



3-1-



~~Ex Libris
Ecclesiae Scoticae.~~

SCS #1544

Formal

General Assembly Library.

Thomas F. Torrance

A. B. W. H. G.

SCS #1547

A

TESTIMONY

TO THE

TRUTHS OF CHRIST,

AGREEABLY TO THE

WESTMINSTER STANDARDS, AS RECEIVED BY
THE REFORMED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

AND IN

OPPOSITION TO DEFECTIONS FROM THE REFORMATION
SWORN TO IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND:

TOGETHER WITH

AN ACT FOR RENEWING THE COVENANTS,
AND A FORMULA.

AGREED TO BY THE

SYNOD OF UNITED ORIGINAL SECEDERS.

SIXTH EDITION.

GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY S. & T. DUNN, 14 PRINCE'S SQUARE.

MDCCCXLIX.

EDINBURGH, 18th May, 1827.

In the Meeting-House, Infirmary Street, THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF ORIGINAL SECEDERS having met and been constituted, &c., agreed that the following notice be prefixed to their Testimony:—

The preparatory steps to Union between the Associate Synod and Constitutional Associate Presbytery having terminated in the mutually expressed consent of these Courts to unite on the ground of a Testimony, the Overture of which, after being printed and circulated, was finally corrected by the two bodies met in general conference; and the Synod having been constituted under the designation of THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF ORIGINAL SECEDERS, unanimously enacted the said Testimony as a term of fellowship, ministerial and Christian, in their body, and appointed it to be published with all convenient speed; the tenor whereof follows.

EDINBURGH, July, 1842.

On the 18th May, 1842, the Associate Synod, commonly called the Synod of Original Burghers, was united to the Synod of Original Seceders, henceforth to form one Association for the support of the covenanted Reformation in these kingdoms, under the name of THE SYNOD OF UNITED ORIGINAL SECEDERS. It had been previously agreed, that the Testimony adopted by the Synod of Original Seceders in 1827, with the insertion in it of the alterations rendered necessary by the union, shall be held as the Testimony of the United Synod, and be made a term of religious fellowship in the body. It was likewise understood that the Synod of Original Burghers approve of the Acknowledgment of Sins and Bond appended to the Testimony; and it was agreed to by the Synod of Original Seceders, that, in the event of union, the question in the formula regarding the burgess-oath shall be dropped. The alterations above referred to are now inserted in their proper place; and the Committee appointed to carry this into effect, have deemed it proper to prefix this statement to the present edition.

CONTENTS.

	Page
INTRODUCTION,	1

PART I.

HISTORICAL PART OF THE TESTIMONY.

SECT. I. Testimony to the State of Religion before the Reformation,	8
II. Testimony to the Reformation in general,	12
III. The Reformation in Britain and Ireland,	13
IV. The First Reformation,	15
V. The Second Reformation in Scotland, and its Extension to England and Ireland,	23
VI. Testimony against the Overthrow of the Reformation, and the Persecution which followed,	30
VII. Testimony to the Goodness of God at the Revolution,	40
VIII. Testimony against Public Evils from the Revolution to the Secession,	41
IX. Contendings for the Reformation in a State of Secession,	55
X. Progress of Public Evils from the beginning of the Secession to the present Time,	87

PART II.

DOCTRINAL PART OF THE TESTIMONY.

	Page
CHAP. I. Of Natural and Revealed Religion,	98
II. Of God and the Holy Trinity,.....	105
III. Of the Divine Decrees,.....	111
IV. Of Divine Providence,.....	116
V. Of the Covenant of Works and Original Sin,...	118
VI. Of Man's Spiritual Inability in his Fallen State,	121
VII. Of the Administration of the Covenant of Grace,	122
VIII. Of the Suretyship and Satisfaction of Christ, ...	126
IX. Of the Law and the Gospel, and the Gospel Call,	133
X. Of the Operations of the Holy Spirit,.....	137
XI. Of Justification,.....	139
XII. Of the Freedom of Believers from the Law as a Covenant, and of Evangelical Holiness,.....	141
XIII. Of Saving Faith, and Evangelical Repentance,	144
XIV. Of the Perseverance of the Saints,.....	147
XV. Of the State of Man after Death,.....	148
XVI. Of Moral-Natural and Instituted Worship,.....	151
XVII. Of the Acts of Moral-Natural Worship,.....	153
XVIII. Of the Ordinances of Instituted Worship,.....	164
XIX. Of the Church, Church-Communion, and Church-Government and Discipline,.....	175

PART III.

PRACTICAL EVILS. 188

APPENDIX,..... 195

Act for Renewing the Covenants,..... 203

Formula of Questions for Ordination and Licence,..... 222

TESTIMONY.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Bible is at once the repository and the standard of divine truth, containing all that is required, and all that is necessary, to be believed or practised in religion. The Church being founded on the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets, it is of her very essence to make a profession of faith in, and submission to, the Scriptures; and she is bound by the authority of her Divine Head, and the charter of her heavenly constitution, to hold fast the whole of their sacred contents;—to confess explicitly, and to appear in defence of such articles of truth as may be denied or opposed. When false and corrupt views of Christianity prevail, a general profession of adherence to the Scriptures, how unlimited soever, is no longer sufficient: an explicit confession of the truth, in opposition to the prevailing errors, becomes necessary. That this may answer the end intended, and that it may serve the purpose of a joint and common confession, it must be a formal document, written and published, like an edict or epistle, to be known and read of all men. Confessions of faith, drawn up by fallible men, and in uninspired words, but founded on and agreeable to what is contained in the Scriptures, do not set aside the authority of the Word of God, but recognise it; they do not introduce a new rule of faith, nor do they make any addition to, but merely explain, vindicate, and apply the only infallible rule; and they do not prove, any more than the existence and spread of error, the insufficiency of the

Scriptures for all the purposes for which they were given. Such were the Creeds of the ancient church, and the Confessions of the protestant churches in our own and other countries.

Where a scriptural confession of faith exists, there will be need, from time to time, for appearances in behalf of it, or of particular articles in it, by the Church herself, or by a minority in her, when the majority may decline the faithful discharge of this duty. If the office-bearers of a church, in their judicative capacity, fail in obeying the calls of Providence to renew their declarations of adherence to their received principles, to vindicate them when attacked, and to point them against the varying forms of error and corruption, their public formularies, how scriptural soever, will gradually become a dead letter, and be anything but an expression of the real state of doctrine and practice among them; of which the present condition of most of the Protestant Churches furnishes a melancholy proof and illustration. Such a testimony is especially required, at a time when formal separation from a church, once pure, and still professing to own an orthodox profession, has become a duty. On such an occasion, it is required to assign the reasons of the secession, and to vindicate it from the charge of schism; to assert and maintain the truths which have been attacked; to convince the Church, whose communion has been left, of her dereliction of her own acknowledged standards; to reclaim her and the generation from their defection in principle and practice; and to transmit religion, pure and entire, to posterity. A Testimony, in this stricter sense of the word, while it agrees with a Confession of Faith in its general nature and design, differs from it in several respects. It recognises the received confession, and appeals to it as a subordinate authority in the Church for deciding on differences which have arisen; it bears witness for particular truths, as not only founded on the Word of God, but avouched in the authorised Confession of Faith; and while, on the one hand, it is not necessarily so extensive as that confession, in respect of the number of the truths specified, so, on the other, it requires a statement of the facts on which it proceeds, both in the way of approval and disapproval. It may be added, that, when the evils which form the ground of separation are of a permanent

kind, the testimony of a body may differ from occasional testimonies, in respect of the public and permanent use which may be made of it, as it must, in such circumstances, serve as a test of faithfulness, and an instrument for distinguishing the communion of those who really adhere to the common confession, from that of those whose adherence to it has become dubious, and in many instances is merely nominal.

As a supreme standard of truth and duty is common to all, as Christianity, considered in itself, is neither local nor variable, and as the Church of Christ, delineated in the Scriptures, is one in doctrine, worship, and government, so the exhibition of these, in the profession and constitution of the Church, as far as it has been faithfully made, has been substantially the same in every age and in every country. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and in him "there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian." But this essential oneness is not inconsistent with important circumstantial varieties in the external form and mode of the exhibition. The faithful contendings for "the faith once delivered to the saints" have been regulated by the opposition made to it, which has varied in different countries at the same period of time, and at different periods in the same country. This appears from the accounts we have of the primitive churches in the New Testament. They had "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," and, as "one body," were bound to "walk with the same rule, and mind the same things;" yet the instructions, warnings, reproofs and commendations given them by the Spirit of God are intermingled with references to facts in their history, and bear directly on the circumstances in which they were respectively placed. Christians, individually and collectively, are subjected to peculiar obligations by their birth, or the ordering of their lot in Providence; when they are brought into any new situation, "it turns unto them for a testimony;" and it is only when they discharge their duty according to these circumstances, that they can be said to act a faithful part. So far is it from being true, that a religious testimony should be uniformly divested of all localities and references to the facts of a particular period, that, on the contrary, its due application to these is, in many instances, a test of its faithfulness; and, although the

truths of God must always be of greater importance than the doings of men, yet these doings are, in many ways, connected with the Divine glory, and often form the proper ground and principal reasons of our testifying expressly for divine truths, or of our testifying for them in a particular manner.—On these principles the testimonies borne to the truth, in different periods and places, have proceeded.

Such, in particular, is the Testimony which was judicially enacted and published by those who seceded from the Established Church of Scotland. This we still regard as a standing testimony for the covenanted cause; as the original document declaratory of the grounds of the Secession; as a point of rallying for the scattered parties which once composed that body; and as the record containing both our claim of right to be regarded as belonging to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and the pledge originally given to return to communion with the established judicatories of it, whenever the public grievances, complained of in that deed, shall be redressed, agreeably to the Word of God, and to the subordinate standards which are still publicly acknowledged. But we apprehend that we are called on to attempt the application of the principles laid down in that Testimony, to evils which had arisen since it was compiled, or to the new shape which former evils have recently assumed; and, in doing this, we judge it to be also our duty to exhibit these principles anew, together with the leading facts on which they were originally made to bear. By thus bringing them again directly under the eye of the present generation, we employ a means, which, by the blessing of God accompanying it, may awaken some who have lost sight of the cause, to “remember whence they have fallen, and repent, and do the first works,” and “stir up” others, “by putting them in remembrance of these things, though they know them, and be established in the present truth.”

We have no peculiar principles. We bring forward nothing which can either attract or startle by its novelty, and, consequently, nothing which requires from us a formal or laboured proof. Our object is to declare our adherence to, and bear our testimony for, the principles of the Church of Scotland, as exhibited from the Word of God in her Confession of Faith and other formularies, drawn up to be the subordinate standards of union and uniformity in the

Churches of Britain and Ireland. We testify in behalf of a Reformation, according to these standards, commenced under the sanction of public vows, carried to a considerable length in all the three kingdoms, and fully established in one of them; and we testify against the overthrow of this reformation, and seek its revival. Accordingly we have principally to do with facts, and these such as are established and of notoriety, relating to received principles and laudable attainments on the one hand, and to sinful deviations and defects on the other.

Many, when they hear of the Covenanted Reformation, form the erroneous conception that it is something specifically different from Christianity. The principles of the *Reformation* are just the principles of primitive Christianity revived, or reformed from the corruptions by which it had been long depraved. The *Reformation of Scotland*, or of *Britain*, is what was actually accomplished in removing the peculiar corruptions which adhered to Christianity in these countries, and in settling the profession of it agreeably to its primitive standard; and the term *covenanted* is simply expressive of the superadded tie by which the nation is permanently bound to promote and maintain this reformation, in consequence of its having pledged its faith for this to God, by solemn covenant and oath.

The Reformation for which we testify had religion for its principal matter and main object; but it is commonly distinguished into civil and ecclesiastical. In common with our fathers, we bear witness for the former, as well as the latter, not in a mere civil or political point of view (although we cannot be indifferent about what was done for the political liberties and secular welfare of our native country), but properly as it was connected with and rendered subservient to the advancement and settlement of religion, and tended to promote that righteousness which exalteth a nation. Viewed in this light, the civil reformation includes, among other things, the ratifications given by the state to the profession of the true religion, and to the several advances made by the Church in the work of reformation. These civil ratifications are not to be viewed as giving any validity whatever to the Confession of Faith, or form of worship and church government, intrinsically considered, in which respect

they rest solely on the authority of the word of God. Nor are ratifications by the state of the acts of the Church to be viewed as adding any validity to these, considered as ecclesiastical deeds. They were intended merely to define the religion adopted by the nation, to serve as the national pledge for its protection and support, to recognise as lawful what had formerly been held as illegal, and to give security by law for the free and undisturbed profession and practice of whatever was thus recognized and ratified. A proper attention to the state of the laws in this country at the commencement of both periods of reformation, and to the dangers with which our reforming ancestors were beset, and the adversaries with whom they had to contend, may satisfy any reasonable mind that these securities were necessary to the advancement of religion, and an important step in national reformation, as well as a dutiful tribute of honour to Him whom his Father hath invested with all power in heaven and earth, on the part of a nation which had subjected itself to his sceptre of righteousness. Nor do such ratifications necessarily lead to the punishment of those who may conscientiously and peaceably dissent from the religion established by law, or to the imposing of restraints on them in matters purely religious. Our ancestors were placed in such circumstances as warranted them to have recourse to penal statutes against certain religious classes, whose avowed sentiments and conduct threatened the overthrow of their religion and liberties by force or fraud; but it cannot be inferred from this, that they would have employed such measures against good and peaceable subjects; and we, in bearing our testimony to that reformation, and pleading for its revival, readily and explicitly disclaim any principle which leads to this. But while, on the one hand, simple forbearance and protection are to be extended to those who do not propagate tenets, nor follow practices, which are obviously hurtful to the general interests of society, or threaten danger, from open violence or secret conspiracies, to the lawful institutions, civil or ecclesiastical, of a nation, so, on the other, a false system cannot be entitled to any countenance or encouragement beyond such a toleration. In this view, "tolerating a false religion" is forbidden in the second commandment; for we are bound, according to

our places and callings, "to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them;"* and what is unlawful to an individual Christian, cannot be lawful to a Christian nation or legislature.—These explanations we judge necessary, to meet the loose charges which are often brought against the cause in behalf of which we testify; and they are stated in this place, to prevent the necessity of repetition.

From what has been stated, it will be seen, that the Reformation in Britain and Ireland is substantially the same with the Reformation abroad, and, consequently, that a faithful testimony in behalf of the former, virtually includes the latter. We view ourselves as standing in a twofold relation,—a general relation to the Church of Christ at large, and a particular relation to that portion of the Church with which we are more immediately connected; and while, in endeavouring to discharge the duties of our generation within our sphere, we consider ourselves as specially bound to trace the footsteps of the Lord's goodness to our native land, and to give him glory, by pointing out wherein we and our fathers have walked contrary to him; we desire, at the same time, not to overlook what he has done for his Church in other lands, amidst similar provocations; and thus to testify our union with "all in every place who call on the name of the Lord Jesus," and our interest in the prosperity and advancement of his kingdom throughout the world.

* Larger Catechism, quest. 99 and 109.

PART I.

HISTORICAL PART OF THE TESTIMONY.

WHEN God of old established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, he commanded the fathers that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, who should declare them to their children, that they might not forget the works of the Lord, but keep his commandments. Viewing ourselves as under the highest obligations to this duty, we desire to add the tribute of our testimony to that of the faithful in every age, and not to hide from our children the praises of the Lord, and the wonderful works which he hath done for his Church and for us.

SECT I.—*Testimony as to the State of Religion before the Reformation.*

WE commemorate, with deep gratitude, the goodness and faithfulness of our God, who, in fulfilment of his promise made from the earliest age, and repeated at sundry times, and in diverse manners under the Old Testament,—sent his own Son into the world in the fulness of time, to finish the work of our redemption on the cross; and who, having raised him from the dead, and given him glory, shed down the Holy Spirit, by whose influences multitudes were converted, through the preaching of the Apostles, to the faith of Christ. And we desire, with the most lively feelings, to recollect and record his mercy in visiting the Gentiles, according to ancient prophecy, to take out of them a people to his name, and in so blessing the labours of the servants of his Son, as that the gospel preached by them was rapidly and miraculously propagated through the world, in the

midst of the greatest opposition, and reached, even at an early age, these remote isles of the sea, wherein it has been our lot to be born and dwell.

