, was adopted by "the Congregation"—the Reformed party in Scotland—as part of their apparatus, and widely used by them. Knox's friend, John Rough, confessed that "he did approve the same, as 1557

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Robertson, *Concilia Scotiae*, i. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Catechism of John Hamilton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, 1552*, Law's edition, p. 13.

agreeing in all points with the Word of God" (1557); while the whole body of Reforming nobles and barons of Scotland in their first "Bond" (3rd Dec., 1557) resolved,<sup>1</sup> "It is thought expedient, devised, and ordained that in all parishes of this Realm (Scotland) the Common Prayers be read weekly on Sunday and other festival days publicly in the Parish Kirks, with the Lessons of the New and Old Testament, conform to the Book of Common Prayers": these "Common Prayers," containing, as we have seen, the Three Creeds as integral parts of them, ( $\alpha$ ) the *Apostles'* in the Daily Service, ( $\beta$ ) the *Athanasian* on the Feasts of Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, etc., and ( $\gamma$ ) the *Nicene* in the Communion Service.

1559 This happy and unforced uniformity was brought to an end, it is true, by the return of John Knox from the Continent. He had quarrelled there with the English exiles; and had come to dislike the Prayer-Book which, as chaplain to Edward VI., he had helped to mould. By his persuasion, *The Confession of Faith used in the English Congregation at Geneva* was "approved and adopted by the Church of Scotland at the beginning of her Reformation."<sup>2</sup> and the Edwardian Prayer-Book was superseded by the *Book of Common Order*, commonly called *John Knox's Liturgy*. The former is a mere expansion of the Apostles' Creed, the articles of which are printed on its margin; and in the latter the Creed itself occurs both in the Order for Public Worship and in the Baptismal Service, when "the Father, or in his absence the Godfather," is required "to rehearse it."<sup>3</sup>

#### B. BETWEEN 1560 AND 1647.

Our Reformers were soon called upon for a fuller and more explicit statement of their views, and on 17th August,

<sup>1</sup> See *Second Prayer-Book of Edward VI.* (Church Service Society's Series), p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot find much authority for this, but the Geneva Confession is printed first in the Eighteenth century collections of *Confessions of Faith, etc., of public authority in the Church of Scotland*. Some of these collections were put out by the Reformed Presbyterians: my copy is dated Glasgow, 1751.

<sup>3</sup> *The Book of Common Order*, Church Service Society's Series, pp. 91, 138.

1560, our "First Confession," *The Confession of the Faith* 1560 and Doctrine believed and professed by the Protestants of Scotland, was "exhibited to the Estates of the same in Parliament, and by their public voices authorized, as a doctrine grounded upon the infallible Word of God." Its *Preface* contains the declaration, "We abhor all heresy," a phrase whose meaning becomes clear when, in the body of the document, Article I, "Of GOD," confesses Him "one in substance, yet in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" and Article II, "Of the Incarnation of JESUS CHRIST," acknowledges Him, "Immanuel, very GOD and very Man, two perfect natures united and joined in one person; by which our confession we condemn the damnable and pestilent heresies of Arius, Marcion, Eutyches, Nestorius, and such others, as did either deny the eternity of His Godhead, or the verity of His human nature, or confounded them, or yet divided them."

If further evidence were necessary that our Scottish Reformers were to the full as zealous as their foreign brethren to "assert their orthodoxy in respect of the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas"<sup>1</sup> of the Conciliar period, it is supplied in the *Catechisms*<sup>2</sup> they put forth. Of these I need mention only two, the translation of Calvin's published at Edinburgh in 1564, and John Craig's in 1581. Both of these require a rehearsal of the Creed, which the former describes as "a brief gathering of the Articles of that Faith which hath been always continued in CHRIST'S Church . . . taken out of the pure doctrine of the Apostles." The same is witnessed by the Questions in *The Form and Order* 1560 of the Election of a Superintendent which may serve in Election of all other Ministers . . ." They are these:—

"Believe ye not that the doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles contained in the books of the New and Old Testaments is the only true and most absolute foundation of the universal Church of Jesus Christ, insomuch that in the same Scriptures are contained all things necessary to be believed for the salvation of mankind?"

"Answer. I verily believe the same, and do abhor and utterly refuse

<sup>1</sup>Prof. W. P. Paterson.

<sup>2</sup>Bonar, *Catechisms of the Reformation*, pp. 7 and 194.

all doctrine alleged necessary to salvation that is not expressly contained in the same.

“Is not Christ Jesus, man of man according to the flesh, to wit the son of David, the seed of Abraham, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin His mother, the only Head and Mediator of this Church?”

“*Answer.* He is, and without Him there is neither salvation to man nor life to angel.

“Is not the same Lord Jesus the only true God, the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, in whom all that shall be saved were elected before the foundation of the world was laid?”

“*Answer.* I acknowledge and confess Him in the unity of His Godhead, to be God above all things blessed for ever.

“Will ye not then contain yourself in all doctrine within the bounds of this foundation? . . . and maintain the purity of doctrine contained in the most sacred Word of God? And to the uttermost of your power gainstand and convince the gainsayers, and the teachers of men’s inventions?”

“*Answer.* That I do promise in the presence of God, and of this congregation here assembled. . . .”

1566 In 1566 the *Second Helvetic Confession*, whose formal acknowledgment of the Creeds I have already spoken of, was accepted by the General Assembly, and ordered to be printed, the solitary point in it to which any sort of exception was taken being the observance of the greater festivals of the Christian year. The Scots at this time would have none of these, so their consent was accompanied with a proviso that a note be “put in the margin of the said Confession where mention is made of the remembrance of some holy days, etc.”<sup>1</sup>

1567 In 1567 the Church of Scotland sent up her *Petition to the Scottish Parliament* asking:—

“And that all and sundry who either gainsay the word of the Evangel as it is now preached, and of us received and approved, as the *heads of the Confession of our Faith* more particularly do express, or that yet refuse the participation of the Holy Sacraments as they are now ministered, be decerned no members of the Kirk within this Realm, so long as they keep themselves so divided from the society of Christ’s Body.” In response whereto:—

<sup>1</sup>Calderwood, *Historie of the Kirk of Scotland*, ii. 331. See also Records of the General Assembly of 1638.

“Our Sovereign Lord, with advise of my Lord Regent and three Estates of this present Parliament (Dec. 20th, 1567), has declared and declares the foresaid Kirk to be the only true and Holy Kirk of Jesus Christ within this Realm, and decerns and declares that all and sundry who either gainsay the word of the Evangel received and approved as the *heads* of the Confession professed in Parliament of before, in the year of God 1560 years, as also specified in the acts of this Parliament more particularly do express, and now ratified and approved in this present Parliament, or that refuse the participation of the Holy Sacraments as they are now ministered, to be no members of the said Kirk within this Realm now presently professed, so long as they keep themselves so divided from the society of Christ's body. Of the which Confession of Faith, the tenor follows.” (And the Confession of 1560, with Scripture citations, follows.)

I cannot find direct evidence that subscription to this Confession was required from *all* in these early days; but it was imposed wherever the circumstances were suspicious—*e.g.*, “Anent Jesuits repairing to this country . . . if any be found, 1579 to charge them straitly to give confession of their faith, revoke their errors, *subscribe* the *articles of religion* presently established by the mercy of God within this Realm.”<sup>1</sup>

Andrew Melville (1545-1622) and his friends were certainly not guilty of that misconception of CHRIST'S institute which Newman has observed in the Emperor Constantine—that “he acknowledged Christianity rather as a school, than joined it as a polity.”<sup>2</sup> “There are two Kings in Scotland, two kingdoms, and two jurisdictions, CHRIST'S and your Majesty's,”<sup>3</sup> was Andrew Melville's most characteristic utterance to James VI. Melville was unable, it is true, to obtain the sanction of the State for the *Second Book of Discipline*, in 1578 which was set forth his ideal as to what the “policy” [polity] of the Scottish Church should be; but the famous treatise received considerable *ecclesiastical* support. It was “agreed upon in the General Assembly of 1578; inserted in the registers of the Assembly of 1581; sworn to in the Covenant of that year; and revived and ratified by the Assembly of 1638.”<sup>4</sup> The only part of this document directly bearing on

<sup>1</sup> *Book of the Universal Kirk*, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> Newman, *Arians*, iii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Calderwood, v. 378.

<sup>4</sup> *Second Book of Discipline*, title-page, Glasgow edition, 1771.

our present subject is that referring to General Councils; but this must be cited; for it exhibits in the clearest manner how little the modern notion of the Church of Scotland being a thing altogether apart, complete within itself, and independent of the Church in other lands, can claim to have been the view entertained by the true fathers of our Presbyterianism. After speaking of the hierarchy of Church Courts or "assemblies,"—parochial, "provincial" (the Synod), and "national" (the General Assembly),—which it demands for Scotland, it proceeds:—

"There is, besides these another more general kind of Assembly, which is of *all nations*, and all estates of persons *within the Kirk*, representing the Universal" [Catholic] "Kirk of CHRIST, which may be called *properly* the General Assembly, or General Council of the whole Kirk of God." "These Assemblies were appointed and called together, especially, when any great schism or controversy in doctrine did arise within the Kirk; and were convocated at the command of godly Emperors, being for the time, for avoiding of schisms within the Universal Kirk of God; which, because they pertain not to the particular estate of any Realm, we cease further to speak of them."<sup>1</sup>

A further step, of which momentous use was to be made, 1581 was taken in 1581, on the spur of a sensational story about certain papal dispensations allowing Roman Catholics in Scotland to subscribe or swear whatever should be required of them, provided they remained faithful to their religion and ready to advance its interests. To meet this danger, the document called sometimes "*The King's Confession*," sometimes "*The Negative Confession*," and, by Dr. M'Crie, "The National Covenant"—a name, says Dr. Grub, which it does not seem to have received when it was put forth—was drawn up by John Craig at the King's request, and subscribed by James himself, his Council, and his household. It begins:—

"We believe with our hearts, confess with our mouths, and subscribe with our hands, and constantly affirm before God and the whole world that this only is the true Christian faith and religion . . . received, believed, and defended by many notable Kirks and Realms, but chiefly by the Kirk of Scotland, the King's Majesty, and Three Estates of this Realm as God's eternal truth and only ground of our salvation; as more

<sup>1</sup> *Second Book of Discipline*, section vii.



particularly is expressed in the *Confession of our Faith* established and publicly confirmed by sundry Acts of Parliament, and now of a long time hath been openly confessed by the King's Majesty, and whole body of this Realm, both in burgh and land. *To the which Confession and form of religion we willingly agree in our conscience in all points, as unto God's undoubted truth and verity, grounded only upon His Word. And therefore we abhor and detest all contrary religion and doctrine, but chiefly all kinds of Papistry in general and particular heads* [of which a long list is then specified].

To this, subscription by all the people was enjoined by State and Church alike. The King ordered it by Royal proclamation. The General Assembly followed suit:—

“Forasmuch as the King's Majesty, with advice of his 1581 Council, has set out and proclaimed a godly Confession of Faith to be embraced by all his true subjects, and by the same expressly giving commandment to the ministry to proceed *against whatsoever* persons will not acknowledge and *subscribe the same*, . . . Therefore the Kirk and Assembly present, enjoin . . . all ministers and pastors . . . to execute the tenor of His Majesty's proclamation.”<sup>1</sup>

But no one supposed the Apostles' Creed to be Popish: on the contrary the very next Assembly approved for general use an Order for “the Election of Elders and Deacons in the 1582 Church of Edinburgh,” in which the Belief is to be rehearsed after the Lord's Prayer.

In 1588 the Assembly repeats its injunction to “all 1588 ministers within their parishes” to “travell with the Noblemen, barons and gentlemen to *subscribe the Confession of Faith*, and to report their diligence to next Assembly.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1590 the General Assembly enacts “that *whosoever have* 1590 *borne office in the Ministry of the Kirk within this Realm, or that presently bear, or shall hereafter bear office therein, shall be charged by every presbytery where their residence is, to subscribe the heads of discipline of the Kirk of this Realm, at length set down and allowed by act of the whole Assembly, in the Book of Policy which is registered in the register of the Kirk . . . under pain of excommunication, to be executed against the non-subscribers.*”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Book of the Universal Kirk*, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* p. 332.

At the same Assembly "the Confession of Faith was subscribed universally, *de novo*."<sup>1</sup>

1610 Canonical Episcopacy was restored in 1610, and till 1638 there was no other government in the Church of Scotland. No separation from the Church took place because of it; though there were many who disliked it, and sought its abolition. The King and his advisers had been thinking of a  
1612 new Confession, and in 1612 they submitted one in draft to  
1616 the Archbishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow. In 1616 a General Assembly held at Aberdeen agreed that "a true and simple Confession of Faith should be set down, to which all shall swear before they be admitted to any office in Kirk or Commonweal; and all students in Colleges."<sup>2</sup> This was done; but the new Confession (which may be found in Calderwood, and differs from the old one chiefly by a "more marked enunciation of the Calvinistic doctrine of election and predestination"),<sup>3</sup> appears to have been used but once; and it never superseded the Confession of 1560, which remained the acknowledged Confession of the Scottish Church, through all changes, till 1647.

"The Form and Manner of Ordaining Ministers, and Consecrating of Arch-Bishops and Bishops used in the Church of  
1620 Scotland" was printed in 1620; and seems to have been used during the latter period of the "First Episcopacy" (1610-1638).<sup>4</sup> The Questions and Answers prescribed in it are those of the Second Prayer-Book of Edward VI. Those relating to doctrine are:—

"Do you think in your heart, that you be truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Order of this Church of [England] to the ministry of Priesthood?"

"*Answer.* I think it.

"Be you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation, through faith in

<sup>1</sup> *Acts of the General Assembly*, Edition 1843, p. 17. The *Second Book of Discipline* having never been ratified by the State, the Assembly's Act enjoining subscription to it remained a dead letter.

<sup>2</sup> Calderwood, vii. 228. *Ib.* 233-242.

<sup>3</sup> Grub, *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 306. Dr. M'Crrie of Ayr praises it highly.

<sup>4</sup> It is printed in the Church Service Society's Series, *Scottish Liturgies of the Reign of James VI.*, pp. 111 *sqq.*

Jesus Christ? And are you determined with the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing (as required of necessity to eternal salvation) but that you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?

*Answer.* I am so persuaded, and have determined by God's grace.

"Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and the sacraments and the discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded, and as this realm hath received the same, according to the commandments of God, so that you may teach the people committed to your cure and charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same?"

*Answer.* I will so do by the help of the Lord.

"Will you be ready with all faithful diligence to drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's word?"

This Ordination Service was considered "short and insuffi- 1636  
cient" by Bishop Wedderburn, an opinion in which Archbishop Laud and King Charles I. agreed with him; and a Royal message was sent to Archbishop Spottiswood bidding him "either admit" of the Ordinal as it then stood in England, or else "amend his own in two gross oversights," viz. (a) its making the Order of Deacons but a mere Lay Office, and (b) its leaving out "in the admission to the Priesthood the very essential words." A closer study of Church history has shewn that the words in question are not "essential";<sup>1</sup> but, however rigid in regard to ceremonies, the Laudian divines (both in Scotland and in England) were not illiberal in point of doctrine; and whilst the ill-fated Scottish Liturgy of 1637 was in preparation, the Scottish Bishops, though holding the whole doctrine of the Athanasian Creed and not doubting that it should be included in their Prayer-Book, made a notable attempt to improve the translation of it. They wrote to Archbishop Laud suggesting several amendments: they succeeded in getting two of them approved, and ordered for Scotland under the King's own hand, viz.: (1) "He therefore that *would*" (instead of *will*) "be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity," and (2) "He who is God and man is one Christ,"<sup>1637</sup> instead of "So God and Man is one Christ."<sup>2</sup> On the other

<sup>1</sup>Newman refers to this point in No. 1. of *The Tracts of the Times*.

<sup>2</sup>*Scottish Liturgy of 1637*, Church Service Society Series, pp. xxix and 241 sqq.

1644 hand, the Covenanting divines were so far from objecting to the Three Creeds, or to the Athanasian in particular, that the hottest of their number, Samuel Rutherford, in his *Due Right of Presbyteries* (1644), speaks of "a confession *de jure*, what every man ought to believe, as the Nicene Creed, and the Creed of Athanasius."<sup>1</sup>

Feb. 1638 The *National Covenant*, drawn up by Alexander Henderson, and publicly signed amid immense enthusiasm in February, 1638, though professing to be old, was really new; for in addition to Craig's Negative Confession of 1581, and various Acts of Parliament in favour of the Reformed religion, it introduced a bond (or covenant) by which the subscribers engaged themselves to forbear the practice of all novations and corruptions in the worship or government of the Church till the same should be approved in a free Assembly and Parliament, and expressed their belief that the innovations complained of in their petitions were contrary to the Confessions of 1560 and 1581, and tended to the re-establishment of Dec. 20, 1638 Popery and tyranny. The Glasgow Assembly, accordingly, complained that, "at His Majesty's command, *some had subscribed the Confession of Faith as it was professed when it was first subscribed*" (1560).

It entered then into a diligent trial of the foresaid [Perth] "Articles, whether they be contrary to the Confession of Faith as it was meant and professed in the year 1580, 1581, 1590, and 1591": and "found . . ." (in virtue of the additions made to that Confession by the *Negative Covenant* of 1581) that the Perth Articles, Episcopacy, etc., are "contrary to the religion then professed."

The Assembly next refers to the Second Helvetic Confession, which it declares was "approved in the General Assembly holden at Edinburgh *anno* 1566, but with special exception against the five festival days" (of the Perth Articles).

The Glasgow Assembly further enacted "that all persons of whatsoever state and condition be obliged to *swear and subscribe the Confession of Faith, as it is now condescended upon* by this General Assembly . . ."; and it made the following deliverances:

<sup>1</sup> *Due Right of Presbyteries*, p. 13.

“ . . . Anent the trial of expectants before their entry to the ministrie, it being notour that they have subscribed the Confession of Faith ; . . . and the Assembly alloweth and approveth the same” [National Covenant and Confession] “ in *all the heads and articles* thereof, and *ordaineth that all Ministers, Masters of Universities, Colleges and Schools, and all others who have not already subscribed the said Confession and Covenant shall subscribe the same, with these words prefixed to the subscription, viz.—The article of this Covenant which was at the first subscription referred to the determination of the General Assembly, being now determined at Glasgow, in December 1638, and thereby the Five Articles of Perth and the government of the Kirk by Bishops being declared to be abjured and removed, the civil places and power of Kirkmen declared to be unlawful, we subscribe according to the determination of the said free and lawful General Assembly holden at Glasgow.*”<sup>1</sup>

This is the earliest *Formula of subscription* I have found in Scotland.

On this *Formula* I make two remarks: (1) that the bare expression, “We subscribe,” was amply sufficient when appended to a document beginning, “We acknowledge and confess”; and (2) that the *Formula* was put forth by the Assembly on its own authority: “seeing” (so it urged) “that to the General Assembly belongeth properly the public and judicial interpretation of *the Confession.*” ‘Interpretation’ is a wide word; but even it required some stretching to include in *the Confession* all the rhetoric of 1581 and all the passion of 1637!

Still the Confession of 1560 was there, expressing the very core of the Church’s faith at this stormy time; and probably the last thing which the Covenanters of that day expected or desired was that they should go to England for a new one.<sup>2</sup> But *the Solemn League and Covenant* had become for them a political necessity; and having agreed to that, they were obliged to take whatever was sent down to them by the Westminster Assembly.