While we have to deplore the early corruption of the Christian Church, erected by the Apostles according to the heavenly pattern shewn them by the Spirit, and delineated in the Scriptures, in respect of faith, worship, and laws, as a proof that the best gifts sent down from above are liable to be abused in the hands of fallible and sinful men,—we are called also to admire the wisdom and power of God in preserving his truth, and carrying on his gracious work of converting sinners, and promoting the edification of his saints, amidst the general and increasing degeneracy. Symptoms of the grand apostacy from the faith, foretold by our Lord and his apostles, soon made their appearance; and the mystery of iniquity, which afterwards stood revealed in the Man of Sin, did “already work” in the Apostles’ days. The doctrine of the Church was gradually corrupted, by notions borrowed from “a philosophy falsely so called;” her worship was mingled with superstition; and, from the love of pre-eminence and other causes, the divinely-instituted parity of her ministers was invaded, and the foundations of a hierarchy laid, even when she was yet in the furnace of persecution. That revolution, which abolished the pagan form of the Roman empire, which threw Satan from the seat in which he had so long and so furiously persecuted the followers of Christ, and converted that power which had hitherto been employed to oppress and crush the Christian Church, into an instrument of protecting and favouring her,—deserves ever to be commemorated, as one of the most signal triumphs gained by our exalted Redeemer over his open and malicious foes; and, as such, it is held forth and celebrated in the prophecies of the New Testament. But this, like many other deliverances wrought, before and since, by the right hand of the Lord, was greatly abused. By injudiciously and sinfully pouring wealth into the Church,—lavishing riches and honours on her ministers—modelling the external form of her government after that of the Empire, and interposing civil authority, accompanied with penalties, in matters which were purely religious—a secular spirit was fostered, the simplicity of gospel-worship overwhelmed by pomp and ceremony, the civil and

ecclesiastical jurisdiction in many instances confounded, and the corruptions already existing in the Church fomented and aggravated. From a variety of causes,—among which the decline of the Roman empire, the ignorance and barbarism of the kingdoms into which it was dismembered, and the divisions which reigned among them, hold a conspicuous place,—the Man of Sin gradually rose to power, until he at last appeared as “that Wicked” described in Scripture, “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

The condemnation of popery has held, and will continue deservedly to hold, a prominent place in the testimony of the Church, in consequence of the notice which “the spirit of prophecy” has bestowed on that antichristian system, and the formidable opposition which it made, and still makes, together with the wide-spreading injury which it has done, to the interests of the Redeemer. Though some of the leading articles of Christianity, particularly those relating to the Trinity and the person of Christ, which had been declared by the first General Councils, were retained, yet the gospel was extensively and radically corrupted under the papacy. The honour due to the one true God was given to creatures; the worship of images was practised and enjoined; the perfection of the sacrifice of Christ, and the prevalence of his intercession, were contradicted by the blasphemous sacrifice of the mass, and by prayers to angels and departed saints; the precious article of justification by faith was supplanted by the doctrine of human merit; and, to support this, the doctrines of original sin, man’s inability in his fallen state to please God, and the necessity of Divine grace, in order to the performance of any duty of acceptable obedience, were explained away. The word of God was polluted by uninspired editions, and made of no effect by unwritten traditions; while the perfection of his law was attacked by the doctrine concerning works of supererogation. Superstition defaced the worship of the Church, and perverted the nature and uses of the sacraments, while it increased their number. The government of the Church was usurped by a worldly hierarchy, with the Pope or Bishop of Rome at their head, who, arrogating to himself a supreme and infallible authority as the vicar of Christ,

dispensed with the laws of God and man, tyrannised over conscience, trampled with impunity on the sovereignty of kings and the liberties of kingdoms, and daringly invaded the prerogatives of Him by whom kings reign and princes decree justice. The people, prohibited from using the Scriptures, accustomed to the celebration of worship in an unknown tongue, and trained to implicit faith, yielded a tame and blind obedience to their pretended spiritual guides, and "the whole world wondered after the beast."

But, general and long-continued as this apostacy was, we have to record, to the praise of God, that he reserved to himself a remnant; and that, in the darkest age, and when antichrist was at the summit of his power, witnesses appeared for the truth and against the reigning errors and abominations, including not only individuals within the pale of the Romish church, but also those who obtained grace, at the dawn of the Reformation and before it, to obey the voice from heaven, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues;" such as the Waldenses, who displayed for ages "the patience and the faith of the saints," in the south of France, in the clefts of the Alps, and in other places to which they were driven; with the followers of Wyckliffe in Britain, and those of Huss in Bohemia. Providence was not pleased to employ them to work a deliverance on the earth; and, "when they had finished their testimony, it was given to the beast to make war with them and to overcome them." But this was overruled for the more illustrious display of the Redeemer's right hand, in bringing salvation from an unexpected quarter, and at a time when it was not looked for. When the whole earth was at rest and still,—when the antichristian interest appeared to be more firmly established than at any former period,—when every breath of opposition to it had been silenced,—when its friends were rejoicing and making merry, and sending presents one to another, because those prophets who had tormented them with their testimony, were slain,—and when they had "caused all men, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead, that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name,"—then the Lord

heard the cry of his martyrs' blood, and thought on his holy promise, and great Babylon came into remembrance before him, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. His slain witnesses rose with honour; their testimony revived with fresh power in their successors; and the same hour was there an earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and the captives of anti-christian Babylon went out without ransom and without flight.

SECT. II.—*Testimony to the Reformation in General.*

IN commemorating this glorious work of God in behalf of his church, we cannot overlook his hand in the preparations made for it by the previous revival of learning in the West, in consequence of the Eastern Church being overwhelmed by the Mahometan power, an event which threatened disaster to Christendom, and by the invention of that art, which, by the ease with which it multiplies the copies of books, has contributed so much to the rapid circulation of knowledge. Nor can we overlook the two principal means by which the Reformation was advanced. The plain and faithful preaching of the doctrines of justification by faith in Christ without the works of the law, and the dissemination among the people of the Scriptures, translated into their own languages, together with a bold and undeviating appeal to them as the sole and perfect rule of faith and manners, were blessed of God for sapping the foundations of the whole fabric of human inventions, and for setting the minds of multitudes free from the bewitching influence of superstition and imposture. The work, which took its rise in the opposition which Luther made to the profligate sale of indulgences, advanced from small beginnings, and amidst the greatest resistance, until, within the course of a few years, the authority and name of the Pope were abjured, and the Reformation was established in many of the states and free cities of Germany, and in the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden. The hand of God was also to be seen in raising up others to co-operate in the great work, particularly Zuinglius and Calvin, by whose labours the Reformation was more extensively promoted on the Continent. It is matter of pleasing commemoration, that a

remarkable harmony existed among all the Protestant churches with respect to the articles of their faith, and the reasons of their separation from the Church of Rome, as appears from the confessions of faith severally published by them ; but it ought not to be concealed, that reformation was carried to a higher pitch, and religion settled in greater purity as to doctrine, worship, and discipline, in the churches called *Reformed*, than in those called *Lutheran*.*

SECT. III.—*The Reformation in Britain and Ireland.*

It is a matter of grateful record, that God has not left himself without a witness in the favoured isles in which we dwell, ever since the early age at which, in sovereign mercy, he made them to wait for the law of his Son. For a considerable time after they received the Gospel, they were kept free from communication with Rome, the fountain whence chiefly corruption flowed on the Catholic church. After she had succeeded, by means of her missionaries, in subjecting the Christians in South Britain to the papal yoke, those of North Britain and of Ireland maintained, to a period much later, their independence, and no small degree of primitive simplicity, under the inspection of an order of religious persons called Culdees. When these lands had become involved in the general apostacy, Wyckliffe was raised to bear testimony to the truth ; and the seeds of knowledge sown by him and his followers, were not altogether eradicated, either in England or Scotland, when the Reformation began in Germany. Providence was pleased to overrule the corrupt policy of Henry

* The churches founded by Zuinglius and Calvin, or formed agreeably to their sentiments, are usually called the *Reformed* churches, in distinction from those which were formed according to the peculiar views of *Luther*. The former included the churches of Switzerland, Geneva, France, the Low Countries, and different places in Germany, Poland, and Transylvania. The *Lutheran* churches, besides maintaining the doctrine of consubstantiation in the sacrament of the Supper, which resembles the popish doctrine on that subject as nearly in signification as in name, retained the use of images in churches, not indeed for worship, but for instruction, together with the sign of the cross in baptism, and some other uninstituted ceremonies.

VIII., for loosening the deep-rooted authority of the Pope in England, and procuring liberty to the people to look into the Scriptures. During the reign of the English Josiah, Edward VI., great exertions were made to reform the church, under the direction of Archbishop Cranmer, and with the advice and assistance of foreign protestants. And, after it was overthrown, and its friends subjected to the fiery trial of persecution under Queen Mary, the protestant religion was mercifully restored and re-established, to the surprise of both friends and foes.

The thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, so far as they relate to doctrine, are scriptural, harmonising with the Confessions of other protestant churches, and explaining the Lord's Supper according to the views of the Reformed, and not of the Lutheran churches. But, in other respects, we have to lament that her reformed constitution was defective, and mixed with great abuses. Instead of reducing the public worship to the simplicity of the scripture standard, the English reformers, after removing what was idolatrous, retained the principal forms of the Popish church; in consequence of which, the consciences both of ministers and people were burdened with a variety of superstitious, or of unmeaning and unedifying ceremonies. Apocryphal books, containing gross fables, were appointed to be read in the public worship; the private celebration of the sacraments was allowed; the office and privilege of presenting their children to the Lord in baptism were taken from parents, and devolved on persons called godfathers and godmothers; the superstitious practices of making the sign of the cross in baptism, of kneeling at the Lord's Supper, and of bowing at the pronouncing of the word Jesus, were enjoined; prescribed forms of prayer, together with superstitious offices for the celebration of the sacraments, confirmation, marriage, and the burial of the dead, not without a mixture of doctrinal errors in some of them, were imposed: holidays were enjoined; and the simplicity and spirituality of gospel worship were depraved by the chanting of prayers and instrumental music. After rejecting the head of the hierarchy, the reformers of England retained its trunk; and, instead of providing a body of ministers qualified for taking the oversight of the flock of God, they burdened the nation with a clerical aristocracy,

whose rank and employments, partly civil and partly ecclesiastical, withdrew them from the discharge of their pastoral functions. The ecclesiastical supremacy was transferred from the Pope to the King, by which means the crown was implicated in that usurpation of the royal prerogative of Christ, and those encroachments on the rights of the church, which form one of the highest charges against the Roman Antichrist. Nor was any provision whatever made for ecclesiastical discipline, to check vice and irreligion, and to prevent the unworthy from participating of the holy sacraments. These things were grieving to a number of excellent men, who ceased not to press a farther reformation, and the introduction of a greater purity of religion; on which account they were branded with the name of *Puritans*, and subjected to hardships and sufferings of different kinds. While we are obliged to mention these things, we at the same time thankfully acknowledge that, among those who were active in settling the reformed constitution of the Church of England, including the bishops, there were many individuals eminent for piety and knowledge, and cordially attached to the reformed religion, who, if they had been left at liberty, would willingly have removed the principal abuses which attached to her worship and government. Nor would we conceal the good done by those who stiffly defended the hierarchy and ceremonies; or the important services which the Church of England, under their superintendence, rendered to the cause of the Reformation at large, until a generation arose which knew not the work which the Lord had done in delivering their fathers from a bondage worse than that of Babylon or Egypt.—The Reformed religion was established in Ireland in the same manner as in England; but its progress was arrested, partly by the barbarism of its inhabitants, and partly by the neglect and maladministration of the English Government, under which they were placed.

SECT. IV.—*The First Reformation in Scotland.*

WE now come to the pleasing task of declaring what God hath done for our native land, in recovering it from anti-christian darkness, planting a pure church in it, maintain-

ing and defending the work of his hand, and reviving it after it had been overthrown and laid waste by the violence and wickedness of men. This work has been divided into two branches,—the *First* Reformation, which swept away the abominations of popery ;—and the *Second*, which removed the corruptions of prelacy, and in the accomplishment of which, Scotland became one with England and Ireland.

When we reflect on the extent to which religion was depraved in Scotland, at the commencement of the Reformation, and the distance at which she was placed from the means of illumination and relief, we are called upon to adore the Divine interposition in her behalf, at so early a period ;—first, by raising up Patrick Hamilton, who, having been led in a remarkable manner to the knowledge of the truth, was honoured by God to be the instrument of opening the eyes of his countrymen to the errors by which they had been deceived ; and afterwards, by raising up George Wishart, whose preaching was blessed for the conversion of multitudes, and the spreading of the knowledge of the gospel extensively through the nation. These holy men, and faithful confessors of Christ, with many others, sealed their testimony with their blood ; but neither the rage nor the craft of the popish clergy could arrest the progress of the truth. From the year 1542, when the parliament enacted, in opposition to the protest of the ecclesiastical estate, that it should be lawful for the lieges to read the Bible in the vulgar tongue, the reformed doctrine continued to make progress, particularly through the labours of John Knox, until it was embraced by a great part of the nation, including some of the principal nobles and gentlemen, who entered into a bond, by which they renounced popery, and engaged to maintain and promote the true preaching of the word of God. The foreign forces brought into the country, to assist in suppressing the Reformation and enslaving the kingdom, having been expelled, by the help of England, a free parliament was called in the year 1560, which abolished the authority and religion of the Pope in Scotland, and ratified and approved the Confession of Faith drawn up by the Protestant ministers. In the course of the same year, the First Book of Discipline was drawn up, approved of by the General Assembly,

and subscribed by the greater part of the Privy Council, who promised to set forward its regulations; and, agreeably to the plan laid down in this book, congregations in different parts of the kingdom were provided with a fixed dispensation of gospel-ordinances, so far as the limited supply of preachers admitted, and the church was organised under the government of kirk-sessions, presbyteries, synods, and a general assembly.*

The government and order of the church were laid down from the Word of God, with greater exactness, in the Second Book of Discipline, which was approved of by the General Assembly in the year 1578; and, as a species of episcopacy had for several years been obtruded on the church, the General Assembly, in July 1580, after mature deliberation, and without any opposition either from the King's Commissioners, or such of the Bishops as were present, formally and unanimously condemned the episcopal office, as a human invention, tending to the great injury of the church. These important steps of reformation were followed by the swearing of the National Covenant, in which the popish religion was abjured, the reformed religion then professed in Scotland, and particularly expressed in the established Confession of Faith, was avouched, and a solemn obligation was contracted, "to continue in the obedience of the doctrine and discipline of this kirk, and defend the same." This covenant was subscribed by King James VI., and his household, in the beginning of the year 1581; and, in consequence of an act of the Privy Council and of the General Assembly, it was, in the course of the same year, sworn and subscribed, with great cheerfulness and gladness of heart, by all ranks of persons, through the nation, under the direction of synods, presbyteries, and sessions; the ministers taking the direction of the work, and zealously promoting it in their several parishes. † "By this solemn Oath and Covenant, this kingdom made a national surrender of themselves to the Lord, and bound and obliged both themselves and their posterity, to cleave

* Presbyteries went at that time under the name of *Weekly Exercises*. By the First Book of Discipline, superintendents and readers were appointed as a temporary and provisional measure, rendered necessary by the scarcity of ministers.

to the truths of God, and to the observance of his laws, ordinances, and institutions." After this the liberties of the Church were for a time invaded, and an attempt to re-introduce episcopacy was made, on the part of the Court; but, by the blessing of God on the faithful contendings of his servants, and on the signal deliverance which he wrought for the nation from the formidable Spanish Armada, a favourable change was produced; the National Covenant was subscribed anew by all ranks in 1590; and in the year 1592, the presbyterian government, and discipline of the Church, and her right to hold kirk-sessions, presbyteries, synods, and a general assembly, were approved of, and ratified by the King and Parliament.

We judge it our duty to specify particularly the following things in the work of Scotland's first reformation, as furnishing grounds of thanksgiving to God. In the *first* place, we cannot pass unnoticed the marks of divine interposition in its behalf, not only in blessing the labours and sufferings of the preachers of the truth, but also in arranging events, and overruling the worldly schemes of princes and cabinets, so as to promote and favour the cause; and in bringing forward many of the nobles of the land to espouse it openly, and to employ their power and influence for protecting their brethren, when exposed to persecution for professing it; a protection, the want of which exposed the Reformation to be arrested in its progress, and utterly suppressed in some other countries. A *second* thing entitled to special notice is, the high degree of purity in which the public worship was settled. Our reformers drew their plan immediately from the inspired volume, and, to use the words of one who had the best means of information,* "took not their example from any kirk in the world, no, not from Geneva;" in consequence of which they rejected entirely the observance of holidays, and other uninstituted ceremonies, some of which were retained, or submitted to, by the reformed churches on the continent. In the *third* place, though the Church of Scotland could not, during the whole of this period, obtain from the State the abolition of lay-patronage in presentation to benefices, yet, from an early period, she declared explicitly in favour of the right of the

* Row, in his History of the Church of Scotland.

Christian people to choose their own pastors and other office-bearers, provided by her acts for the exercise of this right, and guarded by her administration against the intrusion of ministers on reclaiming congregations. In the *fourth* place, a scriptural and efficient discipline was, from the beginning, settled in the Church of Scotland, to be exercised by the office-bearers appointed by Christ; and their right to exercise all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, in distinction from the civil and criminal courts of the kingdom, was early recognised by the State, and repeatedly ratified by acts of the Legislature.* In the *last* place, while the Presbyterian government and discipline remained in force, it was laudably exerted in extending the means of religious instruction, by providing parochial schools, encouraging other seminaries of education, planting vacant parishes, securing to them an efficient dispensation of gospel ordinances, and, above all, by the exercise of an impartial and vigilant superintendence over the conduct of ministers of the Gospel. The year 1596 exhibited the rare and edifying spectacle of the members of the General Assembly publicly confessing with tears the sins with which they were chargeable in their station, and, with uplifted hands, renewing their covenant with God, as preparatory to their engaging in a more extensive removal of corruptions in the internal state of the church, and particularly of their own body; and this solemn exercise was afterwards repeated in synods, presbyteries, and parishes through the land, with evident marks of divine countenance in the revival of religion among ministers and people.

But we have to lament that this good work was interrupted, and the reformation attained perfidiously undermined and overthrown. The king conceived the design of conforming the church of Scotland to the model of the English church. By favouring a Popish party, which had often plotted the overthrow of the liberties and religion of

* Annis, 1576, 1579, 1581, and 1592: Act Parl. Scot. vol. iii. pp. 24, 137, 210, 541. The Act of Parliament 1592, which recognised the right of the church to hold her several judicatories, provided that a General Assembly should be held once every year, but restricted the right of the Assembly to fix the particular time and place of its next meeting, when the King, or his Commissioner, was present in it.

the nation, by invading the established rights of the church, by illegally proroguing the meetings of the General Assembly from time to time, interfering with the election of its members, and overawing its debates, he succeeded, after a course of violence, craft, bribery, and corruption, in at last obtaining the consent of a corrupt General Assembly, held at Glasgow in the year 1610, to the restoration of the episcopal office. Another pretended Assembly, which met at Perth in 1618, approved of five superstitious articles,* intended to pave the way for the introduction of the complete ritual of the English Church. These innovations on the government and worship of the Church of Scotland were ratified by Parliament, and enforced by the arbitrary and tyrannical Court of High Commission.

Though the great body of this church and land dealt unfaithfully with God, by "walking willingly after the commandment," and many of the ministers of religion gave proofs of the most daring perfidy, yet we have to record with gratitude, that numbers all along adhered stedfastly to their engagements, and, in particular, a chosen band of pious and public-spirited ministers, who early saw, faithfully exposed, and firmly resisted the plans of the court, and who bore, with fortitude and cheerfulness, the bonds, and banishment, and other hardships, which they suffered for their testimony in behalf of the liberties and laws of the kingdom of Christ. God was pleased to set the high seal of his approbation on their faithful testimony, by countenancing their ministrations for reviving personal godliness,† and blessing those meetings for prayer and fasting in different parts of the country,‡ by which they were encouraged to adhere to the purity of religion, and wait on God for deliverance; while he opened a door of usefulness for such of them as were driven from their native country, and made them "a sweet savour of Christ" unto many, not only in

* These, commonly called the Five Articles of Perth, are—kneeling at the sacrament of the Supper; the celebration of five yearly holidays, viz., the days of Christ's birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, and of Pentecost; episcopal confirmation; private baptism; and private communicating.

† Particularly in the west of Scotland about the year 1625; and at the Kirk of Shotts in 1630.

‡ These meetings began to be held in the year 1634.

Ireland, but also in Holland and France. But the prospect of deliverance was yet distant, and became darker and darker.

The aspect of matters, in regard to the interests of religion, was, at this time, no less threatening in England and Ireland than in Scotland. Towards the end of the reign of James, and in the beginning of that of his son Charles I., a great change to the worse took place in England—a change, the effects of which, however modified in some respects, continue to be felt to this day. Under the direction of Archbishop Laud, and the patronage of the Court, a scheme was laid for separating the Church of England from all connection with the foreign reformed churches, and for reconciling her, or at least bringing her nearer, to the Church of Rome; and with this view, the Puritans were more severely oppressed—the zealous friends of the Reformation, and of practical religion, were discountenanced—frequent preaching was discouraged—sports and revels on the Lord's day were authorised by royal proclamations, and unblushingly recommended from the pulpits—Arminianism, which is merely the Popish doctrine concerning election, original sin, and human merit and ability, revived in a new form, was warmly encouraged—auricular confession, a doctrine approaching to transubstantiation, with other tenets of the same kind, were openly vindicated; and various rites which had been rejected at the Reformation, as idolatrous or as grossly superstitious, were brought back; while those who refused to countenance these dangerous and sinful innovations, or who wrote or spoke against them, were cruelly punished by the tyrannical courts of High Commission and Star Chamber. At the same time, Parliaments were repeatedly dissolved, because the House of Commons condemned these proceedings, or testified a disposition to inquire into the ecclesiastical as well as the political grievances of the nation; while the ruling clergy, being caressed at Court, and some of them advanced to the most lucrative offices of state, exerted themselves in the defence of all the illegal exactions which had been made on the nation; and by inculcating the doctrine of slavish submission on the part of the people, and exalting the royal prerogative beyond all limits, stimulated and supported the king in the mad and wicked design which he had formed, of establishing an arbitrary government, and ruling without a parliament.

It is matter of grateful testimony, that more was done for advancing religion in Ireland, during the first part of the 17th century, than had been done from the time of the Reformation. The Irish articles of religion, established in 1615, were more explicitly Calvinistical in doctrine than those of the Church of England, and were calculated, as well as intended, in several other respects, to remove the principal scruples of the Puritans.* Through the influence of the pious Usher, and some other bishops like-minded with him, orthodox and zealous preachers, though they scrupled to practise the ceremonies or acknowledge episcopal authority, were not only permitted, but encouraged, to labour in the unoccupied parts of that uncultivated vineyard; in consequence of which, several ministers, whom the terror of the High Commission had driven from Scotland, became eminently useful in disseminating the knowledge of the gospel, and reviving religion in the north of Ireland. But, in the year 1634, a stop was put to this good work, by the malignant influence of the court and ruling clergy. A book of Ecclesiastical Canons was drawn up, in conformity with those of England, which passed over the Irish articles, and required from all who were admitted to the ministry an express and unlimited approbation of the articles of the Church of England, and enjoined an absolute and unreserved compliance with her book of Common Prayer and Form of Ordination.† In consequence of this, all those ministers who had been most useful were silenced for non-conformity; and measures were taken for advancing in Ireland the scheme which had been carrying on for a number of years in England.

The Scottish bishops entered zealously into the new measures of the court, favoured Arminianism, discountenanced the strict observance of the Sabbath, and began to defend or extenuate a number of the errors of popery. As it was supposed that Scotland could make the least resistance, and the bishops had the chief power there, in consequence of the highest offices, civil and judicial, being held by individuals of their order, the court resolved to begin by introducing the projected innovations into the formularies

* Collier, ii. 708.

† Canons agreed on in the Convocation held at Dublin in 1634, and published by his Majesty's authority in 1635.

of the church in this country. But when the hand of the adversaries of the Reformation was high, and their hopes sanguine, and when the hearts of its friends in all the three kingdoms were filled with dismay, when some of them, despairing of the religion and liberties of their country, had gone to seek an asylum in the New World, and others were preparing to follow them, we have to record with wonder and gratitude, that, what men intended for evil was overruled by God for good, and led to a second Reformation in Scotland, more complete than the first, which was extended in the course of a few years to England and Ireland.

SECT. V.—*The Second Reformation in Scotland, and its extension to England and Ireland.*

IN the end of the year 1636, a book of Ecclesiastical Canons, abolishing every remaining vestige of the reformed discipline of the Church of Scotland, was sent down from England,* which was followed by a Liturgy or prayer-book, and a Book of Ordination. The Liturgy was in general an imitation of the English book of Common Prayer, from which, however, it departed in several instances, that it might approach nearer to the breviary, or Romish prayer-book. These innovations, which were imposed by royal proclamation, without being either submitted to the judgment of an ecclesiastical assembly or approved of by parliament, were complained of as equally subversive of the religion and rights of the nation. The petitioners against them, composed at first of a few ministers only, increased so rapidly, as within a short time to include the body of the nation, consisting of noblemen, gentlemen, burgesses, and ministers of the gospel, whose deputies being met at

* These Canons raised the royal supremacy in ecclesiastical matters to the highest pitch; prohibited presbyteries under every shape; enjoined the unrestricted use of the Liturgy and Book of Ordination, and ordered the sentence of excommunication to be inflicted on all who denied this, and on all who affirmed that any of the books now established by royal authority, or the rites and ceremonies of the church, or its government by archbishops, and others under his majesty, contain anything repugnant to the Scriptures, or are corrupt, superstitious, or unlawful.

Edinburgh for the purpose of peaceably conducting their petitions, were led, after serious deliberation and prayer, to form the resolution, after the example of their predecessors in times of trial, to renew the National Covenant, with an express engagement to resist, as contrary to that oath, the innovations now attempted to be imposed on them. The commencement of this work was the signal for the downfall of episcopacy, and of all that had been done for nearly half a century in rearing it. The renewal of the National Covenant began with great solemnity on the last day of February, 1638, and, in the course of a few months, almost the whole land, without the slightest compulsion, cheerfully and joyfully entered into the oath of God. This was followed by a free and lawful General Assembly, called by the king, after repeated and urgent applications, and held in the end of that year at Glasgow, which, having protested against the attempt of the royal commissioners to dissolve it prematurely, proceeded in the important work before it. They deposed and excommunicated the greater part of the bishops; inflicted censures on the rest, according to the offences found proved against them; declared that Episcopacy, and the Five Articles of Perth, were contrary to the National Covenant as originally sworn, and ought to be removed out of this church; pronounced the six General Assemblies which had authorised these corruptions to be unlawful and null; condemned the late innovations, the civil places and power of churchmen, the Court of High Commission, and the whole course of apostacy and oppression which had been persevered in for a series of years; approved of the late renovation of the covenant; restored the presbyterian judicatories; and revived many excellent acts for securing the rights of church courts, preventing the intrusion of ministers on congregations, and promoting religious knowledge and purity of manners, particularly the act of that faithful Assembly held in the year 1596, concerning the corruptions of the ministerial office. Though repeated attempts were made by the court, under the influence of a prelatial and popishly affected party, to overturn these determinations, yet we have to record, that, by the blessing of God on the firm but loyal resistance made by the nation, the reformation, so prosperously begun and carried on, was ratified by the second parliament of

Charles I., held in the year 1640, the last session of which was countenanced by the presence of the king in 1641.

We have farther to commemorate the advances in reformation which were at this time made in England and Ireland, and the steps taken for establishing a most desirable union among the churches in the three kingdoms. This took place "in troublous times;" but, instead of conceiving offence on this account at a good and great work, we are called upon to admire the doings of God, in overruling public confusion, for advancing the interests of his kingdom, and in blessing the afflictions with which he visits nations, for exciting them, as well as individuals, to those duties to which they would otherwise have been indifferent or averse. The Protestants in Ireland were oppressed by the bishops, while they stood in dread of a renewal of the popish massacre, from which they had lately escaped. In England, the dissensions which the court and bishops had excited by their innovations on the religion, and their invasions on the civil rights of the nation, had broken out into a civil war between the king and parliament. The parliament had already corrected a variety of abuses in the Church of England, and evinced a strong desire for conformity in religion with Scotland, while the king testified the greatest aversion to every thing of that kind, refused the mediation of the Scottish Commissioners, and their request that he would dismiss papists and incendiaries from his councils, and gave every reason to think that, if successful in the contest, (of which there was then the greatest probability,) he would employ his victorious arms in overturning the settlement which had been made in Scotland, as well as what had been done for the reformation of religion in England.

In these circumstances, commissioners from the Parliament of England, including members of the Assembly of Divines, then sitting at Westminster, having come to Edinburgh,* did, along with committees appointed by the Convention of Estates and the General Assembly, agree on the draught of the Solemn League and Covenant. This Covenant having been approved of by the Scottish Convention and Assembly, and by the English Parliament, was cordially sworn and subscribed in Scotland, by all ranks of persons ;

* In the month of August, 1643.

in England, by the members of both Houses, and of the Assembly of Divines, and by persons of all ranks generally through the kingdom, except in places occupied by the royal forces ; and in Ireland, by many of the protestants in the south, and almost the whole body of the protestant population in the north, where it was received with the utmost joy.* In prosecution of the religious reformation and union sworn to in this Covenant, this Assembly of Divines at Westminster, in conjunction with commissioners from the Church of Scotland, drew up a Confession of Faith, a Larger and Shorter Catechism, Propositions for Church Government, and a Directory for Public Worship ; all of which were received and approved of by the Church of Scotland, in the manner expressed in the several acts of the General Assembly relating to them, as parts of the covenanted uniformity. The General Assembly added to these a Directory for Family and Secret Worship.—In bearing our testimony to this memorable work, we judge it proper to specify the following things :—

1. The sacred Bond of Union, however much reproached, was warranted by Scripture, reason, and the most laudable examples, and called for by the circumstances in which it was sworn. The Solemn League was, for the matter of it, just and warrantable ; for the ends, necessary and commendable ; and for the time, seasonable. It was called for

* In Munster, all the officers in the army under the Earl of Inchiquin took the Covenant, although the General himself declined it. Leland's History of Ireland, vol. iii. p. 237. Carte's Life of the Duke of Ormonde, vol. i. p. 487, 490. The Covenant was administered in Ulster, by four ministers sent from Scotland to supply the want of preaching in Ireland. Two of them went into the county of Down, and the other two into the county of Antrim. Not a shadow of force or constraint was employed. The officers and soldiers, and inhabitants in general, testified the greatest alacrity in entering into the Covenant. It was carefully explained to them before they were required to swear it ; and such as had been involved in any oath inconsistent with it, were required previously to confess their sorrow for this. The only complaint on the part of the people was, that the ministers were "over scrupulous" as to those whom they admitted to swear and subscribe. These particulars have been preserved in a History of the Presbyterians of Ireland, written by Mr Adair, a minister settled in that country, within two years after the transaction ; and they appear to have been taken from a diary kept by one of the administrators of the Covenant, probably his own father.