In 1645, accordingly, the General Assembly of the Church ratified [but *with the reservation of certain* “less important determinations” touching “doctors” and “the distinct rights

<sup>1</sup> Peterkin, *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> In 1644 the Kirk Session of Elgin ordained that none shall be contracted in marriage except they come and say the Lord’s Prayer, the Belief (Apostles’ Creed), and the Commands. Cramond, *Records of Kirk Session of Elgin*.

and interest of presbyteries and people in the calling of ministers”],<sup>1</sup> the Westminster ‘*Form of Church Government*,’ from which I select the following as bearing on our present subject:

(1) “He that is to be ordained . . . must address himself to the Presbytery, and bring with him a testimonial of his taking the Covenant of the Three Kingdoms.

(2) “Trial shall be made of his knowledge of the grounds of religion, and of his ability to defend the orthodox doctrine contained in them against all unsound and erroneous opinions, etc.

(3) “Upon the day appointed for the Ordination, the Presbytery shall come together to the place, or at least three or four ministers of the Word shall be sent hither from the Presbytery. . . . After the sermon, the minister who hath preached shall, in the face of the congregation, demand of him who is now to be ordained, *concerning his faith in CHRIST JESUS, and his persuasion of the truth of the Reformed religion according to the Scripture, . . . his zeal and faithfulness in maintaining the truth of the Gospel against error and schism. . . .*”<sup>2</sup>

And I remark that the two points as to which the Ordinand is to be examined evidently mean, the First, that he must be orthodox on the Divinity and Incarnation of Our Blessed LORD; and, the Second, that he is not Popish. The directions should be compared with the questions in ‘Knox’s Liturgy’ (above, page 27), which was still in use in Scotland.

1647 Two years later the General Assembly had the *Westminster Confession of Faith* before it. It passed an Act “approving” the Confession “*as to the truth of the matter*”—a phrase, I contend, which limits our Church’s acceptance to the substance or doctrine of the Confession as distinguished from “every form of expression” in it;<sup>3</sup> and it judged it “most orthodox”—as it surely is. For it embodies, and expresses very finely, the whole doctrine of the Catholic Creeds, and the “first Four and most excellent Councils.” Even on Predestination does it go further than S. Augustine? Here is the Act of Assembly:

1647 “A *Confession of Faith* for the Kirks of God in the Three Kingdoms being the chiefest part of that uniformity in religion which by the

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> *Form of Church Government*; Directory for the Ordination of Ministers, Rule 3.

<sup>3</sup> Act of Assembly, 1889.

Solemn League and Covenant we are bound to endeavour, and there being accordingly a *Confession of Faith agreed upon by the assembly of Divines at Westminster . . .* and the said Confession being upon due examination thereof found by the (General) Assembly to be most agreeable to the Word of God, and *in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Kirk. . . .* The General Assembly doth therefore, after mature deliberation, agree unto and approve the said Confession, *as to the truth of the matter* (judging it to be most orthodox, and *grounded upon* the Word of God). . . . But lest our intention and meaning be in some particulars misunderstood, it is hereby expressly declared, and provided, that the not mentioning in this Confession the several sorts of ecclesiastical officers and assemblies shall be no prejudice to the truth of Christ in these particulars to be hereafter expressed fully in the Directory of Government. It is further declared, That the Assembly understandeth some parts of the second article of the thirty-one chapter only of Kirks not settled, or constituted in point of government.”<sup>1</sup>

I have commented on the phrase “as to the truth of the matter”: but the Assembly’s *reservations* also should be noted. Our Church did *not* accept the Confession absolutely. Then, further, I must demur to Mr. Taylor Innes telling us that “in this Act no mention is made of the old Confession of 1560,” and speaking of our Church “throwing away its old Creed.”<sup>2</sup> On the contrary it might be urged that, by the terms of this Act, if any difficulty were to arise as to what the Westminster Confession means, recourse should be had to that of 1560. Certainly it was to the old Confession that the Assembly of 1647 would have referred any one who might ask where “the received doctrine of this Kirk” was to be found. Moreover, if the Westminster Confession had been “approved,” yet *the National Covenant, with the Old Confession wrapped up in it, was held to be binding upon every Scotsman.* It was to the Covenants that subscription continued to be enforced: it may even be doubted if, at this period, the Westminster Confession was subscribed at all: I have not met with any *Formula* of subscription to it; and it is not so much as mentioned in the Ordination Questions put forth by the Westminster Divines. Neither is subscription mentioned by the Estates (the Scots

<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, p. 475.

<sup>2</sup> *Law of Creeds in Scotland* (1867), p. 63. Nor are “Creed” and “Confession” the same thing.

1649 Parliament) in 1649, when "having seriously considered the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Confession of Faith, with the Acts of approbation thereof presented unto them by the General Assembly" they "ratified and approved the said Catechisms, Confession of Faith, and Acts of approbation," and "ordered them to be printed and published." In 1648, the General Assembly approved, and in 1649 the Scots Parliament approved and ratified, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. To the latter, which became *the* manual of instruction for Scottish Presbyterians, the Apostles' Creed is subjoined; and it became the custom to teach it, with the Lord's Prayer, and the Graces Before and After Meat, to children for private use.

#### C. BETWEEN 1660 AND 1690.

1660 When the Restoration came, this "Act of the Estates  
 (1649)," and along with it all those passed by the "Parlia-  
 1661 ments" from 1640 to 1648, were annulled, and the Solemn  
 League and Covenant declared to be no longer binding. Indeed the Covenants were burned by the common hangman. But the Westminster Confession had been gaining ground among the Presbyterians, and these proceedings of the State, so far from impairing their opinion of it, served rather to make it more their own; while on the other hand the retention of the old Confession by the new bishops helped to put that out of favour with them.

1662 In the Church of the "Second Episcopacy" (1662-1690) the Confession of 1560 "possessed a certain degree of authority, but, at first, rather as sanctioned by the State than as enjoined by any ecclesiastical law. The Confession of Faith and the Catechisms drawn up by the Westminster Assembly . . . were no longer of any authority, though some of the bishops seem to have tolerated their use. There was practically, however, at this period, little reference to any other standard than the Scriptures and the Apostles' Creed. . . . The English Ordinal seems to have been invariably used at the consecration of bishops, and generally, though not always, at the ordination of priests and deacons."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Grub, *Ecclesiastical History*, chapter 64.



Things changed somewhat in 1681; when—while in Eng- 1681  
land proposals were being agitated to exclude James, the  
King's brother, as a Papist, from the succession to the  
Throne—the Scottish Parliament, eager to shew its loyalty,  
passed a series of Acts in which they endeavoured to vindicate  
at once the national faith and the principles of hereditary  
right. The latter were set forth in the *Act acknowledging and  
asserting the right of Succession to the Imperial Crown of  
Scotland* (Aug. 13th, 1681):—

“The Estates of Parliament, considering that the Kings of this  
Realm, deriving their Royal power from God alone, do *succeed lineally*  
thereto, according to the *known degrees of proximity in blood, which cannot  
be interrupted, suspended, or diverted by any act or statute whatsoever*  
. . . and that *no difference in religion, nor no Act of Parliament made,*  
or to be made, *can alter or divert the right of succession and lineal  
descent of the Crown to the nearest and lawful heirs . . . declare*  
it high treason . . . to endeavour the alteration, suspension, or diversion  
of the said right of succession etc.”<sup>1</sup>

While the *Act anent Religion and the Test* (August 31st,  
1681), after telling how

“His Majesty, from his princely and pious zeal to maintain and pre-  
serve *the true Protestant religion, contained in the Confession of Faith*  
recorded in the first parliament of King James VI., which is *founded  
on and agreeable to the written Word of God . . . doth require and  
command all his officers . . . to put the laws made against Popery and  
Papists . . . as also against all fanatic separatists from this National  
Church . . . to full and vigorous execution . . . And to cut off all  
hopes from Papists and fanatics of their being employed in offices  
and places of public trust . . . the following Oath shall be taken . . .*  
‘I . . . solemnly swear . . . that I own and sincerely profess the *true  
Protestant religion contained in the Confession of Faith recorded in the first  
parliament of King James VI., and that I believe the same to be founded  
on and agreeable to the written Word of God, and I promise and swear  
that I shall adhere thereunto during all the days of my lifetime . . .  
and shall never consent to any change or alteration contrary thereunto;*  
and that I *disown and renounce all such principles, doctrines, or practices,*  
whether *popish* or fanatical, which are contrary unto, and inconsistent  
with the said Protestant religion and Confession of Faith etc.’”<sup>2</sup>

Much of the language in this Act anticipates that which  
we are to hear a few years later from the Parliaments of

<sup>1</sup> Wodrow, iii. 305.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

King William III. and a long line of General Assemblies. But it is no less important for our present purpose to observe that many of the more conscientious of the clergy found much to object to both in the *Confession* and in the *Test*. A large number of the best ministers then serving under the bishops "demitted for the Test"; while the eminently orthodox and Royalist Synod of Aberdeen did not hesitate to say of the *Confession*, that it contained "some things obscure and doubtful," and some things "contrary to the doctrine of this present Church and *all other Reformed Churches*, e.g. Chapter XXIII, where the *Confession* denies the ministers of the Popish Church to be true ministers of Christ, for the Reformed Churches never re-ordained Popish priests when they turned Protestants." No less interesting—and no less apposite to the present situation—is the *explanation* of this "formula" which (when it was clear that explanation was required) was put forward by Bishop Paterson of Edinburgh, approved by the Council, and sanctioned by the King. It ran:

"The *Confession of Faith* ratified in the Parliament of 1567 was framed in the infancy of the Reformation, and deserves its due praises, yet by the *Test* we do not swear to every proposition or clause therein contained, but only to the true Protestant religion founded on the Word of God contained in that *Confession*, as it is opposed to Popery and fanaticism."<sup>1</sup>

Do we not, in this language also, meet with ideas and phrases with which we shall be familiar nine years later? Many of the men who sanctioned this explanation of the *Test*, had a hand in passing the Act of 1690.

Anyhow, it was with such latitude that the clergy of Scotland were taught at the close of the Seventeenth century by their rulers in Church and State that they might lawfully swear to the *Confessions of the Church*.

By the time of James VII. (1685-1689), the Scottish Presbyterians appear to have given up the old *Confession* altogether; and, if they all detested the brutal persecution of the ultra-Covenanters, very few of them approved of their extreme positions, and the great mass of them had lost their old affection for the *Covenants*. In their Address to the

<sup>1</sup> Wodrow, iii. 305.

King, in 1687, thanking him for his [illegal] "Toleration," 1687 they tell him "we are still resolved to preserve an entire loyalty in our doctrine and practice, consonant to our known principles, which, according to the Holy Scriptures, are contained in the Confession of Faith generally owned by Presbyterians in all parts of your Majesty's dominions."<sup>1</sup> This is the Westminster Confession. The Covenants, it will be noted, are quietly ignored. Nothing else, perhaps, could have been expected in an Address to King James; but it is very significant, I think, that neither are the Covenants referred to in the "Overtures for making liberty practicable,"<sup>2</sup> put forth to their own adherents by the leading Presbyterian ministers, and made the basis on which they now constituted themselves into a distinct organization. So that, even before the Revolution Settlement, a large number of the Presbyterians of Scotland, and these the weightiest, shewed themselves not unready to drop the Covenants. It is true, of course, that when, after the Revolution, William absolutely 1688 refused to have anything to do with the Covenants, and made it a condition of re-establishing Presbytery that they should be ignored, many of those who concurred in the new Establishment were deeply grieved, while others, especially in Fife, and in "the Covenanting West," made—then or afterwards—this "dishonour to the Covenants" a ground of separation from the Church of Scotland. But if it cost us the loss of some, it meant the gain of others—of the large body of men of moderate opinions throughout Scotland, and, we may say, of all, as many as adhered to us, in the North-Eastern counties from Tay to Findhorn, or even to Caithness and the Northern Isles. It would probably have been impossible to bring these in, had the Covenants NOT been laid aside. But I am anticipating.

#### D. FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT DAY.

It was on the 5th of November, 1688, that William, 1688 Prince of Orange, the son-in-law and nephew of King James VII., arrived in England for "the deliverance of [that] Church

<sup>1</sup> Wodrow, iv. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* iv. 432.

1689 and Nation.”<sup>1</sup> In the following January the Scottish Presbyterian ministers met at Edinburgh, and agreed to an Address to William, entreating him to use his endeavours for the restoration of Presbyterian Church-government in Scotland; and in the course of this Address they speak for the third time of “our known principles *contained in our Confession of Faith,*” and for the third time omit all mention of the Covenants. It had become clear to them that the Covenanted Uniformity was a dream, and that the Church of England, at all events, must remain Episcopal.

William was in a dilemma. He had himself been bred a Presbyterian in the Church of Holland, but as King of England he “had a prelatie Church to manage”<sup>2</sup>—which was not very easy to manage; for, if it had overthrown King James, and most of its bishops had accepted “the Deliverer,” yet five of them, including the Primate and Bishop Ken, had resigned their sees rather than take the new oaths. Moreover, it was no secret that the Non-jurors had many sympathisers among those of the clergy who did not go the length of joining them; while the Scottish Episcopal clergy (even the Jacobites among them, who were by no means their whole number), “wanted not friends in our neighbouring kingdom.” The inconvenience, too (not to speak of the anomaly), was obvious of setting up in Scotland an ecclesiastical Establishment differing (were it only in point of Church government) from that of England.

In these circumstances, William, “anxious to conciliate English opinion and to promote a union of the Kingdoms, would gladly have maintained Episcopacy in the Scottish Church; and when the disaffection of its bishops and of many, if not of most, of the clergy forced him to abandon this design, he sought to establish Presbytery on terms so elastic that all Episcopal ministers who concurred in the Revolution might be expected to conform.”<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile the Estates of Scotland had met at Edinburgh

<sup>1</sup> *Book of Common Prayer*, “Form of Prayer, etc. for the Fifth of November” (now abolished).

<sup>2</sup> Wodrow, iv. 482.

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Mathieson, on the Act of 1693, in the *Scotsman*, June 17th, 1905.

on the 14th of March, 1689; on the 4th of April they had declared that James had forfeited the Crown, which on the 11th of the same month they had offered to the Prince of Orange and his wife; while, in the *Claim of Right* which they drew up, they had pronounced that "Prelacy had been a grievance to this Nation . . . and ought to be abolished." Abolished, accordingly, it was by Parliament, with consent of the new Sovereigns, on 22nd of July in the same year; and then steps were taken for the re-establishment in the National Church of (1) *the Confession of Faith*, in which (as the Presbyterians had told both James and William) "their known principles" were "*contained*," and (2) of that Presbyterian Church government which they had won in 1592, and had ever since contended for.

This was effected by the memorable Act of [the Scottish] Parliament of 1690: the Act under which our Church at the present moment finds herself. I must give it in full:—

*Act ratifying the Confession of Faith, and settling Presbyterian Church Government.*<sup>1</sup>

"Our Sovereigne Lord and Lady the King and Queen's Majesties and 1690 three Estates of Parliament, Conceiveing it to be their bound duty, after the great deliverance that God hath lately wrought for this Church and Kingdome, In the first place to settle and secure therein *the true Protestant religion according to the truth of God's Word as it hath of a long tyme been professed within this land*, as also the government of Christ's Church within this nation, *agreeable to the Word of God* and most conducive to the advancement of true piety and godliness and the establishing of peace and tranquility within this realme, And that by ane article of the Claim of Right, It is declared that Prelacie and the superiority of any office in the Church above Presbyters, Is and hath been a great and insupportable grievance and trouble to this nation, and contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people, ever since the Reformation, they haveing reformed from Popery by Presbyters, and therefore ought to be abolished; Lykeas by ane Act of the last Session of this Parliament Prelacie is abolished, Therefore their Majesties with advyce and consent of the saidis three Estates doe *hereby revive, ratifie and perpetually confirme all lawes, statutes and acts of Parliament made against Popery and Papists*, And for the maintainance and preservation of the *true reformed Protestant religion and for the true Church of Christ within this kingdome*, In sua far

<sup>1</sup> Thomson's *Acts*, vol. ix., p. 133.

as they confirm the same, or are made in favours thereof. *Likeas they by these presents, ratifie and establish the Confession of Faith, now read in their presence, and voted and approven by them, as the publick and avowed Confession of this Church, containing the summe and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches (which Confession of Faith is subjoynd to this* 1690 *present Act.)* As also they do establish, ratifie, and confirm the Presbyterian Church government and discipline: That is to say, the government of the Church by kirk-sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and general assemblies, ratified and established by the 114 Act, Ja. 6, Parl. 12, anno 1592, entitled, Ratification of the liberty of the true Kirk, etc. And thereafter received by the general consent of this nation, to be the only government of Christ's Church within this kingdom: Reviving, renewing, and confirming the foresaid Act of Parliament, in the whole heads thereof, except that part of it relating to patronages, which is hereafter to be taken into consideration: And rescinding, annulling, and making void the Acts of Parliament following, viz.: Act anent Restitution of Bishops, Ja. 6, Parl. 18, Cap. 2, Act ratifying the Acts of the Assembly 1610, Ja. 6, Parl. 21, Cap. 1, Act anent the Election of Arch-Bishops and Bishops, Ja. 6, Parl. 22, Cap. 1, Act, entitled, Ratification of the Five Articles of the General Assembly at Perth, Ja. 6, Parl. 23, Cap. 1, Act entitled, For the Restitution and Re-establishment of the ancient Government of the Church, by Arch-Bishops and Bishops, Ch. 2, Parl. 1, Sess. 2, Act 1, Anent the Constitution of a National Synod, Ch. 2, Parl. 1, Sess. 3, Act 5, Act against such as refuse to Depone against Delinquents, Ch. 2, Parl. 2, Sess. 2, Act 2, Act, entitled, Act acknowledging and asserting the right of Succession to the Imperial Crown of Scotland, Ch. 2, Parl. 3, Act 2, Act, entitled, Act anent Religion and the Test, Ch. 2, Parl. 3, Act 6, With all other acts, laws, statutes, ordinances and proclamations, and that in so far allennerly as the said acts and others generally and particularly above mentioned, are contrary, or prejudicial to, inconsistent with, or derogatory from *the Protestant religion*, and Presbyterian government now established, And allowing and declaring, that the Church government be established in the hands of, and exercised by these Presbyterian ministers, who were outed since the first of January, 1661, for non-conformity to Prelacy, or not complying with the courses of the times, and are now restored by the late Act of Parliament, and such ministers and elders only as they have admitted or received, or shall hereafter admit or receive: And also, that all the said Presbyterian ministers have, and shall have right to the maintenance, rights and other priviledges, by law provided to the ministers of Christ's Church within this kingdom, as they are, or shall be legally admitted to particular churches. Likeas, in pursuance of the premises, their Majesties, do hereby appoint the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Church, as above established, to be at Edinburgh, the third Thursday of October next to come, in this instant year 1690. And because many

conform ministers either have deserted, or were removed from preaching in their churches, preceding the thirteenth day of April, 1689, And others were deprived for not giving obedience to the Act of the Estates, made in the said thirteenth of April, 1689, entituled, Proclamation against the owning of the late King James, and appointing publick prayers for King William and Queen Mary : Therefore their Majesties with advice and consent foresaid, do hereby declare all the churches either deserted, or from which the conform ministers were removed, or deprived, as said is, to be vacant, and that the Presbyterian ministers exercising their ministry, within any of these paroches, (or where the last incumbent is dead) by the desire or consent of the paroch, shall continue their possession, and have right to the benefices and stipends, according to their entry in the year 1689, And in time coming, ay and while the Church as now established, take further course therewith. And to the effect the disorders that have happened in this Church may be redressed: their Majesties with advice and consent foresaid, do hereby allow the 1690 general meeting, and representatives of the foresaid Presbyterian ministers and elders, in whose hands the exercise of the Church government is established, either by themselves, or by such ministers and elders as shall be appointed and authorised visitors by them, according to the custom and practice of Presbyterian government throughout the whole kingdom, and several parts thereof, to try and purge out all insufficient, negligent, scandalous and erroneous ministers, by due course of ecclesiastical process and censures ; And likeways for redressing all other Church disorders. And further, it is hereby provided that whatsoever minister, being convened before the said general meeting, and representatives of the Presbyterian ministers and elders, or the visitors to be appointed by them, shall either prove contumacious in not appearing, or be found guilty, and shall be therefore censured, whether by suspension or deposition they shall *ipso facto* be suspended from, or deprived of their stipends and benefices."