“by the deplorable state of the church and kingdom of Ireland, the distressed estate of the church and kingdom of England, and the dangerous estate of the church and kingdom of Scotland.” It had for its matter, in general, all the precious things involved in pure religion and true liberty, and, in particular, the preservation of the reformed religion in Scotland, and the reformation of religion in England and Ireland, while every one who entered into the oath bound himself to study personal reformation; and it had for its end, that a happy conjunction and union being established, “the Lord’s name might be one in the three kingdoms, and the inhabitants, as brethren, might live in faith and love.”—In the year 1648, in consequence of a war, which the majority of the Scottish Parliament rashly declared against England, on account of the prevalence of the sectarians in that kingdom, and which is commonly called the Duke of Hamilton’s Engagement, the Solemn League was renewed in this country; by which renovation the standards of religious union, which were by that time constructed, were formally confirmed by oath, and Scotland declared that she looked upon the Covenant as nationally binding upon her, in whatever manner England and Ireland might act. This solemn transaction was also repeated about the same time in the north of Ireland.*

2. Though we cannot enter here into a defence of the reformation prosecuted according to the Covenant, against the groundless charges with which it has been loaded, yet we judge it necessary to say thus much: That it was a reformation urgently required by the state of the Churches of England and Ireland, which had been long and ardently desired by the most pious and learned men belonging to them, and was at that time loudly demanded by the great body of sound protestants in these two kingdoms; that the platform of reformation was conceived on liberal principles, and constructed with wisdom and moderation;—that no attempt to impose a form of church-government was made by Scotland, which acted through the whole of this business with the greatest disinterestedness; and that the covenant itself, and the public measures taken in pursuance of it, though they have been often charged with rebellion,

* Carte’s *Life of Ormonde*, vol. ii. pp. 76, 77; and Adair’s *History of the Presbyterians in Ireland*.

were characterized by true loyalty, combined with an enlightened patriotism.*

3. The measures adopted by the church at this period were accompanied with a corresponding civil reformation. In England, the civil administration was in some important instances subservient to the advancement of religion. But this was more eminently the case in Scotland, where the Estates of the nation promoted the work of reformation, not only by the legal settlement given to it in 1640, but also by approving the Solemn League, and by many laudable acts of parliament passed in 1649, for securing religion and liberty, and suppressing vice and profaneness; particularly the act abolishing patronages, the act of classes, the acts for keeping the judicatories, places of trust, and army free from corruption, and the act for settling the coronation oath. By this last it was provided, that the person to be admitted to the exercise of the royal power, should previously give the most explicit and solemn pledge, that he agreed to the establishment of the Presbyterian Religion, according to the standards approved of by the General Assembly and Parliament, that he would conform to it, and refrain from all attempts to overturn or oppose it: And, in agreeableness to this settlement, Charles II., after swearing the National Covenant and Solemn League, was crowned at Scoon on the 1st of January, 1650.

Lastly, During this period the blessing of God remarkably accompanied the zealous exertions of ministers and church-courts; producing a visible reformation of manners among all ranks, especially in Scotland, and affording good grounds for believing that multitudes were truly converted to Christ. This became more apparent in the year 1649, after the church was brought to a settled state; and it continued till the Presbyterian Government was overthrown at the Restoration, notwithstanding the dispute which had previously disturbed the peace of the Church.†

* See Appendix, No. I.

† Speaking of the year 1649, a minister who lived in those times, suffered under the persecution, and survived the revolution, has these words:—"Now the ministry was notably purified, the magistracy altered, and the people strangely refined. Scotland hath been, even by emulous foreigners, called Philadelphia; and now she seemed to be in her flower." And of the period preceding 1660, he says:—

We have mentioned these as instances of the goodness of God, which we desire to record and bear witness to, in the second Reformation. It is not meant to say that the work was perfect, even in Scotland, or that there was nothing defective or blameable in the proceedings of the Church, or of the State; but only that, during this period, the Church endeavoured and mercifully attained a great degree of purity, and that, as appears from the instances specified, the tenor of the civil administration was decidedly in favour of religion and reformation.

How much would it have conduced to the glory of God, the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, the encouragement of the reformed churches abroad, and their own peace and welfare, if the churches of Britain and Ireland had held fast what, by the good hand of God upon them, and a train of uncommon events, both in the way of mercy and of judgment, they had attained; and if they had gone on to complete what they had so well begun! How happy would it have been for England, if, knowing in that her day, the things which belonged to her peace, when Providence had burst asunder the yoke of ecclesiastical and political bondage which had so long galled her, she had improved the golden opportunity of securing to herself the blessings of pure doctrine, a faithful ministry, a simple worship, and a well ordered Church polity! How happy would this have been for Ireland, which had only of late begun to taste the blessings of the reformation, but in which “five cities had now sworn to the Lord of Hosts;” and

“I verily believe there were more souls converted to Christ in that short period of time, than in any other season since the Reformation, though of treble its duration; nor was there ever greater purity and plenty of the means of grace than was in that time.—Every parish had a minister; every village had a school, every family almost had a Bible, yea, in most of the country, all the children of age could read the Scriptures, and were provided of Bibles, either by their parents or their ministers.—I have lived many years in a parish where I never heard an oath, and you might have rode many miles before you had heard any. Also, you would not, for a great part of the country, have lodged in a family where the Lord was not worshipped, by reading, singing, and prayer. Nobody complained more of our church-government than our taverners, whose ordinary lamentation was, their trade was broke, people were become so sober.”—*Kirkton's History of the Church of Scotland*, pp. 54, 64.

the ordinances erected in it, and the countenance given to them, were for a sign and a witness that the Lord was known to it, and that its inhabitants at large should yet know the Lord! And O how loud the call to constancy on Scotland, which God had now brought a second time from the furnace of persecution, brighter and purer than ever, and had glorified in the sight of other churches and nations, by making her enemies to come and worship before her, and to know that he had loved her! But ah! how soon was her fine gold changed! How quickly did the glory depart from all the three churches! A scriptural reformation, advanced to a great height in one of them, and prosperously begun in the others, ratified, and confirmed and established by laws, and fenced by the most sacred oaths and covenants, sworn, with uplifted hands, by our king, noblemen, barons, ministers, burgesses, and commons, was not only marred, but perfidiously overturned, and that by the very hands which gave the pledges to God and man for its preservation and its maintenance.

SECT. VI.—*Testimony against the Overthrow of the Reformation, and the Persecution which followed.*

IN bearing our testimony against the apostacy in which all ranks in the three kingdoms were involved, we can specify only a few of the steps as to its beginnings, and the height to which it rose. And here we are obliged to bring the first charge against England.

1. England very soon testified a disposition to draw back and to violate the solemn engagements which she had voluntarily contracted. As long as she was in distress, her words were good, and she dedicated herself to God with great apparent zeal; but, alas! when delivered from the gulf which threatened to swallow up her liberties, she, like Israel, soon forgot the works of the Lord, and became unstedfast in his covenant. When the Westminster Assembly were proceeding dutifully in the important work committed to them, and had made considerable progress in framing the standards of religious union, they found their motions clogged, and their grave consultations turned into litigious and interminable debates, by a small party of Indepen-

dents on the one hand, who pleaded that every Christian congregation formed a complete church within itself, and that every cause relating to the interests of religion should be submitted to the judgment of all its members,—and of Erastians on the other, who pleaded, that all ecclesiastical government and discipline were derived from the State. The Divines in the Assembly who belonged to the first of these classes, were men respected for their piety and soundness in the doctrines of the gospel, but who had become enamoured with a form of ecclesiastical government unknown to the Protestant Churches, and irreconcilable with the idea of national uniformity; and they persisted in defending it, at the expense of defeating the reformation which had been undertaken, although they had sworn, along with their brethren, to “endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in Scotland, in discipline and government,” and to “bring the Churches in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity, in form of church-government, according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches.” The parliament, yielding to the influence of Erastian principles, and inclining to assume to themselves the exercise of that ecclesiastical supremacy which they had condemned in the king, delayed the settlement of religion. Instead of at last approving of, and giving their countenance to, the erection of the form of church-government drawn up by the Assembly of Divines, in the way of taking care that no laws should pass which would lead to persecution, (a matter which was within their own power and province,) they interfered with the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, and accompanied their approbation of the Presbyterian government with such exceptions and restrictions as were inconsistent with its genius, and offensive to those who were the firmest supporters and the most intelligent friends of political liberty. In the mean time, new sects sprang up every day, and errors, heresies, and blasphemous tenets of various kinds, many of which had hitherto been unheard of, were broached and spread in such a manner, as not only to break the unity of the Church, but also to endanger the peace and safety of the State, and, by the confusion and offence which they created, to produce a revulsion in public opinion, and thus pave the way for the restoration of the old hierarchy, with

all its attendant abuses and tyranny. Having obtained the command of the army, the sectaries proceeded to imprison and behead the King, to suppress the Parliament, to dismiss the Assembly of Divines, to emit public declarations and acts of toleration, which gave positive countenance to errors of different kinds, and, unmindful of the "brotherly covenant," to invade Scotland in a hostile manner. This course of proceedings was persisted in, notwithstanding the faithful remonstrances and warnings repeatedly given by the Presbyterian ministers both in England and Ireland.

2. The parliament of England, in the year 1660, restored king Charles II. to the government without conditions or limitations; thus abandoning all their declarations and proceedings in behalf of the reformation of religion, renouncing the solemn compact into which they had entered with Scotland, yielding up their civil liberties for which they had expended so much blood and treasure, and confessing, upon the matter, that they had been for years engaged in a course of rebellion. Those who wished to adhere to their vows neither acted in union among themselves, nor in concert with their brethren in the other kingdoms; and while the Presbyterians in England were listening to the deceitful proposals made to them concerning a moderate Episcopacy and a reformed liturgy, the old and abjured hierarchy, with its liturgy and ceremonies, was re-imposed; about 2000 pious ministers were in one day ejected from their charges, and silenced, for non-conformity; oaths requiring a profession of passive obedience and non-resistance, and a renunciation of the Solemn League, were imposed; and all who scrupled to comply with the ecclesiastical laws, but especially those who discovered any attachment to the late vows and contendings of the nation, were exposed, from time to time, to hardships and sufferings of various kinds. The same course was pursued in Ireland, where many, both ministers and people, suffered for the fidelity with which they adhered to their principles and engagements; and, of sixty-five Presbyterian ministers in the province of Ulster, only five conformed, while the rest submitted cheerfully to deprivation of their livings.*

But it is still more deeply to be deplored, that Scotland,

* See App. No. II.

which had attained a superior degree of purity in religion, and was bound by more numerous ties to adhere to it, should have imitated England in apostacy.

1. The first step of defection, in Scotland, and that which led the way to the overthrow of the Reformation, was the measure commonly called the *Public Resolutions*. The kingdom having been invaded by the English army in 1650, the Commission of the General Assembly, in consequence of their advice being asked by the king and parliament, came to two resolutions, in which they gave their consent to the repeal of the act for reforming the army, and the act of classes, by which certain classes of persons were excluded, for a longer or shorter period, from places of power and trust, civil or military, on account of their notorious immorality, or the hostility which they had shown to the cause of civil and religious reform in which the nation had been embarked. In consequence of the repeal of these acts, persons of this description were introduced, in great numbers, into the courts of justice, offices of state, and posts in the army, on making a superficial and counterfeit profession of repentance. The two subsequent General Assemblies having approved of the resolutions of the Commission, a formal protest was taken against the constitution and proceedings of these assemblies by a number of ministers and elders; and thus the church came to be unhappily divided into two parties, known by the name of *Resolutionists* and *Protesters*. The General Assembly enforced their proceedings by censuring their opponents; and the division, which extended to synods and presbyteries, and was not healed at the Restoration, weakened the hands of both parties, and made them an easy prey to their common enemies. It is not difficult to set up a plausible defence for the Public Resolutions on general principles; but it is evident that, in the circumstances of that time, it was hazardous in the extreme, and therefore sinful, for the nation, with the consent of the Church, to deliver up the maintenance and defence, not only of their dear-bought civil liberties, but also of all that had been done for securing the reformation of religion for a series of years, into the hands of men who had proved themselves decided enemies to both. The event sadly justified the fears of those who opposed this measure; and some of its most

zealous supporters were brought to acknowledge, when it was too late, "That their brethren the Protesters had their eyes open, when they were blind."*

The measure taken to increase their strength did not prevent the nation from falling under the power of the English; and Cromwell, who had usurped the supreme power as Protector, sought, on the one hand, to introduce sectarianism into Scotland, under the plausible form of a toleration,† while, on the other, he encroached on the rights and liberties of the Church, by preventing or dissolving the meetings of her judicatories, and appointing public fasts and thanksgivings by his sole authority.‡

2. On the restoration of Charles II., Presbytery, together with all that had been done in the late reforming period, was overthrown, with marks of the greatest indignity, and prelacy restored in a manner far more objectionable than that in which it had formerly been established in Scotland. Not satisfied with condemning particular measures, the Parliament,§ by the act rescissory, removed at once all the securities given to the Church since the year 1638, and annulled the parliaments which had granted them; declared the ordering and disposal of the external government of the Church to belong properly to the king, as an inherent right of the crown; restored diocesan bishops to their dignities and jurisdiction; repealed the act of parliament 1592, and all other laws which ascribed ecclesiastical power to the presbyterian courts; and declared that there was no church power but that which acknowledged a dependence on the royal supremacy, and for the exercise of which the archbishops and bishops were accountable to his Majesty; pronounced the assembly which met at Glasgow in 1638, an unlawful and seditious meeting, and annulled its acts; declared that all the proceedings for reformation between 1638 and 1650 were rebellious and treasonable; that it was treasonable and rebellious to enter, on any pretext, into leagues or covenants, without the consent of the king, or to take up arms against him, or those commissioned by him; that the National Covenant, as renewed in 1638, and the Solemn League and Covenant, were unlawful oaths; that no obli-

* See Appendix, No. III.

† See Introduction, pp. 5, 6.

‡ Testimony by the ministers of Perth and Fife, published in 1659.

§ In 1661.

gation lay on any of the subjects by reason of them; and that all laws, ecclesiastical as well as civil, approving of them, were null. At a subsequent period, all who administered, or took these Covenants, or wrote in defence of them, or owned their obligation, were subjected to the pains of treason;* and the Solemn League was ordered to be ignominiously burnt at Edinburgh,† as it had been at London. Between 300 and 400 ministers were, at an early period,‡ ejected from their charges, for non-conformity, without any legal procedure, by an act of Privy Council; and, at a subsequent period, the parliament enacted, that all non-conforming ministers, who exercised their office, should be punished as seditious persons; while they ordered all the subjects to wait on the ministrations of the prelatical incumbents, or curates, as they were commonly called, as an acknowledgment of their hearty compliance with his Majesty's government, ecclesiastical and civil.—When the most sacred bonds were thus daringly burst asunder and trampled upon, we need not be surprised at learning that a deluge of profaneness and immorality flowed in upon the land; and that, in the parliament which overturned Scotland's liberties and reformation, according to the testimony of a bishop, “the men of affairs were almost perpetually drunk.”§

3. In the hour of trial, there was a general fainting both among ministers and people, which led to a tame, and for some time almost universal, submission to these wicked and tyrannical proceedings. On the back of the Restoration, ten ministers and two elders, belonging to the Protesters, met at Edinburgh, to draw up a petition to the King, congratulating him on his return, and reminding him of the obligations which he had contracted at his Coronation in Scotland; but they were instantly seized and thrown into prison, by order of the Committee of Estates. ||

* In 1685. Act. Parl. Scot. vol. viii., p. 461.

† In 1682. Wodrow, ii. 227.

‡ In October, 1662.

§ Burnet's History of his own Times, under the year 1661.

|| The administration of the government had been committed, by the King, until the meeting of a Parliament, to the Committee of Estates, appointed in 1651, which consisted chiefly of persons disaffected to the reformation, who had been admitted in consequence of the Public Resolutions, and exerted themselves in repressing every expression of public opinion.

Presbyteries and Synods suffered themselves to become the tools of the Court in prosecuting their brethren who had opposed the Public Resolutions ; and, when they were at last aroused to a sense of their danger by the passing of the act rescissory, their meetings were forcibly dissolved, and the remonstrances against the overthrow of the Presbyterian government, to which some of them had agreed, were confined to the minutes of their respective courts. Almost all the ejected ministers desisted from preaching ; and the great body of the people through the land gave that proof of their compliance with the late changes which the parliament had required, by attending the ministrations of the prelatical incumbents or curates.

4. When the people began to scruple at hearing the curates (many of whom were ignorant and immoral, and all of them involved in a breach of vows,) and when some of the ejected ministers, having recovered from the consternation into which they had been thrown, began to preach to them, first in private houses, and afterwards in the fields, the meetings held for this purpose were discharged as seditious assemblies and conventicles by the government, under penalties which gradually increased, until at last the punishment of death was denounced against both preachers and hearers.

5. Perceiving that they could not suppress these meetings by severity, and that the people continued, at the peril of their lives, to wait on the ministry of those faithful men whose labours were blessed for the conversion and confirmation of multitudes, the rulers fell on the device of an *Indulgence*, by which many were ensnared, and a division introduced among the witnesses against the national defection. The King, at several times, authorised the Privy Council to appoint so many of the ejected ministers as had "lived peaceably and orderly," to exercise their ministry, in certain parishes, and on certain conditions and limitations, which were prescribed to them. In pronouncing our judgment on this point, we desire to cherish a tender respect for the good men who accepted of these indulgences, and to recollect that it is easy for us, who live "in the land of peace," to censure the conduct of those who had to contend "in the swellings of Jordan." We readily allow that they could not be blameable for simply availing themselves

of any liberty afforded them to exercise their ministry, by the removal or relaxation of laws which were in themselves unjust; and we feel disposed to give all due weight to the reasons which they assigned for their conduct. But we think it undeniable, that the indulgences, first and last, sprang directly from the royal supremacy, which was the bitter root of all the evils with which the Church was then afflicted; that the Privy Council, by delegation from the King, assumed Church power in appointing the indulged ministers, judging of their qualifications, planting, and transplanting them at their pleasure, and prescribing instructions for regulating the exercise of their office; and, consequently, that the accepting of these indulgences, and acting under them, without disavowing, in an explicit manner, the power usurped by the civil government over the house of God (especially after the act assertory of the supremacy passed), was a departure from a material part of the testimony of the Church of Scotland, caused offences and divisions among its friends, and encouraged their persecutors to proceed to greater severities against those who were exposing their lives to jeopardy on the high places of the fields.*

6. The land was still farther involved in guilt by the sinful oaths, declarations, and bonds imposed during this period, by which the name of God was profaned, the sacredness of an oath worn off the minds of men, and the faithful subjected to great vexations and sufferings. Such were the oath of *Allegiance*, or rather *Supremacy*; the *Declaration*, which, beside an acknowledgment of the absolute power of the king in all civil matters, required a formal renunciation of the whole of the late Reformation, and of the Covenants by which it was sanctioned: that self-contradictory oath called the *Test*, by which the swearer owned the ecclesiastical supremacy in its fullest extent, and the unlawfulness of resisting the king under any pretext, and at the same time, professed his adherence to the old Scots Confession of Faith, in which both these principles were condemned; the *Bond for Heritors* who withdrew from their parish churches, together with the *Bond for Peace*, which required an avowal of the doctrine of

* See Appendix, No. I.

non-resistance; and the *Bond for Regularity*, by which persons were required to become bound that their wives, children, servants, and tenants should not withdraw from their parish churches, or give any countenance to the ministrations of such as were not authorised by law. The oath of Supremacy, and the Test, though originally enjoined to be taken only by those in public trust, were subsequently imposed on all the subjects.

7. All this was accompanied with a tyrannical administration of government, and a persecution almost unexampled for cruelty and duration. A simple non-compliance with the prelatical government then established, declining to attend ordinances dispensed by the bishops' underlings, being present at conventicles in houses or in fields, refusing the oath of supremacy, or the other oaths and bonds that were imposed, owning the obligation of our solemn covenants, and the lawfulness of defensive arms, or of resisting a tyrannical sovereign, were reckoned crimes of the highest nature, and subjected multitudes of all ranks unto unparalleled severities. The witnesses for Scotland's covenanted cause were, during this period, partakers of almost all the sufferings which the worthies of former times had endured. After enduring the most excruciating tortures, numbers were ignominiously executed in the principal cities of the nation; yea, to such a height did tyrannous cruelty arrive, that many were killed in the open fields, without the colour of a legal process; the merciless soldiers acting at once as their judges and executioners. The tree of prelacy and arbitrary power was, at its first plantation, watered with the blood of the Marquis of Argyle, a staunch Presbyterian and zealous assertor of his country's rights, and of Mr James Guthrie, a bold champion of the liberties of the Church of Scotland; and it continued during twenty-eight years to be nourished with blood. As the crying iniquity of that period has never been nationally and duly mourned over, have we not reason to fear that in our skirts is still to be found the blood of the saints?

In *fine*, these evils came to a crisis, when the Duke of York ascended the throne on the death of his brother Charles II.* Though an avowed and bigoted papist, and

* In 1685.

though his arbitrary principles were well known from the tenor of his former administration in Scotland, yet the parliament of this kingdom, without even requiring him (as the English parliament had done), to take the coronation oath, made an offer of their obedience to this prince, in which they boasted of his absolute authority, and promised him the most unreserved and slavish submission. The consequence of this was, that, after having taken various steps for encouraging the popish worship in Scotland, he issued a proclamation, in which, "by his sovereign authority, prerogative, and absolute power," he suspended and disabled all laws or acts of parliament against Roman Catholics, and declared them as free as any of his Protestant subjects, not only to exercise their religion, but also to enjoy all offices and benefices which he might think fit to bestow on them, in all time coming.* This proclamation, though accompanied with a toleration to "the moderate presbyterians to meet in their private houses" for worship, having excited alarm, a second form of toleration was issued, in which, by virtue of the same prerogative, all penal laws made against any for non-conformity to the established religion were disabled, and liberty given to all the subjects to meet and serve God in their own way and manner, privately or publicly.† Though this toleration flowed from the absolute power of the Crown, was granted in the way of dispensing with the laws of the land, overthrew the legal bulwarks of the Protestant religion, and was calculated as well as intended to prepare the way for the introduction and establishment of popery; and although the professions of regard for tender consciences, with which this, as well as the toleration in England, was accompanied, were belied by the practice of the prince, and the principles of the church to which he adhered,—yet it is deeply to be lamented, that the most of the Presbyterian ministers in Scotland accepted of it, and some of them sent an address to the king, thanking him in their own name and that of their brethren, for his gracious and surprising favour, and promising an entire loyalty in doctrine and practice. Nor was any public and joint testimony given against this sinful and dangerous measure, except that

* Wodrow, Append. p. 187.

† Ibid. p. 194.

which came from the few adherents of Mr Renwick, who suffered martyrdom chiefly for his affirming that the Duke of York was not rightful king of this realm, because he was a papist, had not sworn the Coronation-oath, and was overthrowing the fundamental laws of the kingdom, and for his affirming the lawfulness of defensive arms in behalf of our civil and religious liberties;—affirmations which were re-echoed by the voice of the three kingdoms, before the year in which he closed his life had expired.

These are some instances of the growth and height of our national apostacy, which, together with all other acts during the same period, which were connected with and tended to support them, we condemn and testify against, as just grounds of God's controversy with these lands, and as still calling for humiliation from us in this generation, who have, in many ways, served ourselves heirs to the sins of our fathers.

SECT. VII.—*Testimony to the goodness of God at the Revolution.*

GOD, who delights in mercy, and saves for his name's sake, was pleased to deliver the three kingdoms from popery and slavery, by the memorable Revolution in 1688,—a deliverance as seasonable in the juncture at which it was wrought, as singular in the manner in which it was brought about. When all other attempts for relief had proved abortive, and the hopes and strength of the oppressed were gone; when the liberties of the nation were laid at the feet of a popish tyrant, surrounded with a powerful army; and when the project for establishing popery was ripe for execution in one of the kingdoms, and measures were taken for securing it in the other two, by dispensing with the laws which stood in its way, and advancing papists and popishly affected persons to the principal posts of trust,—Providence raised up a deliverer in William, Prince of Orange, and without struggle or bloodshed brought him to the throne, with the joyful consent of all who put a just value on the blessings of liberty, civil and religious. Nor must we overlook the fact, that the extensive and once flourishing church of France had just been overturned and laid desolate by the perfidious revocation of the Edict of Nantes, followed

up by a series of persecuting measures, of which it is hard to say whether the hypocrisy or the violence was the more atrocious; while a combination of the popish powers threatened the whole Protestant interest with danger which had not been paralleled since the time of the formidable Armada. On these grounds, we deem it a high duty to commemorate the Revolution as a glorious work of Divine power, and a signal mark of Divine favour and mercy to the Churches, not of Britain and Ireland only, but of the Reformation at large.

Nor can we, without ingratitude to God, and without being unjust to the memory of those who were instrumental in bringing about the Revolution, conceal what was done, in all the three kingdoms, for securing civil liberty, and opposing barriers to the inroads of popery; and in providing relief for those protestants who, during the two preceding reigns, had suffered unjustly for non-conformity in England and Ireland. In Scotland we cannot pass unnoticed the public stigma which was put on the tyrannical government of the preceding period; the justice which was done to those who had suffered under it, by the rescinding of their fines and forfeitures; the repeal of the act establishing the supremacy, the laws against conventicles and non-conformity, and those which subjected persons to penalties for taking or owning our solemn Covenants; the act abolishing patronage; and the security which was given by law to the Protestant and Presbyterian religion in general.

SECT. VIII.—*Testimony against Public Evils from the Revolution to the Secession.*

THE work of God is honourable and perfect; the doings of those who should be workers together with him are marked with imperfections, and are often dishonoured and blotted by manifold and grievous defects. None of the three nations rendered unto God according to the benefit which he had conferred on them. In England and Ireland, prelacy was retained; no attempt was made to reform those corruptions in the Established Churches which had so long been grounds of complaint, and obstacles to the advancement of religion; and the Presbyterians, satisfied with having obtained certain privileges for themselves, lost sight

of national reformation, and the sacred vow binding to this was not thought of or mentioned.

In Scotland, also, the settlement both of Church and State was accompanied with sinful defects, and followed by acts and proceedings which deeply affect the interests of religion to this day.

1. The conduct of the nation and its representatives, at the Revolution, was faulty in different respects. The Estates of the nation, in making an offer of the crown, required the redress of a number of grievances under which they had suffered; but they did not shew the same faithfulness with their reforming ancestors in fixing the terms on which their sovereigns were to be admitted to office; nor did the nation, either then or afterwards, faithfully and plainly inform their rulers of their duty, or of the peculiar obligations under which Scotland lay, in consequence of her national attainments and vows.—The Parliament abolished Prelacy, as a great and unsupportable grievance to this nation, and contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people ever since the Reformation; but they did not, as had been done in former times by the competent authorities, consider it as contrary to the word of God, and abjured by our Covenants. They ratified the Presbyterian government according to its establishment in 1592, in the way of sinfully overlooking and passing by all the legal securities given to it between 1638 and 1650, which, together with the reformation attained to in that period, was left buried under the infamous Rescissory Act, which stands in the body of our Scotch law to this day. In like manner, they ratified the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the public and avowed confession of this Church, without any reference to the act of the General Assembly 1647, by which it was received as a part of the uniformity in the churches of the three kingdoms, and with an explicit assertion of the inherent right of the Church to call her own assemblies,—an omission which paved the way for dangerous encroachments by the state. Though certain laws, which subjected persons to penalties for owning the National Covenant and Solemn League were repealed, yet these covenants were allowed to remain under the indignities done them by the rescissory and other acts; nor were they excepted from those oaths which were removed to make way for a general and unqualified oath of

allegiance to the sovereign. The draught of an act for excluding from places of power and trust such as had been accessory to the oppressions of the late persecuting period, was laid aside; in consequence of which persons were entrusted with the management of the affairs of the nation who were hostile to its best interests, and who, though they yielded to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church, took pleasure in clogging her operations, and were ready to embrace the first opportunity to infringe her rights, and invalidate the security which she had obtained.

2. The proceedings of the Church, at this period, were also chargeable with unfaithfulness. The first General Assembly, after the Revolution, sat down, in the year 1690, under the above civil establishment, without remonstrating against what was defective in it; and accommodated their proceedings to the measures of the State, instead of exerting their own intrinsic powers in supplying what was wanting, and lay within their own proper province. By rejecting a paper presented by Alexander Shields and two other ministers, they showed their aversion to inquire into the public evils which had been introduced. They evinced a laudable concern "for retaining soundness and unity of doctrine," by enjoining all who were licensed to preach, ordained to the ministry, or received into communion as ministers or elders, "to subscribe their approbation of the Confession of Faith, approved by former General Assemblies of this Church;"* in their act for a national fast, they enumerated the heights to which the supremacy was advanced, the introduction of prelacy, the general compliance with it, and the persecution which followed, among the grounds of humiliation,† and they declared the sentences passed against the protesting ministers, before the late introduction of prelacy, to be null and void.‡ But neither that assembly, nor any of the subsequent assemblies, expressly approved of the reformation carried on between 1638 and 1650; nor did they expressly condemn the overthrow of it, and the sinful oaths and bonds by which it was renounced; nor did they justify the testimonies and sufferings in its behalf, during the late trying period. Although in some acts for fasting the Assembly acknowledged that our sins are aggra-

* Assembly 1690, Act 7th.

† Act 12th.

‡ Act 13th.

vated by breach of solemn vows, yet notwithstanding the indignities which had been done to our National Covenants, they never expressly asserted their obligation; nor does the name of the Solemn League so much as appear in any of their acts since the Revolution. Although the royal prerogatives of Christ had been daringly invaded, and the whole government of the Church usurped by the crown, during the late reigns,—yet the Assembly did not, by any act, formally condemn the supremacy, or assert the sole headship of Christ, the divine right of presbytery, or the intrinsic power of the Church. And no due testimony was given against the exercise of an Erastian power, on the part of the crown, in repeatedly dissolving and proroguing meetings of the General Assembly, after the Revolution.*

The exercise of the government of the church was established by parliament in the hands of the surviving ministers, who had been ejected since 1661, for non-conformity to prelacy, and such other ministers and elders as they had admitted or might admit; and their right to try and purge out all insufficient, negligent, scandalous, and erroneous ministers, and to redress all other church disorders, was explicitly and fully recognised.† But the ecclesiastical judicatories were not careful to exert this power faithfully in removing or excluding the unworthy from office; and in particular, when the parliament, in 1693, by an infringement of the established rights of the church, had prescribed the terms on which ministers should be received into communion, ‡ the General Assembly agreed, in conformity with these terms, to admit such of the Episcopalian ministers as

* The General Assembly, in 1692, having been suddenly dissolved by the King's Commissioner, the moderator, Mr Crichton, asserted the immediate dependence of the church upon Christ; and, with the concurrence of the members, appointed the time and place of the next Assembly. But when the day fixed came, the diet was deserted, in consequence of only two or three of the members having made their appearance; and the Assembly 1692 remains to this day a blank in the printed records of the church. Repeated prorogations by royal authority followed; and, in 1703, when the Assembly had prepared the draught of an act for asserting the supremacy of Christ, the intrinsic power of the Church, and the divine right of the presbyterian government, it was abruptly dissolved by her Majesty's Commissioner, without any recorded protest.

† Act Parl. Scot. vol. ix. p. 134.

‡ Ibid. p. 303.

should subscribe the Confession of Faith, and promise to submit to and not seek the subversion of presbyterian government, as the only government of this church; in consequence of which hundreds of ministers were admitted to sit in the judicatories, who had been conformists to prelacy, and had given no satisfying evidence of their change of views, or of their sorrow for having been accessory to the sinful and oppressive measures which had been so long pursued.* At the same time, many were admitted to sit as elders in the supreme court, who had dipped their hands in the blood of the saints, and had given no satisfaction for this crying iniquity.