Acts of Parliament are not always easy to interpret ; and at this present moment there is a serious conflict of opinions as to what this Act of 1690 means, when, in a crucial clause, it speaks of the [Westminster] "Confession of Faith approved as the public and avowed Confession of this Church, CONTAINING THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES."

The Very Rev. Dr. Mair, I understand, contends that this means that the Confession of Faith itself, neither more nor less, is this *sum and substance* ; and he asks, "If this *sum and substance* be not the Confession, then what is it ? Where is it

to be found?" While the Rev. Dr. Robertson of St. Ninian's says it means that the Confession of Faith is a summary of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches.

With all deference, I feel bound to take a different view as to the meaning of the clause. I agree with those who hold that the words in question were introduced with the very object of NOT binding us to every proposition or clause in the Confession; but of so presenting the Confession as to induce as many as possible in Scotland to accept it on the ground that it was practically their old faith which they had had since the Reformation, and to enable the King to say to his English subjects: The doctrine I am ratifying in Scotland is *substantially* your own Protestant religion which you called me from Holland to preserve.

To those clergy of the late (Episcopal) Establishment in Scotland, who were ready to accept him as their King, but might boggle at the Westminster Confession, William (it appears to me) desired by these words of the Act to say: You may take this Westminster Confession as, nine years ago you took the old Confession, on the ground that it *contains the true Protestant religion*, and has within it (whatever may be said as to details) the doctrine common to all the Reformed Churches in England and on the Continent.

'CONTAINS' I explain as meaning *holds within it*. The 'SUM' of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches is "the principal heads" of their teaching, just as, in the language alike of Calvin,<sup>1</sup> Knox,<sup>2</sup> and the Westminster Divines,<sup>3</sup> the Apostles' Creed "is a brief 'SUM' of the Christian Faith." The 'SUBSTANCE' of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches is the pith and marrow of it, where its strength lies, the principles which give it cohesion and life, and make it what it is. It is the 'SUBSTANCE,' moreover, as opposed to this or that detail, this or that "form of expression," this or that "less important determination." To

<sup>1</sup> *La Forme d'administrer le Baptesme in Corpus Reformatorum XXXIV.*, Calvini Opera vi. pp. 185 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Knox's Liturgy, "Declare here before GOD . . . the *sum* of that Faith wherein ye believe . . . Then the father . . . shall rehearse the Articles of his faith" [Apostles' Creed].

<sup>3</sup> Note on the Creed at the end of the *Shorter Catechism*.



the further questions, How this sum and substance may be known? and Where may we discover it? the answer is not difficult. Look up the various Confessions of the Reformed Churches then in use; note the points—the many and all-important points—on which, “*as to the matter,*” these Confessions are agreed. A *Harmony of Confessions*<sup>1</sup> will settle the question very speedily.

An additional advantage (as it seems to me) accrues to our Church from this interpretation of the words. They supply the not unnecessary reminder that the Church of Scotland is not a thing altogether by itself. Besides being (as her *Confession* teaches, xxv. 23) part or “member” of the “Catholic Visible Church,” she is also one of that more restricted family known as the Reformed Churches, and means to keep up, as ever since her Reformation she had done, her oneness in belief with them. If in *form* her public and avowed Confession is different from theirs, the *doctrine contained in it* is, in *sum and substance*, the very same.

This seems to me the natural meaning of the words; and that this is how the Act intends them to be taken, is manifest, I hold, first of all, *from the Act itself*. What (1) does the Act set forth as its main purpose? “To settle and secure [in this Church and Kingdom of Scotland] *the true Protestant religion*, according to the truth of GOD’S Word, *as it hath OF A LONG TIME been professed within this land.*” The reference here is clearly to the Reformed doctrine in general; or, if to any particular statement thereof, then to *our First Confession* of 1560. It cannot be to the *Westminster Confession*, for that had *not* “been of *long time* professed in”

<sup>1</sup>As a matter of fact, compilations of the kind, setting forth the unity of the Reformed Churches were familiar to the men of that age. There was, for instance, “An Harmony of the Confessions of the Faith of the Christian and Reformed Churches, which purely profess the holy doctrine of the Gospel in all the chief Kingdoms, Nations, and Provinces of Europe,” a work “submitted in the name of the [Reformed] Churches of France and Belgia to the free and discreet judgment of all other Churches,” which was published, in an English dress, at London in 1643; with “the [old] Confession of the Church of Scotland added thereto.” It opens with a golden sentence from S. Ambrose, “There ought to be no strife but conference among the servants of CHRIST.” This book was much used in Scotland.

Scotland: 1647 was not a very remote date in 1690! Moreover, the phraseology—"the true Protestant religion," "agreeable to the Word of GOD"—recalls the long series of Acts, down to the Test Act of 1681, which had all meant the same thing.

The main purpose of the Act having been laid down in these general terms, we come next, (2) in the passage of the Act now under review, to the mention of the *Westminster Confession*, which is ratified as a *means to secure* the end aforesaid. The Westminster Confession may be accepted (the Act proceeds to insinuate), because (however different in form from the old Confession of 1560) it *contains the sum and substance of the doctrine* of that Confession; because, as the Assembly of 1647 said, when it was sent to them from England, it is true "as to the matter," and "in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church." Then, lastly (3), this ratifying of the Westminster Confession—*so far from abolishing or wiping out previous legislation* in favour of the Reformed doctrine *long time* received in Scotland—forms part of, and is consistent with, their Majesties' "reviving, ratifying, and confirming all laws, statutes, and Acts of Parliament made for . . . the maintenance and preservation of the true reformed Protestant religion."

When we turn from the Act itself to the known mind and desire of the Sovereigns at whose instance it was passed by an obedient Parliament, and to the situation, ecclesiastical and political, of Scotland and England at the time, it is to the same conclusion we are led. Queen Mary was a sincere Anglican. We know that King William—lax in his own beliefs—was at this very moment doing everything in his power to secure, in *England*, on lines frankly Latitudinarian, a "comprehension" of the Dissenters with the Church. He was equally, and openly, anxious to include in the *Church of Scotland*, which must now be Presbyterian, the large number of ministers who, though they had served under the deprived bishops, had yet been content to take the oaths to him and to Queen Mary. These ministers, remember, had not been accustomed to any Confession of Faith except the Apostles' Creed. Some of the best of them

(as we heard) had scrupled in 1681, the venerable Confession of 1560. As a matter of fact, they had been growing out of Calvinism; and to ask them to accept "every proposition and clause" of the Westminster Confession—whose Puritan origin they could not but dislike—would have been tantamount to barring them all out.

The King had been compelled, against his will, to establish the Church government in the hands of the [some sixty] Presbyterian ministers ousted in 1661: he sought, I believe, by this clause "*containing the sum and substance*" to mitigate, as far as might be, the rigour of the new regime.

When, by its Act of 1690, the State had thus undone in favour of the Presbyterians what in 1661-2 it had done in favour of Episcopacy, it proceeded, in the same Act of Parliament, to appoint a General Assembly to meet in October of the same year.

The General Assembly met, accordingly. It passed an 1690 Act:—

*Anent subscribing the Confession of Faith.*

"For retaining soundness and unity of doctrine, it is judged necessary that all probationers licensed to preach, all intrants into the ministry, and all other ministers and elders received into communion with us, in Church government, be obliged to subscribe their approbation of the Confession of Faith, approved by former General Assemblies of this Church, and ratified in the second Session of the current Parliament; And that this be recommended to the diligence of the several Presbyteries, and they appointed to record their diligence thereanent in their respective registers."

And on the 13th November 1690, it issued the following Instruction to the Commission for Visitations:

"That they shall be careful that none shall be admitted by them to ministerial communion, or to a share of the government, but such as upon due tryal (for which the Commission is to take a competent time) shall be found to be orthodox in their doctrine, of competent abilities, having a pious, godly, loyal and peaceable conversation, as becometh a minister of the gospel, of an edifying gift, and whom the Commission shall have ground to believe, will be true and faithful to God and the Government, and diligent in their ministerial duties. And that all who

shall be admitted to the ministry, or shall be received to a share in the government, shall be obliged to own and subscribe the Confession of Faith, and profess their submission to, and willingness to joyn and concur with the Presbyterian Church government."

It will be observed in what moderate terms both Act and Instruction are expressed: the King, doubtless, had been consulted in the drafting of them.

But if he could read beforehand the Acts she was to pass, he had no control over the Church's discipline; and when the Assembly proceeded to weed out all the old incumbents whom they judged to be "insufficient, negligent, scandalous and erroneous," he "returned with fresh energy to his schemes for bringing in his Episcopalian supporters. Unfortunately," says Mr. Mathieson, "this project was prosecuted in a spirit which could not but be fatal to its success; for William paid little respect to the Presbyterian monopoly to which, as enacted in Parliament, he had given his reluctant assent, and the Episcopal clergy treated it with such contempt that, according to their patron, Bishop Burnet, they proposed rather to capture, than to conform to, the Church."

1692 Matters became critical when one hundred and eighty of the Episcopal clergy approached the Assembly of 1692 asking admission to share in the Church's government on subscribing a formula which had been recommended by the King himself—for neither Parliament nor Assembly had prescribed a formula. William's formula was in these terms:

"I, A. B., do sincerely declare and promise that I will submit to the Presbyterian government of this Church, as it is now established in this Kingdom under their majesties King William and Queen Mary, by presbyteries, provincial synods and general assemblies; and that I will as becomes a minister of the Gospel heartily concur with the said government, for the suppressing of sin and wickedness, the promoting of piety, and the purging of the Church of all erroneous and scandalous ministers. And I do further promise that I will subscribe the Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms, now confirmed by Act of Parliament, as containing the doctrine of the Protestant religion professed in these Kingdoms."

Not content with this, William wrote to the Assembly, telling them how he "had bidden certain of these conform

ministers apply to you in the terms of a Formula and Declaratory, which We have delivered to our Commissioner . . . that it may be an act of your own to receive and assume into Church government and communion such as shall address [themselves] to you in these terms, and *subscribe the Confession of Faith, which clears the soundness of their principles as to the fundamental articles of the Protestant religion.*"

The Assembly resented his Letter and refused his Formula. His Letter and Formula, however, are helps to the interpretation of the Act of 1690 to which he had just assented. "They shew," says Mr. Taylor Innes, "what William intended should have been the import of that Act. The symbols are confirmed, not as *being*, but as *containing*, the doctrine of the Protestant religion, and the subscription is to the Confession *not necessarily as the personal belief of the individual*, but as it contains the doctrine of the Protestant religion professed in this Kingdom."<sup>1</sup>

For myself, I hold most strongly that no Formula will be of any use to us in the present day which does not include a profession of personal belief in the fundamentals of the Faith. But the question is, What is the meaning of the Act of 1690, which remains in force, though we are free, if we like, to discontinue the Formula enjoined by Parliament in 1693? And I submit that I have made good my case as to the interpretation we must put upon its crucial terms.

How did the Act of Parliament of 1693 come to be passed? The General Assembly was as determined against the 'Inclusion' of the 'conform' Episcopalian clergy as the English Lower House of Convocation was against the 'Comprehension' of the Dissenters of that country; and the King, powerful as he was, was unable to carry his point against either body. In England the Comprehension Bill was lost. In Scotland we had, in 1693, this Act of Parliament. No more competent historian of the period in Scotland lives than Mr. Mathieson, and here is his description of the situation:—

<sup>1</sup> *Law of Creeds in Scotland*, p. 78.

“Church and Crown were now at variance, and the result of their antagonism was the Act of 1693, ‘for Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church.’ Resenting what he regarded as the mutinous temper of Scottish Presbytery, William was induced to believe that its adherents, whilst denouncing Jacobitism, were excluding men more loyal than themselves; and an Act, or in English phraseology, a Bill, was brought into Parliament imposing on all ministers and preachers the oath of allegiance and the declaration of *de jure* sovereignty known as the Assurance, and addressing the Crown to summon an Assembly—the Assembly appointed by the Moderator being thus ignored—for the reception of all Episcopal ministers who on certain terms—probably those suggested by William—should be willing to conform. The measure was obnoxious to Presbyterians as asserting the right of the civil power to call Assemblies at pleasure and to prescribe qualifications, political and religious, for the pastoral office. They had not sufficient influence in Parliament to prevent the imposition of the oaths; *but they succeeded in introducing amendments which made the Bill as useless to Episcopalians as it was grievous to themselves.* The Act of 1690 had ratified the Confession of Faith as ‘containing the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches,’ and the Assembly of the same year, citing this ratification, had ordered it to be subscribed. As finally passed, however, the Act of 1693 *ignored both this form of subscription and the more liberal one suggested by William,* and enacted that no person should be admitted or continued as a minister or preacher within the Church who had not subscribed the Confession, ‘*declaring the same to be the confession of his faith, and that he owns the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine, which he will constantly adhere to.*’ The new form was adopted by the Assembly of 1694, but, with this exception, the Act proved so distasteful for different reasons to both Presbyterians and Episcopalians that it was never enforced. William at the last moment dispensed with the oaths; and in 1695 he gave up all idea of comprehension by assenting to an Act which authorized Nonconformist incumbents who had renounced the Pretender to retain their cures on condition that they took no part in the government of the Church. Very many Episcopal ministers availed themselves of this Act. In 1710 they still numbered 113, and the last of them, Fisher of Aberfoyle, survived till 1732.”

The Act of Parliament of 1693 I must also give in full. It bears the title,

*Act for settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church.*

“Our Sovereign Lord and Lady, the King’s and Queen’s Majesties, with advice and consent of the Estates of Parliament, ratifie, approve, and perpetually confirm the fifth Act of the second Session of this

current Parliament, intituled, *Act Ratifying the Confession of Faith and settling Presbyterian Church government* in the whole heads, articles, and clauses thereof ; And do further statute and ordain, that no person be admitted, or continued for hereafter, to be a minister or preacher within this Church, unless that he having first taken and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance, and subscribed the Assurance, in manner appointed by another Act of this present Session of Parliament made thereanent, *do also subscribe the Confession of Faith*, ratified in the foresaid 5th Act of the second Session of this Parliament, *declaring the same to be the confession of his faith, and that he ownes the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine which he will constantly adhere to*: As likewise, that he ownes and acknowledges Presbyterian Church government, as settled by the foresaid fifth Act of the second Session of this Parliament, to be the only government of this Church, and that he will submit thereto, and concur therewith, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof, And *their Majesties*, with consent and advice foresaid, *statute and ordain, that uniformity of worship, and of the administration of all publick ordinances within this Church, be observed by all the said ministers and preachers*, as the samen are at present performed and allowed therein, or shall be hereafter declared by the authority of the same, and that no minister or preacher be admitted, or continued for hereafter, unless that he subscribe to observe, and do actually observe the foresaid uniformity : And for the more effectual settling the quiet and peace of this Church, the Estates of Parliament do hereby make a humble *address to their Majesties*, *That they would be pleased to call a General Assembly*, for the ordering the affairs of the Church, and to the end, that all the present ministers possessing churches, not yet admitted to the exercise of the foresaid Church government, conform to the said Act, and who shall qualifie themselves in manner foresaid, and shall apply to the said Assembly, or the other Church judicatures competent, in an orderly way, each man for himself, be received to partake with them in the government thereof : Certifying such as shall not qualify themselves, and apply to the said Assembly, or other judicatures, within the space of thirty days after meeting of the said first Assembly, in manner foresaid, that they may be deposed by the sentence of the said Assembly, and other judicatures, *tam ab officio quam a beneficio* ; And withal declaring, that if any of the said ministers, who have not been hitherto received into the government of the Church, shall offer to qualifie themselves, and to apply in manner foresaid, they shall have their Majesties' full protection, ay and while they shall be admitted and received in manner foresaid : Providing always, that this Act, and the benefit thereof, shall no ways be extended to such of the said ministers as are scandalous, erroneous, negligent, or insufficient, and against whom the same shall be verified within the space of thirty days after the

said application, but these and all others in like manner guilty, are hereby declared to be lyable and subject to the power and censure of the Church, as accords: And to the effect, that the representation of this Church, in the General Assemblies, may be the more equal in all time coming, recommends it to the first Assembly that shall be called, 1693 to appoint ministers to be sent as Commissioners from every Presbytery, not in equal numbers, which is manifestly unequal where Presbyteries are so, but in a due proportion to the Churches and Parochins within every Presbytery, as they shall judge convenient: And it is hereby declared, that all school-masters and teachers of youth in schools, are, and shall be lyable to the tryal, judgment, and censure of the Presbyteries of the bounds for their sufficiency, qualifications and deportment in said office. And, lastly, their Majesties, with advice and consent foresaid, do hereby statute and ordain, that the Lords of their Majesties Privy Council, and all other magistrates, judges, and officers, give all due assistance for making the sentences and censures of the Church, and judicatures thereof, to be obeyed, or otherways effectual as accords."

Unamiable proceedings of this sort have the knack of proving more injurious to those who take them than to the persons against whom they were aimed; and, just as Charles II.'s Act of Uniformity, levelled against the Puritans, has proved a bondage—if also a defence—to the Church of England, so the main burden of the Act for "Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church" of Scotland has fallen on her own shoulders!

1694 One main defect of it, however (as she saw it at the time),—its imposing a test on ministers without the authority of the courts ecclesiastical,—admitted of a remedy; and the General Assembly of 1694 passed an Act of its own, laying down conditions and prescribing a Formula framed on the law enacted by Parliament in the previous year. It is entitled:

*"Act approving Overtures anent a Commission of the General Assembly and Instructions thereto."*

Its Sixth Instruction runs:—

"That this Commission may receive into ministerial communion such of the late conform ministers, as having qualified themselves according to law, shall apply personally to them, one by one, duly and orderly, and shall acknowledge, engage, and subscribe upon the end of the Confession of Faith, as follows, viz: *I . . . do sincerely own and declare, the above Confession of Faith, approved by former General Assemblies*



of this Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be the confession of my faith; and that I own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine which I will constantly adhere to; as likeways that I own and acknowledge Presbyterian Church government of this Church, now settled by law, by Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods and General Assemblies, to be the only government of this Church, and that I will submit thereto, concur therewith, and never endeavour directly nor indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof; and that I shall observe uniformity of worship, and of the administration of all publick ordinances within this Church, as the same are at present performed and allowed. . . .

“As also that the General Assembly require all Presbyteries and Synods, in their admitting or receiving any to ministerial communion, that they oblige them to take and subscribe the same acknowledgment: And that during the said time, neither this Commission nor any other judicatory of this Church, do take advantage to censure any minister whatsoever for not having qualified himself, in terms of the Act of Parliament, 1693, intituled, *Act for settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church*; As likeways that the said Commission and all other judicatories are to take care, that if any shall be found to have maliciously or calumniously, accused any ministers, they shall be condignly censured, according to the order and practice of this Church; As also that the Assembly ordain, that none of these ministers who are not presently in charge be received into ministerial communion, but by the said Commission, or by that Presbytery or Synod of the bounds in which they now reside.”

Its seventh is:—

“That this Commission and Committee foresaid shall be careful to settle elderships and plant ministers in vacant congregations on the North side of the Tay, either by ordaining well qualified expectants (who shall be bound at their entry to subscribe the said Confession of Faith with the *Acknowledgment* above exprest), or by transporting ministers who shall be called by any vacant congregation therein (the Presbytery to which they belong being first applyed unto).”

These were followed in 1700 by another Act of Parliament:

*For Securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government.*<sup>1</sup>

“Our Sovereign Lord with the advice and consent of the Estates 1700 of Parliament Ratifies Approves and perpetually Confirms all Laws Statutes and Acts of Parliament made for the establishing, maintaining and preserving of the true reformed Protestant Religion and

<sup>1</sup>Thomson's *Acts*, vol. x. p. 215.

for the true Church of Christ as at present owned and settled within this Kingdom; As likewise for Establishing Ratifying and Confirming the Presbyterian Church Government and discipline that is to say the Government of the Church by Kirk Sessions, Presbitries Provincial Synods, and General Assemblies to be agreeable to the Word of God and the only Government of Christ's Church within this Kingdom. And particularly without prejudice of the generality forsaid His Majestie with advice and consent forsaid Ratifies Approves and Confirms the fifth Act of the Second Session of this current Parliament intituled Act Ratifying the Confession of Faith, and Settling Presbyterian Church Government in the hail heads articles and clauses thereof as if at length herein set down; But prejudice, nevertheless to the twenty seventh Act of the fifth Session of this present Parliament Intituled Act concerning the Church as to the allowance therein given to certain Ministers not actually assumed by the ordinary Church Judicatures under the conditions and provisions allways exprest in the said Act."<sup>1</sup>

Here again it will be noted the language is of that vague type which King William had always chosen; but again the Assembly met it by insisting on the Formula of [the Act of Parliament of 1693, and] its own Act of 1694:

*Subscribing the Confession of Faith.*

1700 "The General Assembly appoints, that all ministers and ruling elders, belonging to this national Church, subscribe the Confession of Faith, as the confession of their faith, according to the Act of Assembly, 1690, and the *formula* agreed upon in the Assembly, held in the year 1694, Act 11th, ¶ 6, and that this be done, betwixt this and the next General Assembly."

1702 King William died in 1702: Queen Anne, who succeeded him—though her Protestantism was never doubtful—was suspected of wishing her brother to succeed her on the Throne; and she made no secret of her ardent attachment to the Church of England and the High Church party in it. She left unnoticed an address presented to her in England by the Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist ministers in London; and at the prorogation of the English Parliament (May, 1702), while undertaking to maintain the Act of Toleration, she declared that "her own principles must always keep her entirely firm to the interest and religion of the Church of England, and

<sup>1</sup> Acts 1702, cap. 3, and 1703, cap. 2, are in identical terms to above Act.

would incline her to countenance those who had the truest zeal to support it.”<sup>1</sup>

It was impossible that these things should not be marked in Scotland. The hopes of all the Episcopalians—whether ‘Conform’ or Non-juring—rose at once: the Presbyterians were correspondingly alarmed. But the Scots Parliament was with them, and they procured, in 1702, and again in 1703,<sup>1702  
1703</sup> the passing of Acts drawn in identical terms with King William’s Act of 1700. To the first General Assembly of her Reign (March, 1703) the Queen addressed a gracious Letter, several phrases in which we must not pass over. “We earnestly recommend you to be solicitously careful of what may advance the interest of the *Reformed Protestant Religion*, and for suppressing the growth of Popery.” Then she “renews the assurance given by her [at her Accession] for the protection of the *Presbyterian Government*, as that which finds acceptable to the inclinations of her people, and established by the laws of the Kingdom”—she is careful not to say *she* likes it, and she says nothing at all about the Confession of Faith. She adds, however, “We are confident that you will carry so with *others of the Reformed Protestant Religion, albeit differing from you in forms of Church Policy*, that by your meekness and charity they may be the more inclined to live peaceably and dutifully under us, and in brotherly love and respect towards you, and the Established Church.” The Assembly in their reply spoke of the Presbyterian government as “agreeable to the Word of GOD”; and acknowledged their duty to “advance the interest of the Reformed Protestant Religion”; but, when they come to speak of the Queen’s advice in regard to their treatment of others of the Reformed Religion, they only say, “we wish that all the differences were merely about Church Policy (though even for this we should be sorry), and that there were no difference about our Confession of Faith towards GOD and our duty towards your Majesty.”<sup>2</sup> Both the Scottish parties who could own Queen Anne had now their cue—the ‘Conform Episcopalians’—if the strict *formula* of 1693 barred out their *ministers* from the Church Courts—

<sup>1</sup> Stoughton, *Religion in England*, v. 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Acts of Assembly*, 1703, pp. 6, 8.

might yet get laymen into these courts as *elders*, of whom neither Church nor State required such unequivocal subscription; and, to *prevent their doing so*, the Assembly proceeded the very next year to require such subscription—not as yet of all elders, but—of all such as wished to sit in the supreme  
 1704 Court. Wherefore we have the “Act anent Commissioners to the General Assembly, and their subscribing the Confession of Faith,” ordaining

1704 “that all commissions to ministers and ruling elders, from Presbyteries, Universities, and royal Burghs, to subsequent Assemblies, bear, that they have subscribed the Confession of Faith of this Church, according to the 11th Act of the General Assembly, anno 1700: And sick-like, that no minister or elder be nominate and commissionate to be a member of the General Assembly of this Church, by any Presbytery, Burgh, or University; but such as usually reside in, or have a relation to the Presbytery, Burgh, or University, they are commissionate from.”

To prevent the Episcopalians from getting *young men* of their own views whose *election to vacant parishes* they might be able to effect, the Assembly of 1705 extended this provision, in terms even stricter, to all *licentiates*, and “did by an unanimous vote, and hereby do, seriously Recommend it to the several Presbyteries of this Church to keep a watchful eye upon all Students of Theologie and to be careful that none be licensed to preach or admitted to Churches but such as shall give evidence of their Orthodoxy by signing the Confession of Faith approved by former General Assemblies of this Church and ratified by Law in the year 1690 as the Confession of their faith, of their good Affection to the Government of Church and State, of their peaceable Principles and Disposition, by engaging to observe good Order in conjunction with and a due Subjection to the Judicatories of this Church, And of their Literature by abiding a strict Tryal, And shall own the Presbyterian Government of this Church to be agreeable to and founded on the Word of God, And promise never to endeavour directly or indirectly the Prejudice or Subversion thereof, according to former Acts of Assembly thereanent.”

On the other hand, it deposed Mr. John Hepburn, who had “called the Oath of Allegiance to the Queen’s Majesty a Black Oath”; and in view of an agitation which had arisen in the

North in favour of reviving the use of the Lord's Prayer in public worship—any prohibition, whereof, besides being absurd in itself, would have given a handle to the Episcopalians and greatly prejudiced the Church in the eyes of the Queen—passed an Act

“seriously recommending to all Ministers and others within this National Church the due observance of the *Directory for the public worship of God*, approved by the General Assembly, held in the year 1645.”<sup>1</sup>

It must be added, however, that few, even of the Church leaders, shewed any alacrity in obeying this recommendation.<sup>2</sup> By this time the Queen and her Ministers had almost achieved that Union of the Parliaments which her Majesty's ancestor, King James VI., had in vain attempted; and, as a necessary step towards that end, the Scottish Parliament passed the great Act, 1706-7, cap. 6:—

*Act for Securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government.*<sup>3</sup>

“Our Sovereign Lady and the Estates of Parliament, considering that 1706 by the late Act of Parliament for a treaty with England for a Union of both Kingdoms, It is provided that the Commissioners for that Treaty should not treat of or concerning any alteration of the worship, discipline, and government of the Church of this kingdom, as now by law established, Which treaty being now reported to the Parliament, and it *being reasonable and necessary that the true Protestant religion, as presently professed within this kingdom, with the worship, discipline, and Government of this Church should be effectually and unalterably secured*, Therefore Her Majesty, with advice and consent of the said Estates of Parliament, Doth hereby establish and confirm the *said true Protestant religion, and the worship, discipline, and government of this Church* to continue without any alteration to the people of this land in all succeeding generations, And more especially Her Majesty, with advice and consent foresaid, ratifies, approves, and for ever confirms the fifth Act of the first Parliament of King William and Queen Mary, Intituled, *Act Ratifying*

<sup>1</sup> *Acts of Assembly*, 1705, Act x.

<sup>2</sup> See Mr. Anderson of Dumbarton's "Narrative of the Introducing of the Usage of the Lord's Prayer at Dumbarton." *Transactions of the Scottish Ecclesiological Society*, pp. 159-219.

<sup>3</sup> Thomson's *Acts*, vol. xi. p. 402.

*the Confession of Faith and settling Presbyterian Church government [i.e. the Act of 1690], with the hail other Acts of Parliament relating thereto, in prosecution of the declaration of the Estates of this kingdom, containing the Claim of Right, bearing date the eleventh of April one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine, And Her Majesty, with advice and consent foresaid expressly provides and declares, that the foresaid true Protestant religion contained in the above-mentioned Confession of Faith, with the form and purity of worship presently in use within this Church, and its Presbyterian Church Government and discipline, that is to say the government of the Church by kirk-sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods and general assemblies, all established by the foresaid Acts of Parliament pursuant to the Claim of Right, shall remain and continue unalterable, And that the said Presbyterian government shall be the only government of the Church within the kingdom of Scotland : And, further, for the greater security of the foresaid Protestant religion, and of the worship, discipline, and government of this Church as above established, Her Majesty, with advice and consent foresaid, statutes and ordains, That the Universities and Colleges of St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh, as now established by law, shall continue within this kingdom for ever, And that, in all time coming, no Professors, Principals, Regents, Masters, or others bearing office in any University, College, or School within this kingdom, be capable, or be admitted or allowed to continue in the exercise of their said functions, but such as shall owne and acknowledge the civil government, in manner prescribed, or to be prescribed by the Acts of Parliament, As also, that before, or at their admission, they do and shall acknowledge and profess, and shall subscribe to the foresaid Confession of Faith, as the confession of their faith [Act of 1693], and that they will practise and conform themselves to the worship presently in use in this Church, and submit themselves to the government and discipline thereof, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same; And that before the respective Presbyteries of their bounds, by whatsoever gift, presentation, or provision, they may be thereto provided. And, 1706-7 further, Her Majesty, with advice aforesaid, expressly declares and statutes, That none of the subjects of this kingdom shall be lyable to, but all and every one of them for ever free of any oath, test, or subscription within this kingdom, contrary to, or inconsistent with the foresaid true Protestant religion and Presbyterian Church government, worship and discipline, as above established; And that the same within the bounds of this Church and kingdom shall never be imposed upon, or required of them in any sort. And, lastly, that, after the decease of Her present Majesty (whom God long preserve), the Sovereign succeeding to her in the royal government of the kingdom of Great Britain, shall, in all time coming, at his or her accession to the crown, swear and subscribe, That they shall inviolably maintain and preserve the foresaid settlement*

of the true Protestant religion, with the government, worship, discipline, right, and privileges of this Church, as above established by the laws of this kingdom, in prosecution of the claim of right. And it is hereby statute and ordained, that this Act of Parliament, with the establishment therein contained, shall be held and observed in all time coming, as a fundamental and essential condition of any treaty, or union, to be concluded betwixt the two kingdoms, without any alteration thereof, or derogation thereto, in any sort for ever, As also, That this Act of Parliament, and settlement therein contained, shall be insert and repeated in any Act of Parliament that shall pass, for agreeing and concluding the foresaid Treaty or Union betwixt the two kingdoms. And that the same shall be therein expressly declared to be a fundamental and essential condition of the said Treaty or Union, in all time coming."

Here again (let it be noted), although the words of the Act of 1693, requiring Professors in the Universities to subscribe the Confession of Faith as *the confession of their faith* is cited, it is on *the Act of 1690*, and on "*the reasonableness and necessity of securing the true Protestant religion as presently professed within this kingdom,*" that the chief emphasis is laid. That is the end: the Acts referred to are merely means.

The Tories came into power—on "the Church [of England] question"—in 1710; and the next year, 1711, saw three Acts placed upon the Statute Book which caused considerable alarm to the leaders of the Church of Scotland. First came the "Act for preserving the Protestant Religion by better securing the Church of England as by Law established, and for conforming the Toleration granted to Protestant Dissenters"—called the Occasional Conformity Act; next, "The Act to prevent the Disturbing those of the Episcopal Communion in that Part of Great Britain called Scotland in the Exercise of their Religious Worship and in the Use of the Liturgy of the Church of England, and for repealing the Act passed in the Parliament of Scotland intituled an Act against irregular Baptisms and Marriages"; and, finally, the momentous "Act to restore the Patrons to their ancient Right of presenting Ministers to the Churches vacant in that Part of Great Britain called Scotland." Beginning with a recital of the fact that Patronage had been the law of Scotland till 1690, and the statement that the method introduced in the latter year had proved "inconvenient," had "produced great heats

and divisions" among the people, while "the Patrons whose predecessors had founded and endowed those churches had not received any payment or satisfaction for their right of Patronage," this Act required all patrons to take the "Oath appointed for the better security of the Queen's Person and Government," but about the minister to be presented it had only said that he must be "qualified." Could, then, Tory or Episcopalian patrons (of whom there were many in Scotland) present men of their own views? It seemed only too likely. All that the General Assembly had striven to prevent, when it opposed the "Inclusion" schemes of William III. appeared to be coming in upon it like a flood. It took its own measures of defence. It had no longer a Scottish Parliament to support it; so an Act of Parliament was not to be hoped for. But the General Assembly had powers of its own. It could fix the qualification of those to be admitted to the Ministry of the Church of Scotland; and it took care to ensure that there should be none for the patrons to present whose fidelity was doubtful. This was clearly the object of the Assembly's legislation of 1710 and 1711. The Assembly of 1710, knowing what was coming and taking Time by the forelock, had passed an "Act for preserving the Purity of Doctrine":—

1710 "The General Assembly considering that the purity of doctrine is a signal blessing to the Church of God, and that it hath been the great happiness of this Church ever since her reformation from Popery, to have enjoyed and maintained the same; and that the avoiding all expressions in matters of faith, contrary to the form of sound words, tends not a little to preserve the said purity, which is so desirable: And it being informed, that in some places some expressions are used, and opinions as to some points of religion vented, which are not agreeable to our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and the known sentiments of the greatest lights, and most famous Gospel-ministers wherewith this Church has been blessed: Therefore, the General Assembly does discharge all persons to vent any opinions contrary to any head or article of the said Confession and Catechism, or use any expressions in relation to the Articles of Faith, not agreeable to the form of sound



words, expressed in the Word of God and the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, which are most valuable pieces of her Reformation. And the General Assembly does hereby further enact, that no minister or member of this Church presume to print, or disperse in writ, any catechism, without the allowance of the Presbytery of the bounds, and of the Commission: and the Presbytery is hereby appointed to lay any such Catechism before the Commission. And the General Assembly does injoin and require Synods and Presbyteries carefully to advert to the observation of this Act, and that they notice the transgressors thereof."

Not content with this, it had prepared, and sent down to Presbyteries, according to the rule prescribed in the "Barrier Act" a series of "Overtures" for "Regulating the Calling of Ministers," and "*Anent Trying and Licensing Probationers for the Holy Ministry,*" and it "allowed a first reading to 'Overtures Concerning Licensing Probationers,'"

This was the true genesis of the well-known *Act of Assembly, of 1711*, with the enhanced rigidity alike of its *1711 Ordination Questions* and its *Formula of Subscription*. Observe the prominence given, both in the title and in the body of the Act, to the case of *Probationers*:—

1711, *Act 10.—Act concerning Probationers and settling 1711 Ministers, with Questions to be proposed to and Engagements to be taken of them.*

"The General Assembly *considering the great prejudice that may arise to this Church from the licensing of too many probationers, and persons not duly qualified, . . . and that probationers and ministers should not only give sufficient proof of their piety, literature, and other good qualifications for the ministry, but also come under engagements to adhere to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church: Do therefore enact and appoint, that the following questions be put to all such as pass trials in order to be licensed, as also to such as shall be ordained ministers, or admitted to any ministerial charge or parish, and that they shall subscribe the Formula after set down before they be licensed, ordained, or admitted respectively: And the General Assembly hereby strictly prohibits and discharges the licensing, ordaining, or admitting of any who shall not give satisfying answers to these questions, and subscribe the Formula hereto subjoined.*

*Questions to be put to all Probationers for the Holy Ministry, before they be licensed to preach the Gospel.*

- 1mo. "Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners?"
- 1711 2do. "Do you sincerely own and believe *the whole doctrine* of the *Confession of Faith*, approved by the General Assemblies of this National Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, and frequently confirmed by divers Acts of Parliament since that time, *to be the truths of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?* And do you own the *whole doctrine therein contained as the confession of your faith?*"
- 3tio. "Do you sincerely own the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in this Church, and asserted in the 15th Act of the General Assembly, 1707, intituled, *Act against Innovations in the Worship of God;* and also own the Presbyterian government and discipline now so happily established in this Church? And are you persuaded, that the said doctrine, worship, discipline, and Church government, are founded upon the Holy Scriptures, and agreeable thereto?"
- 4to. "Do you promise that, through the grace of God, you will firmly and constantly adhere to, and in your station, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain, and defend the said doctrine, worship, and discipline, and the government of this Church by Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, and General Assemblies?"
- 5to. "Do you promise that in your practice you will conform yourself to the said worship, and submit yourself to the said discipline and government of this Church, *and shall never endeavour, directly nor indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same?*"
- 6to. "Do you promise that you shall follow no divisive course from the present establishment in this Church?"
- 7mo. Do you renounce all doctrines, tenets, or opinions whatsoever, contrary to or inconsistent with the said doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church?"
- 8vo. "Do you promise that you will subject yourself to the several judicatories of this Church? Are you willing to subscribe to these things?"

*Questions to be put to Ministers at their Ordination.*

- 1mo. "Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners?"
- 2do. "Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the *Confession of Faith*, approved by the General Assemblies of this Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be founded upon the Word of God; and do you acknowledge the same as the confession of your faith; and will you firmly and constantly adhere thereto, and, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain, and defend the same, and the

purity of worship, as presently practised in this National Church, and asserted in the 15th Act of the General Assembly, 1707, intituled, *Act against Innovations in the Worship of God?*"

3to. "Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Bourignian,<sup>1</sup> and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to and inconsistent with the foresaid *Confession of Faith?*"

4to. "Are you persuaded that the Presbyterian government and 1711 discipline of this Church are founded upon the Word of God, and agreeable thereto; and do you promise to submit to the said government and discipline, and to concur with the same, and never to endeavour directly nor indirectly the prejudice or subversion thereof; but to the utmost of your power, in your station, to maintain, support and defend the said discipline, and *Presbyterian* government by Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods and General Assemblies, during all the days of your life?"

5to. "Do you promise to submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness, unto the admonitions of the brethren of this Presbytery; and to be subject to them, and all other Presbyteries and superior judicatories of this Church where God in His providence shall cast your lot; And that, according to your power, you shall maintain the unity and peace of this Church against error and schism, notwithstanding of whatsoever trouble or persecution may arise: And that you shall follow no divisive courses from the present established doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church?"

6to. "Are not zeal for the honour of God, love to JESUS CHRIST, and desire of saving souls, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the function of the holy ministry, and not worldly designs and interests?"

7mo. "Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring this call?"

8vo. "Do you engage in the strength and grace of JESUS CHRIST our Lord and Master, to rule well your own family, to live a holy and circumspect life, and faithfully, diligently and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work, to the edification of the body of CHRIST?"

9mo. "Do you accept of, and close with, the call to be pastor of this parish, and promise through grace to perform all the duties of a faithful minister of the Gospel among this people?"