While we are obliged, in tracing the progress of public evils, to point out these sinful steps, we wish not to detract from the respect due to the memory of those worthy ministers and elders who had just come out of the furnace of persecution. We are not insensible to the difficulties with which they had to struggle, the dangers which still hung over them, the threatenings and solicitations with which they were assailed, or the extremes on both hands against which it behoved them to guard. We acknowledge also, with readiness and gratitude, that, at this period, many excellent acts were passed for the advancement of religion and the reformation of manners, and that great exertions were made, under the direction of the General Assembly, for promoting religious knowledge among young and old, especially in the Highlands and Islands. Several ministers, too, faithfully testified against the omissions above mentioned; and motions were made, and overtures introduced, in some presbyteries and synods, for renewing our covenants, as a preparatory step to the removing of corruptions, and reviving of religion; but these were resisted or evaded by the majority, under the pretext that the time was not yet come; and it appears, upon the whole, that the mystery of that system of ecclesiastical polity which has been predominant in the established judicatories of Scotland for a century past, had then begun to work.†

* Acts of Assembly 1694, Act xi. sect. 6; compared with the address of the Commission to Queen Anne, in 1712.

† "After the happy Revolution, under the specious names of prudence and just moderation, the testimony of former times was suppressed, and it was not thought a proper season to intermeddle with

3. Our national guilt was increased by the terms in which the incorporating Union between Scotland and England was settled, and the measures which followed upon it. How desirable soever the Union was in itself, and how great soever the political advantages which have resulted from it are, yet, the maintenance of the hierarchy and ceremonies in England being declared a fundamental and essential article of it, the nation of Scotland, by giving its consent to this, virtually renounced that sacred League and Oath which it was previously under, to endeavour the reformation of religion in England. The close connection into which it brought us with a powerful nation, differing from ours so widely as to church government and forms of worship, could not fail to have an extensive influence; but this was greatly increased by the measures which were consequent upon the Union, and which may be justly viewed as flowing from that transaction.

(1.) The nation was involved in guilt by the imposition of unnecessary or sinful oaths and tests. Oaths connected with government offices and transactions relating to the revenue, came to be frequently repeated, which, together with the introduction of the English mode of swearing, by kissing the gospels, which savours at once of superstition and levity, contributed to profane the name of God. The representatives of Scotland in both Houses of Parliament, and the electors of her representatives in the House of Peers, were obliged to take the Oath of Supremacy. And the oath of Abjuration, involving the swearer in an approbation of an English act of parliament, which provided that the successor to the crown should always be of the communion of the Episcopal Church, was imposed first on persons in public trust, and afterwards on all ministers of the gospel, under a penalty directly affecting their ministerial office.* To these we may add the Sacramental Test, by which all who serve the crown in England or Ireland, are bound to take the sacrament of the Supper, according to the forms of the English church.

our solemn covenants, or with defections from them, that we might not give the least umbrage to those that were in the government, many of whom were not of our principles, and some had been leaders in the former persecution."—*Mr Hog of Carnock's Memoirs*.

* See Appendix, No. V.

(2.) When the plan of introducing the Episcopalian clergy in a body into the church had failed, an act of parliament was passed in their favour, commonly called an Act of Toleration. Although we are far from thinking that Episcopacy, as such, ought to subject its adherents either to penalties or to hinderance in their meetings for worship, yet we must condemn the said act, because it was part of a scheme formed for the purpose of fostering a faction inimical to the protestant succession, recognized the adherents of Episcopacy in Scotland as an independent church, and took their meetings, which long proved nurseries of disaffection to the reigning family, under the wing of government.—At the same time, holidays, which had always been condemned by the Church of Scotland, were publicly countenanced by an act appointing a vacation of the courts of justice during Christmas.

(3.) In the course of the same year, and from the same principle of hostility to the Presbyterian Church, was the act restoring Patronages passed; which has done perhaps more injury to the interests of religion in Scotland than any other measure. Patronage had been complained of as a grievance from the beginning of the Reformation; was abolished in the second reforming period; and after being revived at the Restoration, was again abolished at the Revolution. When the bill for restoring it a second time was before parliament, the Commission, in a representation which the ensuing General Assembly pronounced “most faithful and seasonable,” declared it to be “contrary to our church constitution, solemnly ratified by the acts of parliament of both kingdoms,” and calculated to “inevitably obstruct the work of the gospel, and create great disorder and disquiet in this church and land,”—predictions which have been more than verified by the event. When it is of any real effect in the settlement of vacant churches, patronage restrains and tends to destroy the right of the Christian people to choose their own pastors, and interferes with and shackles the judicatories of the church in the exercise of their power to judge of the qualifications and call of those who are to bear office in her,—rights and powers for which divine, as well as ecclesiastical, law can be pleaded. It is glaringly inconsistent with the Presbyterian constitution, and with that independence of all foreign jurisdiction or

extrinsic control to which it lays claim. It can be vindicated only on the untenable supposition of a relinquishment, on the part of the church, of a portion of her rights for the sake of certain worldly advantages; the plea, to which the defenders of the ecclesiastical establishment and royal supremacy in England have been forced to resort. In fact, the large share of patronage possessed by the crown in Scotland, serves so far the same purpose as the supremacy which it enjoys in England does, while the partition of the remainder among other lay patrons adds an aristocratical to a regal lordship. Besides its tendency to produce a dependent and unedifying ministry, an evil of no small magnitude, it has had an equally if not more pernicious effect on the eldership of the church, by introducing unfit persons into that office, and especially into the supreme court, in which a great proportion of the ruling elders are, as might have been expected, either patrons, or the friends of patrons, who possess an influence fatal to the freedom of an ecclesiastical judicatory, and, as an incumbent and dead weight, have long pressed, and still press down the constitutional spirit and energies of the Church of Scotland.

4. We have also to lament the injuries done to the purity of doctrine, by erroneous teachers, and the remissness and unfaithfulness of the judicatories in checking them. Soon after the deliverance granted to the nation from an unnatural rebellion, a discovery was made which shewed that those evils which had been ground of complaint had corrupted the church to a degree beyond what those most jealous of her purity had suspected. It was found that errors of a pernicious kind had been vented, and were poisoning the fountains from which the waters of life were conveyed through the land, while the appointed guardians of the faith were by no means disposed to adopt the necessary precautions against this alarming evil.

From a process carried on before the judicatories of the church,* against Mr John Simson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, at the instance of Mr James Webster, it was found proved, that the former had taught and defended a number of Arminian and Pelagian tenets,

* From 1714 to 1716.

striking particularly against the necessity of divine revelation, the representation of the human family by Adam, original sin, and the inability of man by nature to do that which is spiritually good. Yet the General Assembly neither inflicted any censure on him, nor declared him guilty of teaching any error; but merely prohibited him from venting certain opinions not necessary to be taught in divinity, and using certain expressions that bear, and are used by adversaries in, an unsound sense. The consequence of this excessive lenity was, that he not only persisted in teaching the above mentioned errors, but was emboldened to proceed still farther. For, in a second process,* it was proved, that, as he had adopted the fountain error of Socinianism, by making human reason the judge of revealed truths, so he had taught his students that the Son of God is not necessarily existent, and that the three persons of the adorable Trinity are not numerically one in substance or essence. But though this bold attempt to introduce Arianism into the church deserved the highest censures, and by far the majority of presbyteries, upon the question being transmitted to them, gave it as their opinion that Mr Simson should be deposed from the office of the ministry, yet the Assembly merely suspended him from teaching, and the exercise of any ecclesiastical function.

While the Assembly refused to condemn Arminian and Pelagian errors, they were forward to fix the stigma of Antinomianism on some articles of gospel truth. The Presbytery of Auchterarder having, with the view of checking the progress of legal doctrine within their bounds, laid down the following proposition, among others, "That it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin, in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in the covenant of grace," the General Assembly, on the same day on which they dismissed the first process against Mr Simson, declared "their abhorrence of the foresaid proposition, as unsound and most detestable." They manifested the same disposition in their acts relating to the book called *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*.† In their eagerness to censure this book (which they enjoined all ministers to warn their people against), the Assembly condemn-

* Begun in 1726, and terminated in 1729. † In 1720 and 1722.

ed, or greatly obscured, the following precious truths:— That the gospel, strictly viewed, contains neither precepts nor threatenings, but is merely a declaration of the glad tidings of salvation; that in it God makes a gift of Christ as a Saviour to sinners of mankind as such, warranting every one who hears the gospel to believe on him for salvation; that saving faith includes personal appropriation and assurance; that believers are entirely freed from the law as a covenant of works, though not as the law of Christ; and that the servile fear of hell and hope of heaven as a reward some way due to our works, are not the proper motives to evangelical and acceptable obedience. Twelve ministers having given in a faithful representation against the injury done to truth by the act condemning the *Marrow*, the Assembly ordered them to be rebuked for their freedom; and, from this time, the doctrine which represents the gospel as a new law, became general among the ministers of the church.

As the Assembly, though repeatedly called upon by representations from synods and presbyteries, as well as individuals, refused to condemn the errors which had been vented by Professor Simson, the leaven of false doctrine continued to spread and corrupt the church. Mr Archibald Campbell, Professor of Church History in the University of St Andrew's, brought forward anew several of the erroneous tenets vented by Mr Simson, and taught, in particular, that the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions is self-love, interest, or pleasure; that men, without revelation, cannot, by their natural powers, find out that there is a God; and yet that the laws of nature, in themselves, are a certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness. Though these errors were published to the world, and had been refuted by private individuals, they were overlooked by the judicatories, who continued to employ their author in business of the greatest importance;* and, when the affair was at last brought under judicial cognizance, the General Assembly materially sanctioned his opinion respecting self-love, by resting satisfied with the following explanation which he gave of it, "That our delight in the glory and honour of God is

* See Index to the Unprinted Acts of Assembly for 1734.

the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions;" and they dismissed him without censure, and without pronouncing him guilty of any error.—To the criminal lenity shewn by the church courts in the case of Professors Simson and Campbell, may be imputed, in no small degree, the unsound and dangerous principles which have subsequently vitiated our academical instruction in matters which lie near the foundations both of religion and morals.

It is to be lamented that the departure from the faith in Scotland was accompanied by a similar departure in England and Ireland. From the time of the Restoration, Arminian and Pelagian tenets continued to spread, until at last they completely overran the Episcopal churches in these kingdoms, to the almost total extinction of the doctrine of grace, and all that is peculiar to Christianity. The evil was aggravated in the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the Arian heresy began to be openly taught and keenly defended, to the great encouragement of infidelity, which, having been hatched amidst the irreligion and licentiousness of the preceding period, was brought to light and fostered by the liberty enjoyed after the Revolution.

But it is still more deeply to be deplored, that this departure from the faith should have extended to the descendants of the Puritans, whose very name reminds us of their contendings and sufferings for the purity of the doctrine, as well as ordinances, of the gospel. This melancholy change in the creed of the Protestant Dissenters in England, first manifested itself in reference to the grand doctrine of justification, which was corrupted, by teaching that the gospel is a new and remedial law of grace, which, instead of perfect obedience, requires faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, as the terms of acceptance with God. This was succeeded by cavilling at and calling in question the doctrines of election, the imputation of Adam's first sin, the corruption of human nature, the satisfaction of Christ, with other truths connected with them; and it issued in the denial of the proper deity of the Saviour, by the adoption and avowal of the Arian heresy. This system was brought in gradually and covertly. Scripture-consequences were denied; subscription to creeds and confessions was refused, as derogatory to the authority of the

word of God, and an invasion on the rights of private judgment; and loose notions respecting Christian liberty, charity, and forbearance, were loudly cried up; while those who stood forward in the defence of truth, and sought to maintain purity of communion, were traduced as guilty of uncharitableness, imposition on conscience, persecution, and usurpation of the prerogative of the Lord of the Church.—This account of the progress of error is almost literally applicable to what took place at the same period among the Protestant Dissenters in Ireland.

In the Protestant churches abroad, too, we have to lament the same declensions at this period. A system of doctrine, bearing a near resemblance to that which was afterwards avowed by Arminius, had long prevailed in the Lutheran church, which, together with the total want of ecclesiastical discipline, was followed with the decay of piety and great corruption of manners, both among ministers and people. The doctrine of universal grace had corrupted the reformed Church of France, before her dispersion; and Arminianism, after establishing itself in Holland, had extended to the other reformed churches, and especially to the once famous Church of Geneva, which had sent forth the light of evangelical truth over so many countries. A dark cloud portending still greater evils to come, had sitten down upon all those churches which had formerly appeared “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

5. To unfaithfulness in relation to the purity of doctrine, the judicatories of the Church of Scotland added a tyrannical and oppressive administration of government. The law of Patronage was not acted upon for a number of years after it passed, but at last it became common to accept of presentations. The church courts had it in their power to defeat the hurtful consequences of this, in the exercise of their right to judge of the qualifications and call of any person to be the minister of a particular parish; but though the General Assembly professed to regard patronage as a grievance, it soon appeared that they were prepared to give effect to it, at the expense of the privileges and edification of the Christian people. Violent settlements took place from time to time, which were sometimes effected by committees appointed by the Commission of the General Assembly, or

by anomalous and unconstitutional courts, composed of a minority of the Presbytery of the bounds, assisted by correspondents from other Presbyteries. Not satisfied with enforcing the law of Patronage, the Assembly violated the rights of the people, in cases where they were left at complete liberty, as appears from their act in 1732, respecting the settlement of parishes, when patrons did not exercise their right of presentation. This act lodged the sole power of election in a conjunct meeting of elders and heritors, providing only that the latter were Protestants; thus giving to heritors as such, though they might not belong to the Church of Scotland, but might be her avowed enemies, the ecclesiastical privilege of choosing her pastors; so that persons of this description, if they happened to be superior in number to the elders and presbyterian heritors, had the decisive power, not of presenting, (which supposes a subsequent call from the people), but of choosing a minister, and obtruding him on a reclaiming congregation.*

To suppress opposition to the course of defection in which they were engaged, the Assembly had recourse to the most despotic measures. Members of court were denied the ordinary method of exoneration as to decisions which they judged sinful,† and the Christian people were deprived of their privilege of being heard by petition, a right common to the members of every free society.‡ A doctrinal testimony from the pulpit was now the only means by which ministers could exonerate themselves in communion with the established church; and of this also they were deprived.

Mr Ebenezer Erskine, minister of Stirling, being called to preach at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, in October, 1732, embraced that opportunity of testifying, in his sermon, against the leading defections of the church, and particularly the act of the last Assembly, concerning

* Act of Assembly, 1732, May 15, sess. 11.

† The Assembly, 1730, May 25, sess. 15, enacted, That reasons of dissent against the determinations of church judicatories should not be entered in the registers.

‡ In 1732, when a representation, signed by 1700 private Christians, complaining of certain corruptions, and craving redress, was presented, the Assembly refused to hear it, or to allow a protest against this procedure, taken by fifteen ministers, to be recorded.

the planting of vacant churches. For this freedom, the Synod ordered him to be rebuked and admonished; against which sentence he protested, and appealed to the General Assembly. The Assembly, which met in May, 1733, approved of the sentence of the Synod, and ordered the rebuke and admonition to be pronounced; on which, Mr Erskine gave in a protest, asserting "his liberty to preach the same truths, and to testify against the same or like defections, upon all proper occasions;" which was adhered to by Mr Alexander Moncrieff, minister of Abernethy, Mr William Wilson of Perth, and Mr James Fisher of Kinclaven, who had protested against the sentence of the Synod, as an undue restraint on ministerial liberty. The Assembly ordered the four ministers to appear before the Commission, which was instructed to suspend them from the exercise of the ministry, if they did not express sorrow for their protest, and retract it; and to proceed afterwards to a higher censure, in the event of their not submitting to that sentence. The Commission, accordingly, suspended them in August; and in November it proceeded to loose their relation to their respective congregations, and to declare them no longer ministers of this church. When this last sentence was intimated to them, the four ministers gave in a joint paper,* in which they protested, that though they had been cast out of ministerial communion with the Established Church, they would still hold communion with all who were adhering to the principles of the true Presbyterian covenanted Church of Scotland, and who, in their several spheres, were striving against the evils opposed to these; but, in regard the prevailing party in this Established Church were carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and covenanted principles, and were suppressing ministerial freedom and faithfulness in testifying against defections from these, therefore they "were obliged to make a SECESSION from them."

* On the 16th of November, 1733.

SECT. IX.—*Contentings for the Reformation in a State of Secession.*

THE judicatories of the Established Church had crowned their corrupt and tyrannical administration by an act, which proclaimed that they were determined to allow none in communion with them to oppose their measures, or testify against the course of defection in which they had persevered for a series of years. But He who “maketh the wrath of man to praise him,” overruled this step, for the accomplishment of the most beneficial ends. In consequence of their being thrust out of communion, the four ministers, against whom the violence of the judicatories was immediately directed, found themselves relieved from the necessity of determining the delicate question, Whether the evils which prevailed in the national Church, and which they had been opposing, were such in themselves as to warrant and call for a separation from her fellowship. A prospect of relief was opened to those who scrupled to countenance the ministrations of intruders, the supporters of intrusion, and the preachers of “another gospel;” and the people were preserved from sinking into apathy about their public rights, on the one hand, or adopting sectarian principles and courses, on the other hand,—an extreme into which they are in great danger of being driven by the maladministration and corruptions of an established church. And hereby an opportunity was afforded for making a joint and public appearance in behalf of the interests of religion. That they might have it in their power to promote these objects, the four ministers, soon after their deed of secession, and in virtue of the powers which they had protested for in it, formed themselves into a Presbytery,* afterwards known by the name of the *Associate Presbytery*. They resolved, however; not to proceed rashly to acts of jurisdiction; and, accordingly, the papers which they published, were for some time sent forth in an extrajudicial form. Of this kind was a Testimony for the principles of the reformed Church of Scotland, in which they assigned the following reasons for their secession: That the prevail-

* On the 6th of December, 1733.

ing party in the judicatories were violating the Presbyterian constitution, and had assumed a lordly and magisterial power over the church; that they were pursuing a course which tended directly to corrupt the doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith; that they persisted in their corrupt courses, notwithstanding all attempts to reclaim them; and that they had imposed sinful terms of communion, and had excluded the seceding ministers, and virtually all others, from endeavouring faithfully to testify against their defections in a way of fellowship with them.*

The arbitrary manner in which the four brethren had been expelled, gave much offence to the more serious part of the nation; and even those who had for some time ruled in the church courts, began to be alarmed at the consequences which might result from the separation which they had caused, and were now willing to relax for a time the rigour of their administration. In this state of feeling, the General Assembly, which met in 1734, adopted measures for removing some of the more flagrant grounds of offence; and, with their permission, the Synod of Perth and Stirling took off the censures inflicted on the seceding ministers, and restored them to the communion of the church. The Seceders did not want motives to invite them to re-enter the National Church by the door which was now opened to them, and they took the question into serious consideration: but, after deliberating on it, they were satisfied that it was not their duty, as matters then stood, to abandon the position into which Providence had brought them; nor without better evidence of a permanent change of public proceedings than they yet had, to resume voluntarily a situation which they had found so embarrassing to their consciences, and in which their exertions had been so cramped and ineffectual. They allowed that the late Assembly had removed part of their causes of complaint, but still "the principal grounds" remained. Nothing had been done for securing the purity of doctrine. The Assembly had shewn a disposition to redress grievances as to intrusions in certain cases which came before them, but had taken no precautions to prevent the evil for the future.

* Testimony to the Doctrine, &c., of the Church of Scotland, published in 1734.

The act prohibiting the recording of reasons of dissent, and the act respecting the settlement of vacant congregations, had been repealed, because they were passed in opposition to the barrier acts, but without any acknowledgment of their sinfulness. The act concerning ministerial freedom confirmed all that was dreaded from the procedure against Mr Erskine, inasmuch as it declared that “due freedom was not impaired or restrained by the late Assembly’s decision in a particular process.” And in the means employed for restoring the four ministers, great care was taken that the legality or formality of the sentences passed against them should not be affected; so that they might still be improved as precedents, whenever circumstances were so far altered, as that there was no reason to dread what the Assembly calls “the lamentable consequences that have followed.”*

After waiting for two years longer, and finding that the judicatories had resumed their former course,—that, at the very time the Assembly were making declarations against the intrusion of ministers on reluctant congregations,† they were sanctioning such intrusions by their own decisions, and that, while they passed an act recommending an evangelical strain of preaching, they protected the erroneous, and dismissed Mr Campbell, without censure, from their bar,—the seceding ministers resolved, without farther delay, to act in a judicative capacity, by granting the dispensation of divine ordinances to such as applied for it,—settling the terms of their fellowship,—and asserting the genuine principles and attainments of the Church of Scotland. Among the steps which they took for promoting the last of these objects, the following deserve to be recorded:—

1. The judicial testimony which they gave to the principles and attainments of the Church of Scotland, and against the course of defection from them.‡ This deed, the substance of which is comprehended in our preceding statements, was published by the Associate Presbytery, not only “to let the world see what they own and acknowledge, and upon what foundation they desire, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, to stand,” but also as “a

* Reasons of Non-accession, published in 1735.

† See Appendix, No. VI.

‡ Published in December, 1736.

testimony to the many great and wonderful appearances of the Lord for his church and land, and to the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Lord's house therein, agreeably to the Holy Scriptures, the Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations, as also against the injuries and insolent indignities done unto, and the encroachments, violations, and breaches, made upon the same." This service had not been performed by the National Church since the Revolution, and was urgently required at this time. Accordingly, the Associate Presbytery traced the national defection to its source. They did not confine themselves to those evils which had formed the immediate subject of their late contentings with the established judicatories, but took in others of a prior date, the condemnation of which entered into the testimony which the faithful party in the church had all along borne. The whole of that testimony they carried along with them into a state of secession. Finding their freedom and the sphere of their operations enlarged, and calling to mind the manifold obligations under which they lay, they judged it their duty to endeavour the revival of a former reformation, from which there had been a long-continued and gradually increasing departure. On these general and broad principles, which include all the precious doctrines and ordinances connected with salvation, did they construct their testimony. That Testimony was not a new standard, but a declaration of the genuine sense of the already received standards, and an application of them to the prevailing errors and corruptions; and in requiring an adherence to it from those who acceded to their communion, the Presbytery did not require them to make any confession of their faith different from what was made by the Church of Scotland in reforming times, or different from what it was the duty of all the friends of the authorised Confession to make explicitly, when its doctrines were denied or perverted.

2. The Presbytery published an enlargement of their testimony, on the head of the doctrine of grace, in which they explained and vindicated a number of valuable truths, particularly as to the difference between the law and the gospel, and the motives and grounds of evangelical obedi-

ence ; in opposition to the acts of the General Assembly respecting the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, and to the legal strain of preaching which had become common. This they did in their Act concerning the doctrine of Grace ; the substance of which will be found in the second part of this work.

3. Another step taken by the Associate Presbytery, in prosecuting their Testimony, was the renovation of our National Covenants, the neglect of which had been often complained of in the Established Church since the Revolution. Being engaged in an attempt to revive religious reformation, they judged that they were called upon to revive the practice of religious covenanting, by which the reformation of religion in Scotland had formerly been both introduced and sanctioned. As they were a minority of the nation, as they acted only in an ecclesiastical capacity, and as they were placed in a very different situation from their ancestors, they could not with any propriety swear the National Covenant and Solemn League in their original form ; but they agreed to renew* them in a bond suited to the circumstances of the times, preceded by an acknowledgment of the sins of all ranks by whom they had been violated. In their act relating to this subject,† they shew that religious covenanting is founded on the moral law, and warranted by the precepts, examples, and predictions of scripture, applicable to New Testament times, and to a minority, as well as a whole land ; they take a view of our National Covenants, the manner in which they were renewed at different times, agreeably to scripture pattern, their continued obligation, and the public breaches of them ; and point out the reasons which call for their present renovation. The ministers belonging to the Presbytery having entered into the bond, measures were taken for having it administered to the people in their respective congregations ; and at a subsequent period,‡ they agreed, that all who were admitted to the ministry, should previously have joined in renewing the covenants, while such as opposed or slighted the duty should not be admitted to sealing ordi-

* Covenant-renovation implies a solemn avouching, not only of the primary obligation which the law of God lays upon us, but also of a secondary obligation laid upon us by former covenants to prosecute the ends of them.

† Published in 1743.

‡ In 1744.

nances. In coming to this determination, they considered the swearing of the bond as a solemn and seasonable form of avouching and sealing all the principles and duties of their religious profession, which was called for and rendered necessary by the strong tide of defection from the reformation-cause which had set in, aided by the latitudinarian principles respecting church-communion, which had begun to prevail in the Church of Scotland.

4. To the contendings of the Presbytery in behalf of reformation belongs also the Declaration of their principles respecting the present Civil Government. Though their sentiments as to the duty of owning and obeying, in all lawful things, the existing rulers, were well known from their uniform practice and their public papers, yet they found they had a call to be more explicit on that head. A considerable number of serious people, attached to the covenanted reformation, had not only declined joining in communion with the Presbyterian Church established at the Revolution, but refused to acknowledge the civil government, or obey the magistrates set up by the nation at that time. After continuing for a considerable time destitute of pastors, they were joined by Mr Macmillan, who had been a minister of the Church of Scotland. As they disowned the government in the most public manner, the Associate Presbytery reckoned it incumbent on them to point out the danger of this extreme, when they were tracing and acknowledging other deviations from the Reformation. Accordingly, they passed an act, in which they "condemn the dangerous extreme that some have gone into of impugning the present civil government over these nations, and subjection thereunto in lawful commands, on account of the want of those qualifications which magistrates ought to have by the word of God and our covenants, even though they allow us the free exercise of our religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the liberties of the kingdom." In consequence of the opposition made to this act by Mr Nairn, one of their number, they drew up a Declaration and Defence of their principles on that head,* in which, after contrasting our ancient civil reformation with our present civil deformation, they shewed, that their

* Published in 1743.

testifying in favour of the former, and against the latter, was not inconsistent with a conscientious subjection to the present government in all its lawful demands.

The grounds on which this principle rests are such as the following:—That magistracy was instituted by God as the Moral Governor of the world, and is common to mankind at large, and not derived from Christ as mediator, or peculiar to Christian nations;—that civil government is not only a benefit to nations, but that it is their duty to have it set up among them, as a moral means appointed and employed by God in the government of the world, for the preservation of order and restraint of wickedness;—that the proper end of it is the promotion of the public good, to the glory of God, by preserving outward and common order;* and that this end is gained in some due degree under every government which is submitted to and owned by the people;—that, though magistracy, like every thing belonging to the kingdom of providence, is put into Christ's hand, to be ordered in subserviency to the good of his church, and though it is secured by promise that he will order it for the active advancement of the interests of his kingdom, yet neither of these alters its nature, or renders it illegitimate,

* “The public good of outward and common order in all reasonable society, unto the glory of God, is the great and only end which these invested with magistracy can propose, in a sole respect unto that office. And as, in prosecuting this end civilly, according to their office, it is only over men's good and evil works that they can have any inspection; so it is only over these which they must needs take cognizance of, for the said public good: While, at the same time, their doing so must be in such a manner, and proceed so far allennarly, as is requisite for that end, without assuming any lordship immediately over men's consciences, or making any encroachment upon the special privileges and business of the Church. And, moreover, as the whole institution and end of their office are cut out by, and lie within the compass of natural principles, it were absurd to suppose, that there could or ought to be any exercise thereof towards its end, in the foresaid circumstances, but what can be argued for, and defended from, natural principles; as indeed there is nothing especially allotted and allowed unto magistrates, by the word of God and the Confessions of the reformed Churches, but what can be so. Now, it must be agreeably to all *this*, that the Apostle signifies magistrates to be *God's ministers for good*; concerning themselves with *good and evil works*,—in a way of *terror, praise, or revenye*: For he does so in a sole respect unto their civil office.”—*Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles anent the present Civil Government, Gib's Display*, vol. i. p. 311

when it is not used for this higher purpose, or warrants us to despise a present lesser good in the prospect of a future greater good;—that, though it is the duty of Christians, and of Christian nations and rulers, to regulate the whole of their conduct by the revealed will of God, yet their neglecting to do this, cannot destroy the validity of those relations which are founded in nature, or of those secular relations founded in natural principles which are formed by voluntary contract, nor release the parties from obligation to perform the duties resulting from them;—and that, as it is the right of the body-politic or majority of a nation to choose magistrates, and this right did not arise from any reformation attained to by them, so their defection from such attainments, though sinful and condemnable, does not deprive them of that right, nor release individuals, or a minority, from subjection and obedience, in all lawful commands, to the rulers set up by those to whom the right of appointing them properly belongs.

Mr Nairn dissented from the act condemning the extreme of disowning the authority of the existing government, as well as from the act for renewing the Covenants, because it did not appoint them to be sworn in the very form and words in which they were originally expressed; and, having left his brethren, joined with Mr Macmillan in constituting the Reformed Presbytery, who, at a subsequent period, published* a testimony for the Covenanted Reformation, in which their distinguishing principles respecting magistracy and covenant renovation are mixed with those which they hold in common with seceders. It is much to be regretted, that a body of ministers and people, so respectable for their seriousness and soundness in the faith as those who belonged to the Reformed Presbytery, and still belong to the Reformed Synod, should have remained so long at a distance from others who profess the same adherence to the standards of the Church of Scotland, and the same regard to her reformation as themselves; and it is earnestly to be desired that a dispassionate examination of the really subsisting grounds of difference, after so great a distance from the time when the controversy arose, should lead to their co-operating in the advancement of the com-

* In 1761.

mon cause. It is with feelings of this kind, and to endeavour, so far as in our power, to promote this desirable end, that we subjoin the following explanations:—

1. We acknowledge that the fundamental deed of constitution in our reforming period, in all moral respects, is morally unalterable, because of its agreeableness to the Divine will revealed in the Scriptures, and because it was attained to and fixed in pursuance of our solemn Covenants; and that the nation sinned in overthrowing it. 2. We condemn the conduct of the nation at the Revolution in leaving the reformed constitution buried and neglected: and in not looking out for magistrates who should concur with them in the maintenance of the true religion, as formerly settled, and rule them by laws subservient to its advancement. 3. We condemn not only the conduct of England and Ireland, at that period, in retaining Episcopacy, but also the conduct of Scotland in not reminding them of their obligations, and, in every way competent, exciting them to a reformation, conformably to a prior treaty and covenant; and particularly the consent which this kingdom gave at the Union, to the perpetual continuance of episcopacy in England, with all that flowed from this, and partakes of its sinful character. 4. We condemn the ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown, as established by law in England and Ireland, and all the assumed exercise of it in Scotland, particularly by dissolving the assemblies of the church, and claiming the sole right of appointing fasts and thanksgivings, together with the practical compliances with it on the part of church-courts or ministers in the discharge of their public office. 5. We condemn the abjuration oath, and other oaths, which either in express terms, or by just implication, approve of the complex constitution. 6. We consider that there is a wide difference between the arbitrary and tyrannical government of the persecuting period, and that which has existed since the Revolution, which was established with the cordial consent of the great body of the nation, and in consequence of a claim of right made by the representatives of the people, and acknowledged by the rulers; who, although they want (as the nation also does) many of the qualifications which they ought to possess according to the word of God and our covenants, perform the essential duties of the magistratical office by maintaining justice, peace, and order,

to the glory of God, and protecting us in the enjoyment of our liberties, and in the free exercise of our religion. *Lastly*, Holding these views, and endeavouring to act according to them, we can, without dropping our testimony in behalf of a former reforming period, or approving of any of the evils which cleave to the constitution or administration of the state, acknowledge the present civil government, and yield obedience to all its lawful commands, not only for wrath but for conscience sake; and in doing so, we have this advantage, that we avoid the danger of practically disregarding the numerous precepts respecting obedience to magistrates contained in the Bible,—we have no need to have recourse to glosses upon these, which, if applied to other precepts running in the same strain, would tend to loosen all the relations of civil life,—and we act in unison with the principles and practice of the Christians of the first ages who lived under heathen or Arian emperors, of Protestants who have lived under Popish princes, of our reforming fathers in Scotland under Queen Mary, and of their successors during the first establishment of Episcopacy, and after the Restoration, down to the time at which the government degenerated into an open and avowed tyranny.—We do not reckon it necessary to say anything here as to the mode of renewing our covenants in a bond suited to the times, as we apprehend that there are now few of the friends of that duty who will object to this, or plead for the swearing of these oaths in the very form and words in which they were originally framed.