<sup>1</sup>The renunciation of Bourignianism was aimed at one man, Dr. George Garden of Aberdeen, who was at once the most eminent of the "Conform" Episcopalian ministers, and in special favour with the Queen. "Under her auspices" he had brought out his sumptuous edition of the Works of John Forbes of Corse, a confessor under "her Majesty's grandfather, King Charles the Martyr, for his fidelity to his Prince, and his devotion to the ancient and Apostolical government of the Church." (Amsterdam, 1703.)

*Questions to be put to a Minister already ordained, on his admission to a parish.*

“You having been already ordained a minister of the Gospel of CHRIST, it is supposed that the usual questions on such occasions were put to you, and that you did then declare, etc. (here the questions put to ministers at their ordination are to be repeated), and do you not now consent and adhere to these declarations, promises and engagements; and accept of and close with the call to be minister of this parish, and promise through grace to perform all the duties of a faithful minister of the Gospel among this people?”

*Formula to be subscribed by all such as shall pass Trials in order to be licensed, and that shall be ordained ministers, or admitted to parishes.*

“I . . . do hereby declare, that I do sincerely own and believe the *whole doctrine* contained in the *Confession of Faith* approved by the General Assemblies of this National Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, and frequently confirmed by divers Acts of Parliament since that time, to be the truths of God; and I do own the same as the confession of my faith: As likewise, I do own the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in this Church, and also the *Presbyterian* government and discipline now so happily established therein; which doctrine, worship and Church government, I am persuaded, are founded upon the Word of God, and agreeable thereto: And I promise, that, through the grace of God, I shall firmly and constantly adhere to the same, and to the utmost of my power, shall in my station assert, maintain and defend the said doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Church by Kirk-session, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods and General Assemblies; and that I shall in my practice conform myself to the said worship, and submit to the said discipline and government, and never endeavour, directly nor indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same: And I promise, that I shall follow no divisive course from the present establishment in this Church: Renouncing all doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to or inconsistent with the said doctrine, worship, discipline, or government of this Church.”

So that the *prime motive* of the Assembly's legislation anent the Confession and the Formula from 1694 to 1711 inclusive (as well as of the clause—now at her own request repealed—which the Church got inserted into the Act of Parliament of 1693), *was not so much the preservation of the Faith, as the protection of the party into whose hands the*

*Revolution had placed the ecclesiastical power in Scotland.* The very title of the Act of 1693 shews this. It is not an "Act for the maintaining of *the Reformed Religion*": it is an "Act for Settling the Quiet and Peace of *the Church*," and by 'Church' is meant, of course, the men then in power in the Church, who had been set in power by the Act of 1690. These men, and those in communion with them, were still, in point of numbers, weak; soon they became strong, and before the accession of George III. (1760) the immense majority of the Scottish people were in communion with the Church of Scotland as by law established. But in the days of their early weakness they feared, and had some reason to fear, lest they should be swamped in Presbytery and Assembly by men whose preferences and aims were different from theirs; and their first object, in all their measures, was self-defence.

From the Assembly's point of view, these measures were natural; and, for the Assembly's purpose, they were not unwise. They were all "inspired"—as Mr. Mathieson says of the Act of 1693—"by the danger, which has never since recurred, of an Episcopal invasion." And with the passing away of this particular danger, there has passed away also *the special reason*—the "historical reason," Mr. Mathieson calls it—for the peculiar stringency of all these Acts (1693-1711).

We may—we must—disapprove, and regret, the line followed at this juncture alike by the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians of Scotland. We may wish that both had taken broader, higher, more Christian views as to their duty to CHRIST and to each other. Churches always go wrong when they act at the bidding of any motive lower than the declared will of the Church's HEAD. But we can quite see how natural—to fallen man—was the course pursued (I fear it must be said) by both these parties. The Non-jurors, of course, were out of it altogether.

It would be wrong—and it would be untrue—to say that, because our Church in the twenty-seven years succeeding the Revolution was led, under a pressing fear of being swamped by "Episcopal men," to utilize her *Confession of Faith* as a weapon of exclusion, a weapon of offence, therefore she

did not care for it on its own merits as an exposition of sound doctrine. On the contrary she prized it. She had said over and over again that it expressed her "known principles": she had constrained the Government to ratify it as "the public and avowed Confession of this Church," and she never speaks of it without respect. But all the same it is worth observing that, *whenever the Church employed her Confession for this, its proper, purpose, she treated it with considerable freedom.* As, at her first accepting it, she received it with certain reservations, so now, to her own children, she admitted that some parts of it (and these *not* the Predestinarian parts) were of more importance than others. Thus, so early as 1696—only three years after the stringent *Formula* of 1693—she passed an Act, in which, while "discharging all ministers and other members of this Church to . . . vent . . . any doctrine, tenet, or opinion contrary to or inconsistent with the Confession of Faith of this Church," she insists on a few great truths, "the *grand mysteries of the Gospel*," as she calls them. This is how she speaks:—

*"Act against the Atheistical Opinions of the Deists; and for establishing the Confession of Faith.*

1696 "The General Assembly of this national Church, taking to their serious consideration, that in many places, not a few, of Atheistical principles, who go under the name of *Deists*, and for the time refuse the odious character of *Atheist*, maintain and disseminate pernicious principles tending to Scepticism and Atheism: And that there is no small ground to fear the spreading of that gangrene through this land, where (as it is credibly informed) there are not wanting active factors for Satan and his kingdom of darkness, who make it their great business to overturn and ridicule true and pure religion, Do therefore seriously recommend to, and enjoin the ministers of the Gospel, where there is any apparent hazard of such a contagion, to warn and guard the Lord's people against that infernal course, and to detect the abominableness of the tenets of those men, such as the denying of all revealed religion, *the grand Mysteries of the Gospel*, viz. :—*The doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Messiah, His satisfaction to justice, salvation through Him, justification by His imputed righteousness to them who believe on His name, the resurrection of the dead*, and in a word, the certainty and authority of Scripture revelation; As also their asserting that there must be a

mathematical evidence for each purpose, before we can be obliged to assent to any proposition thereanent, and that natural light is sufficient to salvation. It is also hereby required, that authors who treat well of those subjects be named to the people in order to perusal: As likewise, that ministers deal seriously with the seduced, and such as are mostly in hazard to be perverted, but especially seducers and imposters, that after sufficient instruction and admonition, these be proceeded against as scandalous and heretical apostates use to be: And in general, the Assembly doth *discharge all ministers and other members of this Church, to publish or vent, either by speaking, writing, printing, teaching or preaching any doctrine, tenet or opinion contrair unto, or inconsistent with the Confession of Faith of this Church, or any article, part or proposition therein: And appoints that all such as contravene this Act, or any part thereof, be censured by the Church according to their demerite.*"

So also, in a later Act passed for a less controversial purpose, her Act of 1720:

*For preaching Catechetical Doctrine.*

"The General Assembly . . . recommend to the several ministers of the Church punctually to observe the Acts . . . for preaching catechetical doctrine . . . and more especially [to] *insist upon the great and fundamental truths, according to our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, such as that of the Being and Providence of God, and the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, the necessary doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity in the unity of the Godhead; particularly, of the eternal deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the satisfaction to Divine justice made by Him who is our only propitiation, of regeneration by efficacious grace, of free justification through our blessed surety the Lord Jesus Christ, received by faith alone, and of the necessity of a holy life, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness; and that they be earnest and instant in their prayers to God, etc.*"

Here again there is no ultra-Calvinism. The "great and fundamental truths" more especially to be insisted on, are not Reprobation, or that the Pope is the Man of Sin, but the Trinitarian and Christological doctrines of the Creeds and Councils—"the necessary doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity in the Unity of the Godhead"—then being denied in England and in Ireland; and "the *Eternal Deity*" of CHRIST, which at that moment was being impugned in England by Arians like Clarke and Whiston within the Church, and was spreading

1719 with alarming rapidity among the Presbyterians of that country. The Act having specified these essentials of "the Faith of CHRIST JESUS," goes on to specify the main heads of Reformation doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

Alongside of these Acts of Assembly may be set the con-  
1719 temporary statement of Professor William Dunlop, that the Confession of Faith is not a term of Church Communion, and that there is nothing in the law of the Church to justify the requiring from candidates for baptism or from parents seeking baptism for their children anything beyond an assent to the truths of the Gospel. The words are the same both in the Larger and in the Shorter Catechism, "professing their faith in CHRIST and obedience to Him."

This, and the two very interesting Acts of Assembly support, I make bold to urge, the view here maintained that the Church of Scotland, even while imposing—to keep out Episcopalians—a very stringent *Formula*, yet drew distinctions between the fundamental verities, contained in the Confession, and its determinations on matters of less importance; and drew these distinctions, moreover, at the very point which separates the extremer positions of Calvinism from the great doctrines of the Catholic, and Reformed, Faith.

In Scotland, as in England, there were efforts made, in the later decades of the Eighteenth century, to get rid of clerical subscription, but all such proposals were discouraged by Principal Robertson, although he was himself a Moderate and the leader of the Moderates. It would be absurd to say that he and his friends (who had all subscribed the Confession in the Formula of 1711, and answered "satisfactorily" the Ordination questions then prescribed) regarded themselves as bound thereby to "every proposition or clause" in the Confession. It was notorious that they did not. It would be unfair to say that, in acting thus, they were all dishonest. Candour was the virtue on which they prided themselves, and were regarded by the whole country as possessing. Yet though a tradition of toleration, not to say of laxity, grew up  
1745-81 within the Church, the *Paraphrases* (1745-81) are there to

<sup>1</sup> Compare the *Form of Process* (Ministers) "if the errors be not gross and striking at the vitals of religion."



shew how clear, and how warm, was the faith of many a Moderate divine.

To all the Churches the French Revolution supplied an object lesson which recalled to them the value of definite Christian doctrine; and the Church of Scotland, like others, became once more pronouncedly orthodox; still, even in such writers as Dr. Hill, the tone and temper are certainly not hyper-Calvinistic. The same thing may be observed among the other party in the Church. The men who were to form the Free Church expressed, no doubt, a strong admiration for the Covenants and the principles of "the Second Reformation." They copied only too exactly the methods of the Protesters. But their own personal beliefs were in many points different from those of Seventeenth-century Puritanism. This was felt at the time in regard to the Evangelical preaching of Dr. Chalmers, and was really much more marked in the Zwinglianism of his friend, Principal William Cunningham.<sup>1</sup> It would not have been possible, without much indulgence, to square the teaching of either with certain statements of the Westminster Standards. But who ever spoke of prosecuting either?

After the lamentable Secession of 1843—the greatest calamity, perhaps, that ever befell our nation—the Moderate clergy were loudly, if not quite justly, blamed for having caused it by their failure to "preach the Gospel"; and the voice of their pulpits became, for twenty years, that of the Evangelical orthodoxy. But the same influences were at work in Scotland as had led in England to the Clerical Subscription Act of 1865.<sup>2</sup> Dean Stanley, who may be said to have been the procuring cause of that Act, was a *persona grata* to many in the Church of Scotland;<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Tait, who was its efficient cause, was himself a Scotchman; while, on the other hand, we hardly felt the conservative power of the Oxford movement. But if those among us who desired a

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. John Macleod on Baptism in *The Divine Life in the Church*, vol. i., pp. 133 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Dean Stanley's *Lectures on the Church of Scotland* were delivered in Edinburgh in 1872.

relaxation of subscription were successful in obtaining the  
 1889 great Act of Assembly of 1889, their victory became an occasion for a notable assertion of the Church's orthodoxy, and a no less notable renewal of the distinction she had drawn (in her Acts of 1696 and 1720, and always in her practice) between "the grand mysteries of the Gospel," "the great and fundamental truths," and what she now spoke of as "unnecessary burdens as to *forms of expression* and *matters* which do *not enter into the substance of the faith.*"

Moreover, whatever may be the real meaning of the Act of Parliament of 1690, no one can doubt as to the sense in which its terms were understood by the General Assembly of 1889. The *substance of the Faith* whereof this Assembly speaks is certainly not the whole *Confession of Faith*: it is something therein embodied; though there are associated with it matters of inferior importance. Here is the Act, with its Formula and Ordination Questions:—

1889, Act 17.—*Act on Subscription of Office-bearers of the Church.*

EDINBURGH, *May 27, 1889, Session 6.*

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Standing Committee on Classifying Returns to Overtures, which was given in by the Agent, Convener.

The Committee reported on Overture No. I., on Subscription of Office-bearers, that 64 Presbyteries had approved, 16 had disapproved, and 4 had suggested alterations.

It was moved and seconded, and upon a division agreed to—That this Overture, having been approved of by a majority of the Presbyteries, be now converted into a standing law of the Church. The following is its tenor:

Whereas it is expedient that the formulas presently in use in this Church should be so revised and amended that, *while affording security on the part of all who subscribe them for their adherence to "the true Reformed religion heretofore received in this realm," and to "the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church,"* they should at the same time be in accordance with statute law, and so expressed as *not to present any unnecessary impediment to the acceptance of office by duly qualified persons*: For these causes the General Assembly, with the consent of a majority of the Presbyteries of the Church, enact and ordain, that ministers at their ordination, and licentiates when receiving licence

shall subscribe to the Confession of Faith as required by Act of Parliament 1693, cap. 38, entitled, An Act for settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church, in terms of the formula hereinafter prescribed. And further, the General Assembly enact and ordain, that all elders at the time of their ordination, in accordance with the Act of Assembly 1690, shall subscribe their approbation of the Confession and Presbyterian government of the Church, in terms of the formula hereinafter prescribed for them. And further, that the questions hereinafter prescribed, and none other, shall be put respectively to ministers before ordination, to probationers before licence, and to elders before ordination.

The General Assembly, *while desiring by these changes to enlarge rather than curtail any liberty heretofore enjoyed, and to relieve subscribers from unnecessary burdens as to forms of expression and matters which do not enter into the substance of the faith, declare, at the same time, the adherence of the Church to the Confession of Faith, as its public and avowed confession, and containing the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches.*

*Formula hereinbefore appointed to be subscribed by ministers at their ordination, and by probationers when receiving licence.*

I declare the Confession of Faith, approved by former General Assemblies of this Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be the confession of my faith, and I own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine, which I will constantly adhere to. As likewise I own and acknowledge Presbyterian Church government, as now and for long 1889 time settled by law, to be the only government of this Church, and I will submit thereto and concur therewith, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof. As also I will observe that uniformity of worship and of the administration of all public ordinances in this Church, as the same are at present performed and allowed, or shall be hereafter declared by the authority of the same.

*Questions hereinbefore appointed to be put to ministers before their ordination.*

1. Do you believe the Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the supreme rule of faith and morals?

2. Do you declare the Confession of Faith of this Church to be the confession of your faith?

3. Do you acknowledge Presbyterian Church government, as now settled by law, to be the only government of this Church; and do you promise to submit thereto, concur therewith, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof?

4. Do you promise to submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness, unto the admonitions of the brethren of this Presbytery; and to be subject to them, and all other Presbyteries and superior judicatories of this Church where God in His providence shall cast your lot: And that, according to your power, you shall maintain the unity and peace of this Church against error and schism, notwithstanding of whatsoever trouble or persecution may arise: And that you shall follow no divisive courses from the present established doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church?

5. Are not zeal for the honour of God, love to JESUS CHRIST, and desire of saving souls, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the function of the holy ministry, and not worldly designs and interest?

6. Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring this call?

7. Do you engage in the strength and grace of JESUS CHRIST, our Lord and Master, to rule well your own family, to live a holy and circumspect life, and faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work, to the edification of the body of CHRIST?

8. Do you accept of, and close with, the call to be pastor of this parish, and promise through grace to perform all the duties of a faithful minister of the Gospel among this people?

*Questions hereinbefore appointed to be put to probationers before licence.*

1. Do you believe the Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the supreme rule of faith and morals?

2. Do you declare the Confession of Faith of this Church to be the confession of your faith?

1839 3. Do you acknowledge Presbyterian Church government, as now settled by law, to be the only government of this Church; and do you promise to submit thereto, concur therewith, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof?

*Formula hereinbefore appointed to be subscribed by elders at their ordination.*

I hereby declare my approbation of the Confession of Faith, as approved by this Church and ratified by law in 1690; and I promise to submit myself to the discipline and Presbyterian government of the Church as established by law, and will never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof.

*Questions hereinbefore appointed to be put to elders before their ordination.*

Do you approve of the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church, and promise never, directly or indirectly, to attempt the prejudice or subversion thereof?

*Note to the foregoing Act:*

*Eodem die, Session 7.*

It was moved, seconded, and agreed to—That the General Assembly instruct Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, that before any Minister, Licentiate, or Elder be asked to sign the respective formulas, the whole Preamble of the Act anent Subscription of Office-bearers of the Church be read over to him.

It was followed up in the next Assembly by an

Act that Subscription of the *Formulas* appointed by Act XVII., 1889, be held Equivalent to Subscription of the *Formulas* previously in use.

*Edinburgh, June 2, 1890, Session 13. 1890*

*Inter alia,—*

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee on Classifying Returns to Overtures, which was given in by the Agent, Convener, who reported that the Overture No. 4, anent Subscription, had received the assent of the majority of the Presbyteries of the Church.

It was moved, seconded, and agreed to—That the Overture having received the approval of a large majority of the Presbyteries, be now converted into a standing law of the Church. The following is its tenor:—

Whereas by Act XVII. of General Assembly of 1889 it is enacted that Ministers at their ordination, and Licentiates when receiving licence, shall subscribe the Formula and answer the questions therein appointed; and it is further enacted and ordained that Elders shall subscribe at their ordination the Formula therein appointed for Elders, and there may be other occasions upon which Ministers and Elders are required to sign the Formulas and answer the questions in use previous to the passing of the said Act XVII. 1889: And whereas it is desirable that subscription of the Formulas appointed by the said Act XVII. 1889 should be held equivalent to subscription of the Formulas previously in use,—Therefore the General Assembly, with consent of the Presbyteries of the Church, hereby declares and enacts that where by any existing Act of General Assembly any Minister or Elder is required to sign any Formula and answer any questions, the signing of the Formulas and answering the questions appointed by

Act XVII. 1889, to be signed and answered by them respectively, shall be held to be equivalent to and to come in place of the signing of the corresponding Formula and answering the corresponding questions prescribed by the Acts of Assembly, 1694 and 1711 respectively, as the case may be.

But while these Acts gave relief to many, there were still those whose conscience felt aggrieved, especially by the words in the Formula for Ministers, "I own the *Confession of Faith* . . . to be the confession of *my faith*"; and the General 1899 Assembly of 1899 appointed a Committee "to consider the power which the Church possesses of modifying the terms of the Ministers' Formula of adherence to the Confession of Faith." Authority was given to the Committee to take the opinion of counsel, and they consulted Mr. Asher, Mr. Rankine, and Mr. Constable. These eminent counsel were of opinion that "the provisions of the Act 1693, c. 38, with regard to the subscription of the Confession of Faith and the relative declaration were still in force, had not been abrogated, and were still binding on the Church"; moreover, "that the Church could not lawfully impose a more stringent formula than is warranted by the Act of 1693; but the formula imposed in 1711 was more stringent than the statute warranted; and that it could not lawfully be revived." The Committee reported to the Assembly of 1901 as follows:

1901 "1. The Church Courts have in their judicial capacity the fullest powers in dealing with cases of alleged error in doctrine. 2. The Church may also by a declaratory Act explain or define doctrinal points as to which the Confession is *ambiguous* or *silent*. 3. But so long as the Act 1690 remains in force, the Church has no power by a declaratory Act or otherwise to modify, abridge, or extend, any article of the Confession."

There were dissents in Committee to this conclusion; but when the report was given in, it was moved and seconded—Receive the Report, thank the Committee for their diligence, and discharge them.

It was also moved as an Addendum—"In resolving, in the meantime, to proceed no further in the matter, the General Assembly refer to their Act on Subscription of Office-bearers in the Church (XVII. 1889), in which they declared their desire, by the changes then enacted, 'to enlarge rather than curtail any liberty heretofore enjoyed, and to

relieve subscribers from unnecessary burdens as to forms of expression and matters which do not enter into the substance of the faith.' The General Assembly renew this declaration; and recognising that the complete and exclusive jurisdiction in all causes concerning the faith which is inherent in the Church of CHRIST has been ratified and guaranteed to the Church of Scotland by National Statutes, and that the Church's ultimate authority in all such matters are Holy Scriptures and the HOLY SPIRIT, the General Assembly are confident that the office-bearers in the Church will so exercise its jurisdiction as not to oppress the consciences of any who, while owning the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, are not certain as to *some less important determinations also contained in it.*"

This motion, with the Addendum, was carried by a majority of 178 to 146.

The agitation, moreover, was continued, and in 1903 there came before the Assembly an Overture from the Presbytery of Greenock with reference to the Formula of Subscription to the Westminster Confession.

"Mr. Murray, Kilmalcolm, was heard in support of the Overture.

"It was moved and seconded—In requiring subscription to the Formula legalised by Act of the Scots Parliament, 1693, the General Assembly does now expressly declare that the Confession of Faith is to be regarded not as an infallible creed imposed on the consciences of men, but as a system of doctrine valid only in so far as it accords with Holy Scripture, interpreted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

"A second motion was moved and seconded—

"Finding that ambiguity exists as to the authority of the Confession of Faith, to which all office-bearers in the Church are required to subscribe according to the Formula prescribed by Act of Parliament, 1693, the General Assembly, considering that the said Confession is based upon Holy Scripture, and having specially in view Chapter I. sects. 9, 10, Chapter XX. sect. 2, and also Chapter XXXI. sect. 4, wherein it is expressly set forth 'That God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of Faith and Worship'; 'That the Supreme Judge by which all controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentences we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture,' hereby declare that the Confession of Faith is to be regarded as an infallible rule of Faith and Worship only in so far as it accords with Holy Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

"The General Assembly re-affirm their declaration in Act XVII. 1889, and their Deliverance upon the Report of the Committee on the Powers of the Church, contained in Proceedings of Session 6 of Assembly 1901, and instruct that these be read along with this declaration to all office-bearers in the Church when called to sign the Formula legalised by Act of Parliament, 1693.

"A third motion was moved and seconded—The General Assembly remit the Overture from the Presbytery of Greenock to a Committee to take the matter of the Overture into serious consideration, and especially to consider whether an approach should not be made to the Legislature in connection with the Confession and Formula, and what form such an appeal should take.

"With consent of the House the first motion was withdrawn in favour of the second.

"A test vote having been taken between the second motion and the third, the second motion was carried by a very large majority."

It seems that it was not necessary that the Declaratory Act contained in the Second Motion, which was carried—important as it was—should run the gauntlet of the Presbyteries under the Barrier Act. It was brought before the Assembly as part of a motion of which no previous notice had been given; and it was accepted without much discussion, and without adjournment. But serious objection to its terms was taken afterwards, on the grounds that (1) it is based on a very doubtful interpretation of the passage in the Confession which it professes to follow; (2) that it apparently makes the assent of the individual the criterion of truth. The hope of getting rid of this Declaration undoubtedly contributed to the unanimity of the support which the Assembly of 1905 gave to the proposals of the Church Interests Committee.

1904 On Monday, 1st August, 1904, judgment was given in the House of Lords on the great case of "the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland *versus* Lord Overtoun and others," in which it was held that the Free Church had made out its complaint of a breach of trust by the diverting of certain property given for the use of the Free Church of Scotland "to the maintenance and support of another and different body, namely, the United Free Church";



and the Lord Chancellor based his judgment partly on the ground that whereas the Free Church had originally professed "the Establishment principle," the United Free Church left that an open question; and partly on the ground that the Declaratory Act passed by the Free Church Assembly in 1892 was in flagrant contradiction of its own Standard, the Confession of Faith.<sup>1</sup>

In consequence of this decision the Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland took up, in October, 1904, the question of the Confession of Faith and Formula of Subscription, and *inter alia* reported as follows to the Assembly of 1905:

The most important portion of the work which has this year devolved 1905 upon the Committee has reference to the situation created in Scotland by the judgment of the House of Lords in the autumn of last year.

In most of its aspects—probably in its larger and more important aspects—that judgment did not directly affect the Church of Scotland; but an event of such far-reaching importance could not take place without having at any rate indirect bearing upon the relationship subsisting between Church and State in Scotland.

Having regard to the original instructions given to the Committee by the General Assembly of 1882, "to watch over and take any steps they may think necessary and advisable in regard to any questions or measures which may be brought before the Legislature affecting the interests of the Church," it was impossible for the Committee not to feel that a very direct duty was laid upon them to watch the course of events in so far as they might affect the interests of the Church of Scotland. . . .

At meetings of your Committee held in the course of last autumn it became apparent that the situation has been considerably modified, and that it was the duty of the Committee, in the light of events to which allusion has already been made, to reconsider the subject.

It was obvious that the judgment of the House of Lords had turned the attention of the people of Scotland to the whole question in a manner which seemed to open the way for its careful and deliberate consideration, with greater possibilities of advantage than seemed likely at any previous time.

It was seen that one effect of the judgment of the House of Lords would be that an appeal to Parliament would have to be made, and your Committee felt that if, after full discussion of the position of the Church of Scotland, it became apparent that we could agree to go to

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<sup>1</sup> *Free Church of Scotland Appeals, Authorized Report*, pp. 562 sqq.

Parliament, either unanimously or by a substantial majority, to ask for some alteration in the terms of subscription required of ministers under the Act of 1693, the opportunity should not be lost. . . .

The question whether our request to Parliament should go in the direction of repealing the Formula prescribed by the Act of 1693, and substituting another form of it on the suggestion of the Church, or whether it would be more expedient to take the second of the two courses indicated above, was the subject of long and anxious consideration by your Committee.

The difficulties involved in suggesting a Formula, having regard to the situation now existing, are obviously very great. The conditions under which we should have to proceed are :

1. That the Formula must be of a binding character.
2. It must bind the subscriber to a certain statutory document.
3. It must not bind him to every detail of that document.
4. It must avoid specification of parts as binding, and parts as not.

On the other hand, any change that it is worth while to ask for must obviously conform to the following conditions :

1. What we ask for must be something worth having, of substantial character, and obviously so to any candid mind.
2. That whatever we ask for shall be asked for by a vote which represents a very large majority of the Church; and that it is *perfectly clear that as a Church we remain loyally bound to the Reformed Faith.*
3. That it shall be something that Parliament may be reasonably expected to grant, so as to increase the efficiency of the Church in furthering the religious instruction of the people.

Your Committee are unanimously of opinion that it would be very inexpedient to ask Parliament to substitute another Formula for the existing one. It is obvious that such a change of Formula—seeing that the authority under which the change is to be made is that of Parliament, and that the same authority would have to be appealed to for any subsequent change, however slight—raises a very different set of conditions from the proposal now made that the Church, under proper constitutional safeguards, might have power, without derogating from essentials or disregarding the “sum and substance,” to make any modification that in the fulness of time might be found to relieve subscribers from unnecessary burdens as to forms of expression and matters which do not enter into the substance of the Faith. The Committee do not undervalue the security for the maintenance of the Reformed Faith which is afforded by the alliance of the Church with the State. But they believe that a new statutory formula, however carefully framed and however well fitted it may appear to bear the test of time, might, in virtue of its modern statutory origin and sanction, be regarded as a disabling barrier by some who find

no stumbling-block in the terms of the establishment of the Church on the basis of the Reformed Faith under the Act of 1690.

Your Committee think that many of those who look with apprehension upon the policy of making any approach to Parliament at all, base their judgment in no small degree on the consideration which is here indicated.

If, therefore, there was no alternative but to ask for the enactment in special terms of a new Formula, the considerations against approaching Parliament would be of much greater force than as it seems to your Committee they are.

While the Act of 1690 is expressly embodied in the Act of Union, this is not the case with the Act of 1693, which has already been amended, and, in part, repealed by the Imperial Parliament.

Your Committee have held four meetings, specially devoted to the discussion of this subject.

At the first, in October, 92 members were present, and letters were received in addition from 47 others.

At the second meeting, in November, there was an attendance of 126 members, and letters were received from 25 others. A full Memorandum on the situation was considered at this meeting; and while some members expressed doubt as to whether there was really any deep-seated dissatisfaction in the Church with the existing state of matters, the feeling of a very large majority of the meeting was in the affirmative, and that it would be wise maturely to consider the whole situation.

At the meeting in March, 85 members were present, and letters were received from 38 others. At this meeting a long discussion took place, and many varying suggestions were made. The following resolution was adopted:

“Approve generally of the policy indicated in the Memorandum, May, 1905 and while reserving freedom of criticism of the details of any proposals that may be put forward on their merits, suggest that the Legislation Committee should be requested to formulate proposals to carry out the policy indicated, namely:

“That our request to Parliament should be with the object of securing to the Church the right to regulate her own affairs within and upon the Act of 1690 and the Confession of Faith, so that our position would be that we should have the right as a Church to make our own Formula, and it would then be possible for the Church, while not going outside of the Confession of Faith or *derogating from it in essentials*, to retain the power of modifying from time to time under its own constitutional procedure the actual terms of subscription.”

Thereafter the Committee on Legislation gave full consideration to the subject, and recommended a Draft Bill in the following form:

*A BILL to amend the Law in regard to the Formula of Subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith required from Ministers and Licentiates of the Church of Scotland.*

BE it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by authority of the same as follows :

1. The Act mentioned in the Schedule is hereby amended in the manner therein set forth.

Amendment of Act mentioned in the Schedule. Short title and commencement.

2. This Act may be cited as the Church of Scotland Act, 1905, and shall come into force when a new formula shall have been prescribed in the manner set forth in the Schedule.

SCHEDULE.

The Act passed by the Parliament of Scotland held by King William and Queen Mary at Edinburgh the 12th day of June 1693, intituled "An Act for settling the quiet and peace of the Church."

WORDS REPEALED.

Declaring the same to be the Confession of his Faith, and that he owns the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine, which he will constantly adhere to, as likewise.

WORDS SUBSTITUTED THEREFOR, AND TO BE READ AS PART OF THE ACT.

Together with a declaration of his faith in the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches therein contained according to such formula as may from time to time be prescribed by the General Assembly of the said Church, with the consent of the majority of the Presbyteries of the Church, and also a declaration.

This report from the Committee on Legislation came up at the Meeting of your Committee held on the 9th of May.

On the presentation of this Report, and in response to questions as to Procedure, the Convener (the Right Hon. the Lord Balfour of Burleigh) informed the meeting that he proposed to move the following resolution :

That the Committee having considered the proposed Bill put before them by the Committee on Legislation, in pursuance of the request made to that Committee on the 1st of March last, approve of the same and agree to report it to the Assembly for approval in conjunction with the Committee on Legislation, and meantime instruct the Convener to send a copy of the Bill and of this Resolution to the Prime Minister, the Secretary for Scotland, and the Lord Advocate.

It was moved and seconded—

That the Committee delay meantime making any recommendation to the assembly on the subject of approaching Parliament with a view to legislation as to the relations of the Church to the Confession of Faith.

This motion was put to the meeting, and a vote taken upon it, when it was rejected by 65 votes to 10. From this decision there dissented Dr. Macdonald, Dr. Niven, Dr. Robertson (St. Ninians), Dr. Alexander Williamson, Mr. Douglas (Arbroath), Mr. A. T. Niven.

It is worth noting, that of 49 letters of apology received only 3 contained any expression of dissent from the course recommended by the Committee on Legislation.

Your Committee then proceeded to consider on its merits the Draft Bill recommended by the Committee on Legislation. It was moved and seconded to amend the terms suggested in the Schedule, so as to make it read, "declaring his faith in the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches therein contained."

This motion was by leave withdrawn.

The motion proposed by the Convener was then put to the meeting, and carried without a division being challenged. From this decision there dissented Dr. Robertson, Dr. Niven, Mr. Douglas, Mr. A. T. Niven.

Dr. Robertson subsequently sent to the Convener the following Reasons of Dissent, to which Dr. Niven intimated his adherence :

I. The present formula, containing an accurate expression of the position held by adherents to any religious Confession, ought not to be abolished so long as the Westminster Confession of Faith remains one of the standards of belief of the Church of Scotland.

II. No indication has been given by the people of Scotland or by the members and office-bearers of the Church of Scotland that they desire a change of formula, and no legislation on the subject should take place until unequivocal evidence is afforded of such a general desire.

III. The result of the Bill recommended by a majority of the Church Interests Committee, permitting the General Assembly from time to time to change the formula, will of necessity be the introduction of an element of turmoil into the Church, injury to the religious interests of the country, incitement to division and public disturbance, and a step towards complete separation of Church and State.

IV. The Formula proposed is ambiguous, incapable of clear interpretation, and in every respect inferior to the existing formula.

V. The present time is singularly inopportune for such a measure, in view of the divided condition of the non-established Presbyterian Churches in Scotland.

Mr. Douglas sent Reasons of Dissent as follows :

I. The time is inopportune.

II. The Assembly of 1905 should not be asked to commit the Church to so momentous a proposal.

III. The proposal would not increase theological liberty.

IV. It is inconsistent with the position and principles of the Church as established by law.

1905 In giving in this Report to the General Assembly (Friday, 26th May, 1905) Lord Balfour said, "Whatever we ask from Parliament should be asked for by a vote that represents a very large majority of the Church, and makes it perfectly clear that as a Church we remain loyally bound to the Reformation faith," and he concluded by moving:

"The General Assembly approve the Report . . . cordially approve of the course followed by the Committee with reference to the Formula of subscription required from ministers and professors of theology to the Confession of Faith; they express general approval of the proposed Bill printed in the Report, and instruct the Committee, and the Committee on Legislation to take such steps as they may deem opportune to secure legislation on the lines indicated."

The motion was carried unanimously in a very full Assembly.

This was what the Assembly asked of Parliament: that in subscribing the Confession ministers and professors of theology should therewith "declare their faith in the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches contained in the Confession." It was not this which Parliament gave. The Bill, as passed, dealt mainly with the position into which the judgment of the House of Lords had brought the Free Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland; is quoted as the "CHURCHES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1905"; and is intitled:—

1905 "*An Act to provide for the Settlement of certain Questions between the Free Church and the United Free Church in Scotland, and to make certain amendments of the Law with respect to the Church of Scotland.*"

The only parts of it relating to the Church of Scotland are these:

And whereas it is expedient to amend the law relating to the subscrip-

tion of the Confession of Faith by Ministers of the Church of Scotland and others :

5. The formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith required from ministers and preachers of the Church of Scotland as by law established and from persons appointed to Chairs of Theology in the Scottish Universities and the Principal of Saint Mary's College, Saint Andrews, respectively, shall be such as may be prescribed by Act of the General Assembly of the said Church with the consent of the majority of the presbyteries thereof. The formula at present in use in any case shall be required until a formula in lieu thereof is so prescribed.

Formula of Subscription to the Confession of Faith in the Church of Scotland.

SECOND SCHEDULE.

ENACTMENTS REPEALED.

Act.	Title.	Extent of Repeal.
An Act of the Parliament of Scotland passed in the year one thousand six hundred and ninety-three.	Act for settling the quiet and peace of the church.	The words 'the same to be the confession of his faith, and that he owns the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine which he will constantly adhere to, as'
An Act of the Parliament of Scotland passed in the year one thousand seven hundred and seven.	Act for securing the Protestant religion and Presbyterian Church government.	The words 'do and shall acknowledge and profess and,' and the words 'as the confession of their faith.'

The General Assembly of 1906 "received with deep satisfaction that part of the Report of the Committee which refers to the Formula of Subscription to the Confession of Faith, and the legislation of last year in regard thereto, and expressed their gratitude to all those who contributed to the result. In view of the manifest necessity for calm and careful deliberation in framing a formula such as is referred to in the 'Churches (Scotland) Act, 1895,' they appointed a Special Committee to consider the situation now presented, with

power to submit to the next General Assembly, if so advised, a formula such as in their opinion is suitable for adoption by the Church."

On this weighty task the Committee is accordingly engaged.

## VI.

### THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

When, as a consequence of the Revolution of 1688, the Scottish Bishops were deprived, and Presbyterian government re-established in the National Church, the clergy who had served under Episcopacy were unaccustomed to any subscription, though certain of the prelates seem to have required a more or less formal acceptance of the old Scottish Confession (1560), and some (if Burnet may be trusted) of that of Westminster Really, the only doctrinal standards at this period were the Scriptures and the Apostles' Creed. There had been, however, a movement among the younger clergy prior to the Revolution, in favour of a Liturgy, and that Liturgy the English Book of Common Prayer.

To this movement, the disestablishing of Episcopacy proved eminently favourable: it removed the politic scruples of the 1690 Bishops:<sup>1</sup> indeed, it made it politic for the Episcopalian clergy—those of them, alike, who took the oaths of allegiance to the new Sovereigns, and those who refused these oaths—to approximate as closely as possible to the Church of England, as the only body which could really give them any help. Accordingly we find that very soon, especially among "the Conform Episcopalsians,"<sup>2</sup> the English Liturgy was in regular use; which meant, of course, that not only the Apostles' Creed, but the Nicene and the Athanasian, were regularly said in public worship. The "Scottish Episcopalsians 1711 Act" of Queen Anne (1711), after a preamble:—

<sup>1</sup> See Grub, *Ecl. Hist. Scot.* iii. 217.

<sup>2</sup> The Non-juring Episcopalsians in Scotland preferred the Scottish Prayer Book of Charles I. (1637): by 1731 this was *their* Liturgy; and out of its Communion Office, the Scottish Communion Office (1764) was to some extent developed.



“Whereas since the abolishing of Episcopal government in Scotland those of the Episcopal persuasion there have been frequently disturbed and interrupted in their religious assemblies, and their ministers prosecuted for reading the English service to their congregations,<sup>1</sup> and for administering the Sacraments according to the form and manner of the Church of England,”

provides :—

(1) “It shall be free and lawful for all those of the Episcopal communion in that part of Great Britain called Scotland to meet and assemble for the exercise of Divine worship to be performed after their own manner by pastors ordained by a Protestant bishop and who are not established ministers of any church or parish, and to use in their congregations the Liturgy of the Church of England *if they think fit*, without any let or hindrance. . . .”

(2) “Provided always that *none shall presume to exercise the function of a pastor* in the said Episcopal meetings except such as shall have received *Holy Orders from the hands of a Protestant bishop*. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

(3) “Provided also that neither this Act shall . . . extend to give any ease, benefit or advantage to any Papist or Popish recusant whatsoever, or to *any that shall deny* in his preaching or writing *the doctrine of the blessed Trinity*.”

(4) “And every minister or preacher as well of the Established Church in Scotland as those of the *Episcopal communion protected and allowed* by this Act shall at some time during the exercise of the Divine service in such respective church, congregation or assembly pray in express words for her most sacred Majesty Queen Anne, and the most excellent Princess Sophia, Electress and Dutchess dowager of Hanover while living, etc.”

It will be noticed that no word is said of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

Legislation of a distinctly penal character against the Non-juring Episcopalians began in 1719; and in 1746 and in 1719  
1748, very severe Acts were passed which reduced the 1746  
Scottish Episcopal Church to the “shadow of a shade.”<sup>3</sup> 1748  
These Penal Laws were, in a great measure, removed in 1792 1792

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, in the case of Greenshields (1709-11), Grub, iii. 361 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> This part of the Act is still in force; so that, even if they would, the Scottish Episcopal clergy are hindered by Statute Law from admitting ministers not episcopally ordained to take service in their churches. See *Scots Statutes Revised*, vol. i. p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> *Guy Mannering*, chap. 37.

(after the death of Prince Charles Edward), by an Act of Parliament (32 George III. 3), which gave to the Scottish Episcopal Church a statutory Confession; and under which for the first time her ministers were required to *subscribe* any declaration of belief. Entitled an "Act for granting relief to Pastors, Ministers, and Lay Persons of the Episcopal Communion in Scotland," it provides—for this part of it is still in force—*inter alia*

"That every person who shall exercise the function of a pastor or a minister in any Episcopal chapel, meeting-house, or congregation in Scotland shall . . . subscribe a declaration of his assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, as contained in the Act passed in the thirteenth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in the words following; videlicet,

"I, A. B., pastor of a congregation of persons in the Episcopal communion in Scotland meeting for Divine Worship at — in the county of —, do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe to the Book of Articles of Religion agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces in the realm of England, and the whole clergy thereof in the convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred and sixty-two; and I do acknowledge all and every the articles therein contained, being in number thirty-nine, besides the ratification, to be agreeable to the Word of God."<sup>1</sup>

The clergy shewed no great haste to comply with this Act: and the Primus of the day suggested that the Scottish Episcopal Church should "adopt the Articles of the Church of England, in like manner with her Liturgy as her own," and require all ordinands *ex animo* to subscribe them.

1804 In 1804 the Act of Parliament received ecclesiastical sanction. A Convocation of the Bishops and Clergy of the Episcopal Church, called for the purpose, unanimously adopted "the Thirty-Nine Articles as the public test or standard of the religious principles of our Church";

and all present subscribed them in the form prescribed in the Relief Act; the Bishops undertaking to require a similar subscription from all candidates for Holy Orders in the future. This obligation to subscribe was enforced in the first Code of

1811 Canons of the Scottish Episcopal Church enacted in 1811.

<sup>1</sup>This is the Formula of the English Canons of 1604.

It was not, however, till 1890 that the Scottish Episcopal 1890 clergy came under express obligation to use the Prayer-Book form, "and none other," save so far as that had been previously implied by their general promise of obedience to the Canons of 1811; and that in 1863 the General Synod had adopted the Book of Common Prayer as the Service Book of the Church for all the purposes to which it is applicable. The Synod of 1890 enacted that the English form of subscription of 1865 should be used in future, but with certain variations. One of these is not unimportant: for the English words, "except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority," the Scottish Episcopal Church reads: "except so far as shall be altered by lawful authority *in this Church*"; an amendment which allows the Bishop a certain power to authorise departures from the letter of the Prayer-Book of 1662. It is said that there is in the Scottish Episcopal Church a diminishing tendency to refer to the Thirty-Nine Articles as its leading standard of doctrine, if they ever were so; and to refer, more and more, simply to the authority of the Ancient Creeds of the Church Universal, the Nicene Creed in particular: also that, while by no means tired of the Prayer-Book either as *lex credendi* or *lex orandi*, there is a feeling that it is hardly as elastic as might be wished.<sup>1</sup>

It should be added that Canon XII. of the Scottish Episcopal Church contains the very liberal declaration: "The form of subscription promising obedience to the Canons of this Church implies only obedience to their requirements, and not necessarily approval of everything therein contained, or that may be supposed to be inferred therefrom."

## VII.

### THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

The Free Church of Scotland began her separate course in 1843 on the theory of a continuity unbroken with the ecclesiastical past. Dr. Welsh, the Moderator of the General Assembly

<sup>1</sup>For a good deal of the matter in this section, I am indebted to a paper kindly lent to me by my esteemed friend, the Very Rev. Dean Wilson, Edinburgh.

of 1842, when the time came for making up the roll of the General Assembly of 1843, said that

“in consequence of certain proceedings affecting our rights and privileges, proceedings which have been sanctioned by Her Majesty’s Government, and by the legislature of the country, and more especially in respect that there has been an infringement on the liberties of our constitution, so that we could not now constitute this Court without a violation of the terms of the union between Church and State as now authoritatively declared, I must protest against our proceeding further.”

He then read a “Protest,” previously prepared, and signed by two hundred and three ministers and elders, commissioners to the Assembly, which (after detailing the grievances complained of) declared :—

“We protest that, in the circumstances in which we are placed, it is and shall be lawful for us, and such other Commissioners chosen to the Assembly appointed to have been this day holden, as may concur with us, to *withdraw to a separate place of meeting*, for the purpose of taking steps for ourselves and all who adhere to us—*maintaining with us the Confession of Faith and standards of the Church of Scotland as heretofore understood*—for *separating, in an orderly way, from the Establishment*; and thereupon adopting such measures as may be competent to us, in humble dependence on God’s grace and the aid of the Holy Spirit, for the advancement of His glory, the extension of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, and the administration of the affairs of Christ’s house, according to His holy Word.”

The Free Church accordingly took with her the Confession of Faith, and the Formula and Ordination Questions of 1711; together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Directory of Public Worship sanctioned by the General Assembly of 1705. To these she *added* certain more recent documents connected with the struggle of the previous ten years—“the Third Reformation of the Church of Scotland,” as they termed it<sup>1</sup>—“The Claim, Declaration, and Protest against the encroachments of the Court of Session,” which had been carried by a large majority in the Assembly of 1842; the “Address to the Queen thereanent” (1842); the “Protest by the Commissioners to the General

<sup>1</sup>From “Authorized Standards of the Free Church,” the publication of which was “sanctioned” by its General Assembly in 1851.

Assembly appointed to meet on 18th May, 1843"; the 1843 "Act of Separation and Deed of Demission by Ministers, 1843"; and the "Supplementary Act and Deed of Demission by Ministers." But she soon saw fit to take a further step, and her General Assembly, in 1846, enacted:

"Whereas it has become necessary, in consequence of the late 1846 change in the outward condition of the Church, to amend the Questions and Formula to be used at the licensing of Probationers, and the ordination of Deacons, Elders, and Ministers respectively, the General Assembly, with consent of a majority of Presbyteries, enact and ordain, that the following shall be the questions so to be used; And, considering that the Formula to this Act subjoined embodies the substance of the answers to the said questions, the Assembly appoint the same to be subscribed by all Probationers of the Church before receiving license to preach the Gospel, and by all office-bearers at the time of their admission: And the General Assembly, in passing this Act, think it right to declare, that, while the Church *firmly maintains the same Scriptural principles as to the duties of nations and their rulers* in reference to true religion and *the Church of Christ*, for which she has hitherto contended, *she disclaims intolerant and persecuting principles*, 1846 *and does not regard her Confession of Faith, or any portion thereof, when fairly interpreted, as favouring intolerance or persecution*, or consider that her office-bearers, by subscribing it, profess any principles inconsistent with liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment.

I. ELDERS AND DEACONS.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners? Free Church  
1846

2. Do you sincerely own and declare the Confession of Faith approved by former General Assemblies of this Church, to be the confession of your faith; and do you own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine to which you will constantly adhere?

3. . . . .

4. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head of the Church, has therein appointed a government in the hands of church-officers, distinct from, and not subordinate in its own province to civil government, and that the Civil Magistrate does not possess jurisdiction or authoritative control over the regulation of the affairs of Christ's Church; and do you approve of the general principles embodied in the Claim, Declaration and Protest, adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1842, and in the Protest of Ministers and Elders, Commissioners from Presbyteries to the General Assembly, read in presence of the Royal Commissioner

on 18th May, 1843, as declaring the views which are sanctioned by the Word of God, and the standards of this Church, with respect to the spirituality and freedom of the Church of Christ, and her subjection to Him as her only Head and to His Word as her only standard?

9. . . . Are you willing to subscribe to these things?

#### II. PROBATIONERS.

1. (Same as to Elders.)

2. Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith approved by the General Assemblies of this Church, to be the truths of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; and do you own the whole doctrine therein contained as the confession of your faith?

3. Do you sincerely own the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in this Church, and also own the Presbyterian government and discipline; and are you persuaded that the said doctrine, worship, and discipline, and Church government, are founded upon the Holy Scriptures, and agreeable thereto?

4. (Same as to Elders.)

#### III. PROBATIONERS, AFTER BEING CALLED BY A CONGREGATION, AND MINISTERS AT ADMISSION TO A PASTORAL CHARGE.

1. (Same as to Elders.)

2. Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, approved by former General Assemblies of this Church, to be founded upon the Word of God; and do you acknowledge the same as the confession of your faith; and will you firmly and constantly adhere thereto, and to the utmost of your power assert, maintain, and defend the same, and the purity of worship as presently practised in this Church?

3. Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Erastian and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to, and inconsistent with, the foresaid Confession of Faith?

#### IV. FORMULA.

*(To be subscribed by Probationers before receiving License, and by all Office-bearers at the time of their admission.)*

I, ———, do hereby declare that I sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, approved by

former General Assemblies of this Church, to be the truths of God ; and I do own the same as the confession of my faith ; as likewise I do own the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in the Free Church of Scotland, and also the Presbyterian government and discipline thereof ; which doctrine, worship, and church government, I am persuaded, are founded on the Word of God, and agreeable thereto : I also approve of the general principles respecting the jurisdiction of the Church, and her subjection to Christ as her only Head, which are contained in the Claim of Right and in the Protest referred to in the questions already put to me ; and I promise that, through the grace of God, I shall firmly and constantly adhere to the same, and to the utmost of my power shall in my station, assert, maintain, and defend the said doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church, by Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, together with the liberty and exclusive jurisdiction thereof ; and that I shall, in my practice, conform myself to the said worship, and submit to the said discipline, government, and exclusive jurisdiction, and not endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same ; and I promise that I shall follow no divisive course from the doctrine, worship, discipline, government, and exclusive jurisdiction of this Church, renouncing all doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said doctrine, worship, discipline, government, or jurisdiction of the same."

It will be observed, from the words in italics in the preamble, that we have here, so early as 1846, what is really a "Declaratory Act": the Free Church throughout her history has sought to give relief to scrupulous consciences rather by "explaining"—some would say "explaining away"—this part or that part of the Confession, than by altering the terms of subscription to it. But so far was the Free Church in those days from complaining of the length or fulness of the Standards she took with her, that she actually multiplied their number ; and took in again, at least in a certain fashion, two which had been purposely dropped at the Revolution Settlement, the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, as well as those minor treatises which emanated from the Westminster Assembly. In 1851 her General Assembly passed an

Act and Declaration anent the Publication of the Subordinate Standards 1851 and other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland, in which, after rehearsing how our "Reformers amid many

troubles" had "constructed and modelled the constitution of the Church, in doctrine, worship, and government" in the First Reformation, and in the Second Reformation; and how "this Church, by Commissioners duly named by the General Assembly took part in the Assembly of Divines at Westminster in 1643; and, having in view the uniformity contemplated in the Solemn League and Covenant *consented to adopt* the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Directory of Public Worship, and Form of Church Government, agreed upon by the said Assembly of Divines," she proceeds:—

These several formularies, as ratified, *with certain explanations*, by divers Acts of Assembly in the years 1645, 1646, and particularly in 1647, this Church continues till this day to acknowledge as her subordinate standards of doctrine, worship, and government:—with this difference, however, as regards the authority ascribed to them, that while the *Confession of Faith contains the creed, to which, as a confession of his own faith, every office-bearer in the Church must testify in solemn form his personal adherence*—and while the Catechisms Larger and Shorter are sanctioned as directories for catechising—the Directory for Public Worship, the Form of Church Government, and the Directory for Family Worship, are of the nature of regulations rather than of tests—to be enforced by the Church like her other laws, but not to be imposed by subscription upon her ministers and elders.<sup>1</sup>

The Documents published in accordance with this Act are arranged in two classes:—I. "Standards of the Free Church of Scotland, agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and approved by the General Assembly of 'the Church of Scotland':—(1) The Confession of Faith, (2) The Larger Catechism, (3) The Shorter Catechism, (4) The Sum of Saving Knowledge, (5) The National Covenant, (6) The Solemn League and Covenant, (7) The Acknowledgment of Sins, etc., (8) The Directory for Public Worship, (9) The Form of Presbyterial Church Government, and (10) The Directory for Family Worship; and, II. 'Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland':—(1) Claim,

<sup>1</sup> See the whole Act in the *Authorized Standards of the Free Church*, Edin. 1860. Dr. Chalmers was too weak to attend this Assembly, and on hearing of the overture "expressed himself unfavourable to anything like a renewal of the National Covenants." Hanna, *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers*, chapter 40.



Declaration and Protest, anent the Encroachments of the Court of Session, 1842; (2) Address to the Queen thereanent, 1842; (3) Protest by the Commissioners to the General Assembly appointed to meet on May 18th, 1843; (4) Act of Separation and Deed of Demission by Ministers, 1843; (5) Supplementary Act of Separation and Deed of Demission by Ministers; (6) Act anent Question and Formula."

It is not necessary here to enter into all the events in the history of the Free Church which led to the various modifications which from time to time she made on the position she took up in 1843. Various stages of the development may be seen in the Acts of her General Assembly here subjoined:—

1873.—*Anent the Mutual Eligibility of Ministers of the United Presbyterian, Reformed Presbyterian, and Free Churches.* <sup>Free Church 1873</sup>

. . . In passing this overture into a standing law, the General Assembly think it right to declare, as they hereby do declare, their adherence to the great fundamental principles of this Church regarding—*first*, the sole and supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His exclusive right to rule in and over His own Church, and the consequent obligation of the Church to be regulated in all her proceedings by His Word alone, for which end she claims to be protected in the maintenance of a complete independence in spiritual matters, and immunity from all coercion and control from without; and regarding *secondly*, the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ as head over all things to His Church, and supreme over nations and their rulers, who are consequently bound, collectively and officially as well as individually and personally, to own and honour His authority, to further the interests of His holy religion, and to accept the guidance of His Word as making known His mind and will. . . .

1874.—*Anent Signing of the Formula.*

The General Assembly, with consent of Presbyteries, enact and 1874 ordain, That in every case of induction into any spiritual office or function in this Church, the person to be inducted shall sign the Formula prescribed in Act XII. 1846, intituled *Act anent Questions and Formula*, during public worship on the day of induction, immediately after giving satisfactory answers to the questions appointed in said Act to be put to him; and that in every case of a minister being proposed of a minister who belongs to another branch of the Church of Christ, if the

Presbytery find the call regular . . . they shall transmit to the minister . . . a copy of the said Act XII. 1846, . . . with relative declaration in full (*ut supra*, No. 2); . . . and if no communication is sent beyond a simple acknowledgment of their receipt, the Presbytery will then, upon the assumption that no difficulty exists on his part as regards the said documents, proceed in the case according to the laws of the Church.

The Assembly also, with consent aforesaid, rescind the last clause of section 9 in the Second Head of the said Act XII. 1846 ["Are you willing to subscribe to these things?"], as being superseded by the provisions now enacted as to the time and manner of signing the Formula.

*Act 1876.—Act Anent Union with the Reformed  
Presbyterian Church.*

1876

. . . Whereas it appears that the Synod of [the Reformed Presbyterian] Church are willing to accept, without reserve, the existing Formula of the Free Church of Scotland, on the understanding that the Act of Assembly, 27th August, 1647, and the Preamble to the Act XII. of Assembly 1846 are held to be in force, as interpreting the said formula, and also to allow the name of the united Church to be the Free Church of Scotland. . . .

The series culminated in the famous *Declaratory Act* of 1892.

Free Church  
1892 *Declaratory Act anent the Confession of Faith, passed by  
the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland,  
1892.*

EDINBURGH, 26th May 1892, *Sess.* 13.

Whereas it is expedient to remove difficulties and scruples which have been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive licence or are admitted to office in this Church, the General Assembly, with consent of Presbyteries, declare as follows :

That, in holding and teaching, according to the Confession, the Divine purpose of grace towards those who are saved, and the execution of that purpose in time, this Church most earnestly proclaims, as standing in the forefront of the revelation of Grace, the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to sinners of mankind, manifested especially in the Father's gift of the Son to be the Saviour of the world, in the coming of the Son to offer Himself a propitiation for sin, and in the striving of the Holy Spirit with men to bring them to repentance.

That this Church also holds that all who hear the Gospel are warranted and required to believe to the saving of their souls; and

that in the case of such as do not believe, but perish in their sins, the issue is due to their own rejection of the Gospel call. That this Church does not teach, and does not regard the Confession as teaching, the fore-ordination of men to death irrespective of their own sin.

That it is the duty of those who believe, and one end of their calling by God, to make known the Gospel to all men everywhere for the obedience of faith. And that while the Gospel is the ordinary means of salvation for those to whom it is made known, yet it does not follow, nor is the Confession to be held as teaching, that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His mercy, for Christ's sake, and by His Holy Spirit, to those who are beyond the reach of these means, as it may seem good to Him, according to the riches of his grace.

That, in holding and teaching, according to the Confession of Faith, the corruption of man's whole nature as fallen, this Church also maintains that there remain tokens of his greatness as created in the image of God ; that he possesses a knowledge of God and of duty ; that he is responsible for compliance with the moral law and with the Gospel ; and that, although unable without the aid of the Holy Spirit to return to God, he is yet capable of affections and actions which in themselves are virtuous and praiseworthy.

That this Church disclaims intolerant or persecuting principles, and does not consider her office-bearers, in subscribing the Confession, committed to any principles inconsistent with liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment.

That while diversity of opinion is recognised in this Church on such points in the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith therein set forth, the Church retains full authority to determine, in any case which may arise, what points fall within this description, and thus to guard against any abuse of this liberty to the detriment of sound doctrine, or to the injury of her unity and peace.

But the Declaratory Act, if it gave relief to many, resulted in a secession from the Free Church. The seceders constituted themselves into a separate church, under the name of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which still exists as a Synod, having fifteen charges. In view of this the Free Church Assembly, in 1894, enacted and declared :—

“Whereas the Declaratory Act 1892 was passed to remove difficulties 1894 and scruples which had been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive licence, or are admitted to office in this Church, the General Assembly hereby declare that the statements of doctrine contained in the said Act are not thereby imposed upon any of the Church's office-bearers as part of the standards of the

Church ; but that those who are licensed or ordained to office in this Church, in answering the Questions and subscribing the Formula, are entitled to do so in view of the said Declaratory Act."

1900 When, on 30th October, 1900, Dr. Rainy moved "that the General Assembly [of the Free Church] do now adjourn to meet to-morrow forenoon at half-past eleven o'clock, in the Waverley Market Hall there to consummate the union [with the United Presbyterian Church] which has now been legislatively sanctioned by the Church," Mr. M'Neilage moved that "the General Assembly adjourn now, to meet here to-morrow morning at half-past eleven o'clock." Dr. Rainy's motion was carried by a very large majority, whereupon Mr. J. K. Cameron for himself and those adhering to him dissented and protested :

"On behalf of ourselves and all who may adhere to us, we, being members of this Assembly, dissent and protest that, notwithstanding the pretended adjournment or dissolution of the General Assembly for the purpose of carrying through the proposed Union we have right to continue in session and to exercise all the powers inherent in the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, with liberty to adjourn from time to time, as may be necessary, until such time as the Assembly shall be lawfully dissolved."

Mr. Cameron and his adherents constituted but a very small minority, but they fought the case in the law-courts ;  
 1903-4 carried it to the House of Lords ; won ; and were declared to be the Free Church of Scotland, entitled in law to the property held in the name of that body. They pled, among other things, that "the alleged agreement" between the contracting parties "was only rendered possible by illegal qualifications in 1892 of the [Ordination] Questions and Formula of the Free Church ; and that the new Questions agreed to be substituted in the United Church imported a wider deviation from the Standards of the Free Church of Scotland than either the Declaratory Act of the United Presbyterian Church of 1879, or the Declaratory Acts of 1892 and 1894 of the Free Church of Scotland."<sup>1</sup>

1906 They have since repealed both of these Declaratory Acts.

<sup>1</sup> *Free Church of Scotland Appeals*, p. 17.

VIII.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

This Church, which was formed in 1847 by the amalgamation of the Secession or Associate Synod (1733) and the Relief Synod (1753), while earnestly Evangelical in doctrine, and remarkably active in the work of Foreign Missions, became more and more identified with Voluntaryism, and opposition to whatever seemed to involve the principle of Church Establishments. I give the

QUESTIONS PUT TO MINISTERS AT ORDINATION OR INDUCTION.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice ?

2. Do you acknowledge the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as an exhibition of the sense in which you understand the Holy Scriptures ;—this acknowledgment being made in view of the explanations contained in the Declaratory Act of Synod thereanent ?

W.B.

3. Are you persuaded that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, has therein appointed a government distinct from, and not subordinate to, civil government ; and do you acknowledge the Presbyterian form of government, as authorised and acted on in this Church, to be founded on, and agreeable to, the Word of God ?

4. Do you approve of the constitution of the United Presbyterian Church, as exhibited in the Basis of Union ; and, while cherishing a spirit of brotherhood towards all the faithful followers of Christ, do you engage to seek the purity, edification, peace, and extension of this Church ?

. . . . .

and

DECLARATORY ACT. ADOPTED BY ITS SYNOD, 1879.

Whereas the formula in which the Subordinate Standards of this 1879 Church are accepted requires assent to them as an exhibition of the sense in which the Scriptures are understood : Whereas these Standards, being of human composition, are necessarily imperfect, and the Church has already allowed exception to be taken to their teaching or supposed teaching on one important subject : And whereas there are other subjects in regard to which it has been found desirable to set forth more fully and clearly the view which the Synod takes of the teaching of Holy Scripture : Therefore, the Synod hereby declares as follows :

1. That in regard to the doctrine of redemption as taught in the Standards, and in consistency therewith, the love of God to all mankind, His gift of His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and the free offer of salvation to men without distinction on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice, are matters which have been and continue to be regarded by this Church as vital in the system of gospel truth, and to which due prominence ought ever to be given.
2. That the doctrine of the Divine decrees, including the doctrine of election to eternal life, is held in connection and harmony with the truth that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and that he has provided a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and offered to all in the gospel; and also with the responsibility of every man for his dealing with the free and unrestricted offer of eternal life.
3. That the doctrine of man's total depravity, and of his loss of "all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation," is not held as implying such a condition of man's nature as would affect his responsibility under the law of God and the gospel of Christ, or that he does not experience the strivings and restraining influences of the Spirit of God, or that he cannot perform actions in any sense good; although actions which do not spring from a renewed heart are not spiritually good and holy—such as accompany salvation.
4. That while none are saved except through the mediation of Christ, and by the grace of His Holy Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how it pleaseth Him; while the duty of sending the gospel to the heathen, who are sunk in ignorance, sin, and misery, is clear and imperative; and while the outward and ordinary means of salvation for those capable of being called by the Word are the ordinances of the gospel: in accepting the Standards, it is not required to be held that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His grace to any who are without the pale of ordinary means, as it may seem good in His sight.
5. That in regard to the doctrine of the Civil Magistrate, and his authority and duty in the sphere of religion, as taught in the Standards, this Church holds that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only King and Head of the Church, and "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body"; disapproves of all compulsory or persecuting and intolerant principles in religion; and declares, as hitherto, that she does not require approval of anything in her Standards that teaches, or may be supposed to teach, such principles.

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6. That Christ has laid it as a permanent and universal obligation upon His Church, at once to maintain her own ordinances, and to "preach the gospel to every creature"; and has ordained that His people provide by their freewill offerings for the fulfilment of this obligation.
7. That, in accordance with the practice hitherto observed in this Church, liberty of opinion is allowed on such points in the Standards, not entering into the substance of faith, as the interpretation of the "six days" in the Mosaic account of the creation: the Church guarding against the abuse of this liberty to the injury of its unity and peace.

and

SYNODICAL FINDING ANENT DECLARATORY ACT, 1879.

In connection with the Declaratory Act, the Second Question of the Formula shall henceforth be read as follows:—"Do you acknowledge the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as an exhibition of the sense in which you understand the Holy Scriptures, this acknowledgment being made in view of the explanations contained in the Declaratory Act of Synod thereaunt?"

IX.

THE UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

This Church was formed on 31st October, 1900, by the union of by far the larger portion of the Free Church of Scotland with the United Presbyterian Church. The parties had already, by formal resolution of the General Assembly of the Free Church and of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, agreed on a Preamble, Questions and Formula to be read to, asked, and signed, by all entering the Ministry of the United Church. They are in these words:

PREAMBLE.

*(To be printed at the head of the Questions, and publicly read when they are put.)*

It is hereby declared, that the following Questions are put in view of Act 1647 approving of the Confession of Faith; Act XII. 1846 of the Free Church of Scotland; Declaratory Act 1879 of the United Presbyterian Church; and Act XII. 1892, with relative Act of 1894, of the Free Church.

It is hereby also declared, that the documents referred to in Question No. 4. and there named for brevity the Claim of Right of 1842, the

Protest of 1843, and the Basis of Union of 1847, are respectively the "Claim, Declaration, and Protest adopted by the General Assembly U. F. Church of the Church of Scotland in 1842," and the "Protest of Ministers and Elders, Commissioners from Presbyteries to the General Assembly, read in presence of the Royal Commissioner, on 18th May, 1843," and the "Basis of Union adopted by the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church on 13th May, 1847."

QUESTIONS TO BE PUT AT THE ORDINATION OR  
INDUCTION OF A MINISTER.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and life?

2. Do you sincerely own and believe the doctrine of this Church, set forth in the Confession of Faith approved by Acts of General Synods and Assemblies; do you acknowledge the said doctrine as expressing the sense in which you understand the Holy Scriptures; and will you constantly maintain and defend the same, and the purity of worship in accordance therewith?

3. Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Erastian, and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to and inconsistent with the said doctrine of this Church.

4. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head of the Church, has therein appointed a government in the hands of church-officers, distinct from, and not subordinate in its own province to, civil government, and that the civil magistrate does not possess jurisdiction or authoritative control over the regulation of the affairs of Christ's Church; and do you approve of the general principles with respect to the spirituality and freedom of the Church of Christ, and her subjection to Him as her only Head, and to His Word as her only standard, embodied in the Claim of Right of 1842, the Protest of 1843, and the Basis of Union of 1847, as principles which are sanctioned by the Word of God and the subordinate standards of this Church?

5. Do you acknowledge the Presbyterian government and discipline?

ACT ANENT QUESTIONS AND FORMULA.

Formula of Subscription, to be subscribed by Probationers on receiving licence, and by all Ministers and Elders at the time of their admission:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby declare that, in the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus our Lord, I will constantly maintain and defend the doctrine, worship, and government of this Church, with the liberty and exclusive spiritual jurisdiction thereof, as expressed in my answers to the questions put to me; and that I will fulfil, to



the utmost of my power, all the obligations to which I have solemnly pledged myself.

QUESTIONS AT LICENSING AND ORDINATION.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and life?

2. Do you sincerely own and believe the Doctrine of this Church, set forth in the Confession of Faith, approved by Acts of General Synods and Assemblies; do you acknowledge the said doctrine as expressing the sense in which you understand the Holy Scriptures; and will you constantly maintain and defend the same, and the purity of worship in accordance therewith?

3. Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Erastian, and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to and inconsistent with the said doctrine of this Church?

4. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head of the Church, has therein appointed a government in the hands of church-officers, distinct from, and not subordinate in its own province to, civil government, and that the civil magistrate does not possess jurisdiction or authoritative control over the regulation of the affairs of Christ's Church; and do you approve of the general principles with respect to the spirituality and freedom of the Church of Christ, and her subjection to Him as her only Head, and to His Word as her only standard, embodied in the Claim of Right of 1842, the Protest of 1843, and the Basis of Union of 1847, as principles which are sanctioned by the Word of God and the subordinate standards of this Church?

5. Do you acknowledge the Presbyterian government and discipline, as authorised in this Church, to be founded on, and agreeable to, the Word of God; do you promise to maintain, and submit to, the said government and discipline; and, while cherishing a spirit of brotherhood towards all the faithful followers of Christ, do you engage to seek the purity, edification, peace, and extension of this Church?

The remaining questions (6-9) bear on the religious character and aim of those addressed.

In 1904, the House of Lords gave its decision on the Free Church Appeals; and at its next General Assembly the United Free Church adopted the Act following:

*Act adopted by the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland, at Edinburgh, on May 31, 1905.*

The General Assembly resolve and declare as follows:

1905

1. They assert and protest that those branches of the Church in Scotland now united in this Church have always claimed, and this

Church continues to claim, that the Church of Christ has under Him, as her only Head, independent and exclusive jurisdiction and power of legislating in all matters of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church, including therein the right from time to time to alter, change, add to, or modify her constitution and laws, subordinate Standards and Church Formulas, and to determine and declare what these are.

2. The General Assembly accordingly declare anew and enact that it is a fundamental principle and rule of this Church, that in dependence on the grace of God, recognising the authority of the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the supreme unchangeable Standard, and looking to the Head of the Church for the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, this Church has the sole and exclusive right and power from time to time, as duty may require, through her Courts, to alter, change, add to, or modify her constitution and laws, subordinate Standards, and Formulas, and to determine what these are, and to unite with other Christian Churches; always in conformity with the Word of God, and also with the safeguards for deliberate action and legislation in such cases provided by the Church herself—of which conformity the Church herself, acting through her Courts, shall be the sole judge—and under a sense of direct responsibility to the ever-living Head of the Church, and of duty towards all the Church's members.

3. The General Assembly also declare and enact that in all the Courts of the Church a decision of the Court given either unanimously, or by a majority of its members present and voting, is the decision of the Court, and the decision of the General Assembly so reached is final. With respect to Acts which are to be binding Rules and Constitutions of the Church, the Assembly shall have regard to the safeguards referred to in the foregoing resolution.

4. The General Assembly further declare that the Church holds her funds and property, present and future, in conformity with these principles; the Church accepting her right to hold benefactions, subject to specific conditions attached to them by the donor, when and so long as she judges these conditions to be consistent with her liberty and her principles, and to be expedient in the circumstances of the time.

When the Churches (Scotland) Bill was before the House of Lords, the above resolution of the General Assembly was laid on the table of the House by command of His Majesty the King. It does not, however, follow that it would be sufficient to safeguard even "the present and future property" of the United Free Church should the course taken by her in 1900 be followed by a majority of the United Free Church and a

resolute minority protest. The Resolution wears somewhat of the aspect of an attempt on the Church's part to contract herself out of the law. The Churches [Scotland] Act of 1905 provides:—

(3) The Free Church and the United Free Church respectively shall hold any property allocated to them under this Act for the purposes of and in accordance with their respective constitutions, and in allocating to the United Free Church any property which is at the commencement of this Act appropriated to any special Church purposes shall, so far as possible, provide by their orders that the property shall remain in the hands of the United Free Church *appropriated to the same or similar purposes.*

But (1) the Act proceeds upon, and does not set aside the Judgment of the House of Lords, which gave occasion to it; (2) it refers in its Preamble only to "questions [that] have arisen as to property between the Free Church and the United Free Church of Scotland"; and (3) an amendment to this very section by Mr. Parker Smith intended to secure "that if they got property allocated to them by the Commission it should be allocated to them in the new conditions so that in future no question could arise similar to that in the past"<sup>1</sup> was withdrawn.

Questions of property are, of course, of great importance; Churches can no more be maintained on air than individuals. But the Church's prime duty is to PREACH the one and only Gospel, to *hold*, and to contend for, *the Faith once for all delivered to the saints*<sup>2</sup>; and when the Bill was passing through the House of Lords, Lord Robertson sounded a note of serious warning as to the enormous claim made by the General Assembly of the United Free Church in passing the Act and Resolution above cited. "This Church has made" (said his Lordship) "as part of its constitution a declaration that she is absolute master of her own creed; that she can alter it to any extent to-day or to-morrow, to the end of the chapter."

We may well pray GOD that she will not; and that the safeguards she refers to will continue to be respected. But no one can deny that there are some symptoms in the United

<sup>1</sup> Philip, *Churches (Scotland) Act*, 1905, pp. 28 and 39.

<sup>2</sup> *S. Mark* xvi. 15; *Gal.* i. 7, 8; *S. Jude* 3.

Free Church, and not there only, calculated to fill with anxiety the lovers of the Historic Faith. Nor is it immaterial to advert to the strange confusion, in the first paragraph of this 'Act and Resolution,' between "the Church of CHRIST" in one clause, and "this Church" in another, especially as taken in connexion with the statement in the third paragraph that the decision of her General Assembly (even if reached by a bare majority) is final. Surely the United Free Church does not regard herself as the *whole* Church of CHRIST; or deem herself a tree by herself, so that she has nothing to do with what the rest of the Church believes and has believed. Surely she does not think of Christ being "*her* Head" and not the Head also of *the whole Body* (*Eph.* iv. 16)? Surely if there is one thing (next to a stedfast looking unto CHRIST our King and Lawgiver), that the Churches of Great Britain need, it is that they should *look not only at their own things, but also at the things of others* (*Phil.* ii. 4); and, recognising *the one Faith and the one Baptism, the one Body and the one Spirit, the one Lord, the one God and Father of all*, should *give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit* (i.e. the unity which the HOLY GHOST sets forth to us) *in the bond of peace* (*Eph.* iv. 1-6).

From what has been said, it will be seen that while all, or almost all, the Churches to which we have referred are not quite satisfied with, or easy under, their publicly avowed Confessions or the Formulas binding them thereto, yet not one of them has actually laid aside its Confession or dispensed with a Formula. Neither the Church of England, nor the Church of Ireland, nor the Scottish Episcopal Church has drafted a new series of Articles. Neither the Church of Scotland, nor the Irish Presbyterian Church, nor the United Free Church of Scotland, nor the Presbyterian Church of England has taken a single step towards the preparation of a substitute for the Westminster Confession. In the Scottish Episcopal Church, as we have heard, emphasis is being more and more laid in practice "on the Creeds of the Universal Church, especially the Nicene." The same might be said of the Church of Scotland, as witness not only the place held

by both Creeds in *Euchologion*, and the repetition of the Nicene Creed at the celebration of Holy Communion appointed by the General Assembly in S. Giles'; but the inclusion of both Creeds in the Church's authorized *Anthem Book*, and of the Apostles' Creed in the *Church Hymnary*.<sup>1</sup> We may add that when the Assembly of 1870 caused Forms of Baptism to be prepared in which the profession and engagements of Christian parents are expressed, and ordered copies to be sent to all the ministers of the Church, in several of these the Apostles' Creed is the belief imposed; again, when, in 1894, the Assembly caused certain recommendations for the proper conduct of Public Worship and the celebration of the Sacraments to be published for consideration by the Church, in the Forms for Baptism and Admission of Catechumens so sent down, assent was required to the Apostles' Creed, while that for the Lord's Supper suggested that either the Apostles' or the Nicene Creed should be said or sung.<sup>2</sup> In the United Free Church (which also authorized the *Church Hymnary*) the Rev. Dr. M'Crie, of Ayr, has just been voicing in his *Chalmers' Lectures* his admiration for *Euchologion*, and his wish for the increased use in public worship of the Apostles' Creed.<sup>3</sup>

The hope is growing that our present divisions are not to continue for ever, but that the different sections of our Reformed Christianity (Presbyterian and Episcopalian, and others, perhaps, besides) may come together to confer; and, combining all that is good and true in our several systems of doctrine, worship, and government, may find a basis of Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order in which we shall all agree, and be able to go to Parliament as a united people, and say to it, "On this basis we are ready for re-union, and desire to be acknowledged as the United Church of Scotland." But we have not yet reached this stage. We can look forward to it: we can, at least, so far prepare for it as that

<sup>1</sup> The *Church Hymnary*—so its title (1898) assures us—is "authorized for use in Public Worship by the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church, and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland."

<sup>2</sup> *Reports of the Schemes of the Church of Scotland*, 1904, pp. 968, 972.

<sup>3</sup> As reported in *Aberdeen Free Press*, Nov. 15th, 1906.

we shall do nothing in any way calculated to render the attainment of it more difficult. The task, however, which at present is before us in the Church of Scotland is a humbler one.

We have not asked, and we have not got, the repeal of the Act of 1690. Under it the Westminster Confession and the Presbyterian Form of Church Government remain "established" in our Church. It is not competent for us (without either giving up Establishment—which none of us desire—or getting that Act repealed) to alter either. The sole thing we can deal with is *the Formula* by which our Ministers shall express *their adhesion to the Confession*. The problem is hard,—while retaining, and declaring, the fundamentals of the Faith, Catholic and Reformed, and *displaying* (as men who are proud of it) the *banner* (*Ps. xx. 5*) of our King, even JESUS CHRIST, both GOD and Man,—to secure at the same time that we shall not vex the conscience of any whom HE is calling unto His service in the Holy Ministry by laying upon them any other, or unnecessary, burden (*Acts xv. 28*), whether in regard to "forms of expression" or to "matters which do not enter into the substance of the Faith."

The Westminster Confession admittedly contains things which may be (and have been by successive General Assemblies) thus characterised. But it is not very easy to enumerate these; and the attempts that have been made to do so have not been particularly convincing or successful. If the Confession is rather a manifesto than a creed<sup>1</sup> properly so-called; if it is not, like the Thirty-Nine Articles, a basis of *agreement* between Christians of different schools, but rather looks sometimes as if it were meant (as Lord Halsbury remarked) "to exclude and denounce the doctrine" of people whom we should now most gladly receive into communion; if it is not, like the Ancient Creeds, itself a hymn, a banner inspiring and easily displayed; if it is distinctly more Calvinistic in regard to Predestination and Reprobation than the preaching of the Church of Scotland has been for more than one hundred and fifty years; yet certainly it possesses very great merits. It is nobly proportioned, and nobly stated. Its words for the most part are admirably chosen. It *contains*,

<sup>1</sup>See Rev. H. J. Witherspoon, *Creed and Confession*, p. 16.

beyond doubt, "the sum and substance" of the historic "doctrine of the Reformed Churches"; its language in regard to Holy Scripture, and in regard to the Sacraments, has proved a tower of strength to more than one who have been ignorantly charged with error upon these matters. Above all, it embodies every article of those Fundamental Truths of the Gospel set forth so well in the Ancient Creeds and by the earliest and most excellent of the Councils of the Church, and taught in the New Testament by our LORD and His Apostles. Moreover, we have nothing else. We have no Liturgy, with the obligatory recitation of the Creeds. The observance of the Christian year, with its call to proclaim in regular succession the great Gospel facts which make up the Creed, is not yet by any means universal among us; and it is purely optional. Without the Confession, what might not the Church of Scotland have become in the Eighteenth century? What did become of those Presbyterians in England and in Ireland who discarded clerical subscription to it? We have none among us, we are assured, who do not believe with heart and soul the true Godhead of our LORD and SAVIOUR. If so, why should any hesitate about confessing it? We should glory in proclaiming it. And are these the days in which it would be wise to throw down the gates that have barred so long the entrance to CHRIST'S ministry of persons who do not really believe the truths on which HE built His Church? We have not only to keep such men out. We have to maintain our witness to our LORD. We have to keep ourselves united *in the bond of truth* with the rest of His Holy Church. And so long as we give a clear adhesion to the Faith of our Baptism, to the Faith of the Ancient Creeds embodied in our Confession, so long shall we be able to say, as the Reformed Churches said with one voice in 1566, "Inasmuch as we hold and confess these things, we claim to be accounted not for heretics, but for Catholics and Christians."

Now to GOD the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST  
be glory for ever. Amen.





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