In 1745, the Associate Synod (for the Presbytery had found it necessary, on account of the increase of their numbers, to form themselves into a Synod) had their attention directed, by overtures from Presbyteries, to the removing of any public bars which stood in the way of due progress in covenanting: and, in particular, to the consideration of the question, Whether those in communion with them could warrantably and consistently swear the following religious clause in some burgess oaths:—"Here I protest, before God and your Lordships, that I profess, and allow with my heart, the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof: I shall abide thereat, and defend the same to my life's end; renouncing the Roman religion, called Papistry." After different steps

taken at several meetings, the Synod came to a decision,* that, "Those of the secession cannot, with safety of conscience and without sin, swear any burgess-oath with the said religious clause, while matters with reference to the profession and settlement of religion continue in such circumstances as at present." In the progress of the discussion, it appeared that, though the majority of ministers was in opposition to the oath, a minority respectable for its numbers, but still more so from the names of some individuals who composed it, was arrayed in its defence. A protest was taken against the decision; the controversy was keenly agitated throughout the body; and, at a subsequent meeting of synod,† it was moved that the decision condemning the oath should not, now nor afterwards, be a term of ministerial and Christian communion, until the question of its being so shall be referred to presbyteries and kirk-sessions. Repeated protests were taken against the putting of this motion, as disorderly, notwithstanding which it was put, and (those who had protested against it not voting) carried; upon which a declaration, subscribed by those who supported the original decision, was read, protesting that, as that meeting had materially dropped the whole testimony, the lawful authority and power of the Associate Synod is devolved on a constituted meeting of those ministers and elders who had protested against the late vote, with such as should join them. Thus was the Synod divided into two separate and conflicting bodies, each of which asserted that it was the majority, and laid claim to the title and powers of the court. Those who defended the burgess-oath, passed an act nullifying the synod constituted by those who adhered to the decision condemning that oath; and the latter proceeded against the former, in a gradual course of discipline, to the highest censures of the church. The Synod, consisting of those who opposed the condemnation of the burgess-oath, professed to adhere to the public papers of the Associate Presbytery, though they appear to have restricted their approbation of them by alterations on their Formula;‡ and they desisted from the renewing of the Covenants, on the ground that the friends of that duty were divided in sentiment and communion.

* In April, 1746.

† In April, 1747.

‡ Address of the Associate Synod in 1799, p. 7.

This mournful breach affords a lesson to churches, when most honoured of God to be faithful, to "rejoice with trembling." It is difficult to believe that an ecclesiastical body, which had hitherto preserved such unanimity and concord in their deliberations and decisions upon a variety of questions, some of which were of a very delicate and complicated nature, could have divided on the subject of a burgess-oath, had not the leaven of prejudice and suspicion insinuated itself, soured their minds, and fomented any difference of sentiment which at first existed among them. In reviewing this melancholy portion of the history of the Church, it is consolatory to reflect, that, previous to this breach the Associate Synod, or rather Presbytery, had been led to complete the statement of their public testimony in behalf of the various articles of truth which were immediately in danger, and in opposition to the existing errors and evils, in the different papers which they had judicially agreed on and published to the world. Had both parties continued to adhere to these, in their letter and spirit, it is probable that they could not have remained long in a state of separation, and that the influence of the principle, (whatever it was,) which had temporarily driven them asunder, must have soon yielded to the powerful attraction of common principles and a common bond.

Impressed with these views and feelings, two of the religious bodies which this question had hitherto kept asunder, judged it their duty to take the subject under their serious consideration. The Synod of Original Seceders, in their Testimony, published in 1827, after stating their reasons for continuing to approve of the decision condemning the swearing of the oath by seceders, suggested it as their opinion, that an arrangement might be made as to the subject of difference, which would be at once honourable to truth, and not hurtful to the conscience of any. This suggestion was readily and cordially met by the Synod of Original Burghers, and joint measures were, in consequence, adopted, with the view of ascertaining the practicability of such an arrangement. In concluding the negotiation, both parties proceeded on the principle, that desirable as union is, if the reality of the thing is to be sought and not the appearance merely, this will be secured more effectually, and with more honour to truth, by candid ex-

planations on the points in question, than by studiously avoiding the agitation of them, a plan which, while it makes greater pretensions to charity and peace, lays a ground for subsequent irritation and dissension.

In the course of explanation, it was found that the only difference of opinion between the two bodies related to the exact meaning and necessary application of certain terms in the oath, which, as the question originally came before the Secession Courts as a question of practice, did not appear to be an insuperable obstacle to a Scriptural adjustment of the dispute. After repeated conferences, it was satisfactorily ascertained, that the members of both Synods were agreed on all points with the Judicial Testimony of the first Seceders, particularly in its approval of the profession of religion made in this country, and authorised by the laws between 1638 and 1650, on the one hand; and in its disapproval of the defects in the settlement of religion made at the Revolution, on the other. Encouraged by this harmony of sentiment as to the great cause of Reformation, so much forgotten and so keenly opposed from various quarters in the present time, and feeling deeply the solemn obligations under which they in common lie to support and advance that cause; and the burgess oath, the original ground of separation, being now, in the providence of God, abolished, and both parties having now, for various reasons, seen it to be their duty to refrain from swearing that oath, should it be re-enacted; the two Synods agreed to unite upon the following explanatory declarations and resolutions, calculated, in their judgment, to remove the bars in the way of harmonious fellowship and co-operation, and to prevent, through the blessing of God, the recurrence of any similar difference for the future.

Explanatory Declarations.

1. That when the church of Christ is in danger from adversaries who hold persecuting principles, or who are employing violence or insidious arts to overturn it, the legislature of a country may warrantably exact an oath from those who are admitted to official and influential stations, calculated for the security of the true religion; and that, in these circumstances, it is lawful and proper to swear it.
2. That no Christian, without committing sin, can on

any consideration swear to maintain or defend any known or acknowledged corruption or defect in the profession or establishment of religion.

3. That a public oath can be taken only according to the declared and known sense of the legislature or enacting authority, and no person is warranted to swear it in a sense of his own, contrary to the former.

4. That no church court can warrantably give a judicial toleration or allowance to do what they declare to be sinful, or what there is sufficient evidence from the word of God is sinful.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING COVENANTING.

That the renewing of our covenants in a bond suited to the times is a seasonable duty, and that means shall be used for having that solemn exercise performed throughout the united body.

On procedure in Covenanting.

1. The morality of public covenanting being taken for granted, and its seasonableness having been declared in a preceding article, we further declare, that agreeably to the Act of the Associate Presbytery 1743, and also to their Act in 1744, the renovation of our Covenants, National and Solemn League, shall be a term of Ministerial Communion in the United Body, and also of Christian Communion, so far as that none can be admitted, who are opposers, contemners, or slights of the duty.

2. That the union betwixt the two bodies shall be consummated by such of the Ministers and Preachers as have not already joined in covenanting, engaging in that duty, together with such students of Divinity as may offer themselves; their brethren who have lately entered into the bond signifying their adherence, by holding up their hands after the others have sworn.* None shall subsequently be licenced to preach the Gospel in the Body, who have not joined in the bond, or at least given a solemn pledge to do so when an opportunity is offered. But, in this last case,

* Agreeably to a subsequent arrangement, the union was consummated by the ministers and preachers of both Synods, together with the students of divinity, and a considerable number of ruling elders, engaging in covenanting.

it is understood that the Synod shall be consulted, and its consent obtained.

3. It is agreed that, according to an Act of the Associate Presbytery in 1744, concerning the order to be observed in covenanting, “the solemn acknowledgment of the public sins, and breaches of our Covenants, shall be publicly joined in and made, whereupon these covenants shall be publicly sworn and subscribed in the Bond, by all such as shall *willingly offer themselves* unto the Lord in this solemn work and duty ;” and “that none shall be admitted to swear and subscribe the Covenants but such as have a competent measure of knowledge, are free of all known scandal, and have a conversation becoming the Gospel ; as these only can make a credible profession of willingly offering themselves unto the Lord.” It is also agreed, that, while all proper means are used for stirring up and preparing the people in their respective congregations to engage in this important and seasonable duty, there should be no undue haste in those congregations where it has not been formerly practised.

ON COMMUNION AND PRACTICAL RELIGION.

Deeply sensible of the importance of preserving the purity of church fellowship and of adopting such means as, by the Divine blessing, may be most calculated to promote the revival of religion in general among them, the Synods uniting declare,—

1. That, though it appears both Bodies have hitherto proceeded on the same general plan in the admission of members into their communion, they are sensible that additional attention is due to this subject, and agree in earnestly recommending that greater care be taken by Ministers and Sessions, that all persons admitted to the enjoyment of sealing ordinances shall have made themselves acquainted with the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, as exhibited in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and vindicated in the Testimony of the Associate Body ; as well as that they maintain a becoming moral and religious character.

2. Whereas, in some parts of the Uniting Bodies, many individuals, without adverting, we are persuaded, to the injurious effects of the practice as tending to neutralize the influence of their testimony, and operating unfavourably on

the unity of the Church, have indulged in a habit of occasionally joining in public worship and hearing the word under ministers of the Gospel, and with religious bodies, from whom, though they hold much of the truth, we have scriptural grounds of separation;—the Synod do earnestly recommend and urge greater strictness in this matter; as believing it to be more conducive to edifying and consistent fellowship, more fitted to excite to serious efforts for the healing of existing divisions, and, therefore, more accordant with the spirit even of a true and enlarged charity, to refrain (until such differences shall have been adjusted on scriptural grounds) from everything that would imply a slight estimate of matters of difference, or incline to a resting contented with a partial, instead of a real and thorough union.

3. In addition to these resolutions tending to promote strictness of admission and purity of fellowship, the Synods uniting are strongly impressed with the duty, in coming together, of using all likely methods of furthering vital and practical godliness. They would seek the increased efficiency of religious ordinances, either by adopting the obsolete practice of Presbyterial Visitations, or if that shall be judged inexpedient, by substituting in its room some other means of encouraging Pastors, Elders, and private Christians in their respective duties, and exciting and keeping alive a suitable interest in each other, and in the work of the Lord among their hands. They feel it will be important to exercise a vigilant care in exciting to the indispensable duty of family worship, and in urging parents to ply earnestly the work of domestic instruction. They will seek to call greater attention to the practice of personal and family fasting and thanksgiving, and to stimulate the formation and promote the increase of meetings for prayer and private fellowship. In fine, sensible of the necessity of divine influences to render their endeavours for these ends effectual, they would earnestly entreat the people under their inspection to join with them in seeking of the God of Zion an abundant effusion of the Holy Ghost, according to his promise.

If we have been more minute on this subject than some may think needful, it is not because we wish to magnify the difference, or to revive debates; but because we think that, when a separation has taken place, has subsisted long,

and has produced a train of interesting consequences, the better way of removing it, both in point of duty and of safety, is by candid explications, with the view of producing mutual understanding; instead of having recourse to the easier and more plausible method of burying the whole subject of difference in silence, or wrapping it up in vague and ambiguous generalities, which, while it is neither honourable to truth nor edifying to the world, often conduces little, in the issue, to the harmony and comfort of the coalescing bodies.

The Synod constituted in the way of testifying against those who had engaged in the defence of the burgess oath, went forward in the work of renewing the Covenants. Having taken into consideration some other oaths, they found that the clauses of general and unlimited allegiance in the constable-oath, and in some burgess-oaths, could not be consistently sworn by those who were testifying against existing evils in the laws of the land; and that they could not, with safety of conscience, take the oath of church-warden in England and Ireland. They condemned the mason-oath, because it requires the swearer to engage to keep secret certain things before they were made known to him, and its administration is accompanied with a number of superstitious ceremonies; and the chapman-oath, because it includes a similar bond of secrecy, and bears on articles which are trifling or impracticable. And they appointed sessions to require satisfaction from such of their members as involved themselves in these sinful and ensnaring oaths.—In consequence of an attempt to revive, in this country, the doctrine of universal redemption, in a somewhat new form, the Synod, in 1754, published an act against the Arminian error on this head.* The particular form which it then assumed has passed away; but the error itself has of late been gaining ground, and many who profess attachment to the doctrine of grace, and even of unconditional election, stumble at the doctrine of particular redemption, although it will be found intimately connected with the substitution of Christ, and the efficacy of his death.

In the year 1795, there was laid before the Synod (which had now taken the name of the General Associate Synod)

* This was occasioned by the publication of a Treatise on Justifying Faith, ascribed to Mr Fraser of Brac.

an overture of a Narrative and Testimony, to supersede in practice the Judicial Testimony. After being occupied in its correction for a number of years, the Synod approved and enacted it as a term of ministerial and Christian communion, in the manner stated in their act relating to it;* and, about the same time, they revised the Acknowledgment of Sins and Bond, and adapted them to the present state of their Testimony. These acts were opposed by several members of court, who allowed that the Narrative and Testimony contained, particularly in the doctrinal part of it, an assertion of many valuable and precious articles of truth, but objected to it as departing from the received doctrine on the connection between church and state, and the national character and obligation of our Covenants. Having on this ground protested against the adoption of these deeds, four of these brethren soon after formed themselves into a presbytery, under the name of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery.†

We do not judge it necessary to enter farther into the dispute occasioned by the Narrative and Testimony, not only because the great body of those who formed the General Synod have dropped it, and ceased to exist as a separate society, but also because such members of the Synod as continued to adhere to that Testimony, under the name of the Associate Synod, and the members of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery, have in the good providence of God, come, by mutual explanations, to see eye to eye, and unanimously to agree to the following propositions, which we consider as doing justice to the truth, on the several points which were brought into controversy.

1st, WE agree in declaring, that the church of Christ is a spiritual, free, and independent kingdom, essentially distinct and different from secular kingdoms, in her origin, offices, laws, judicatories, formal objects, and special ends; and that she possesses from JESUS CHRIST, her sole King and Head, an intrinsic and unalienable power for all the purposes of her administration, not derived from, and not subordinate to, the powers of this world: More particularly, that Christ hath instituted a specific form of government in his

* In 1804.

† In 1806.

church, to be exercised by such office-bearers as he hath appointed in his word, and that they have authority from him to meet in his name, in smaller or larger judicatories, as often as the necessities and welfare of the church may require, and to regulate whatever regards the affairs of the House of God, according to the laws of that house, without being subject to the direction or control of civil rulers, so long as they keep within the proper line of their office, and do not encroach on the peculiar business of secular government, nor abuse their power to the detriment of those interests which it has in charge.

2*d*, That Natural Religion, an acknowledgment of which lies at the foundation of all confidence and duty in human society, forms an important object of care and attention to nations and their rulers.

Mankind in their national, no less than in their individual capacity, are dependent on God. As it is to him they owe their national existence and prosperity, they must be bound to acknowledge his supremacy, and to take such measures as are competent to them, that he be publicly honoured and served among them. The voice of nature conspires with that of revelation in pronouncing this to be the homage that pertaineth to the "King of Nations," who will not fail to resent the withholding of it on the "nations who call not on his name." It is a dictate of nature, that nations, as such, should do homage to him who ruleth among the nations. This is their interest as well as their duty, even in a temporal respect. Religion is not only of great advantage to society; it is its firmest pillar. Civil government could not exist among men, and far less could it gain its secondary and higher ends in promoting the public good extensively, by mere external laws and force, without the aids of religion, and the secret but powerful operation of conscience.

3*d*, That, though civil government is founded not on revealed but natural principles, yet it is the duty of nations and their rulers, who are favoured with Revealed Religion, not only to embrace it, but to recognize and

give public countenance to the profession of it, and by their laws and administration to provide, in every way competent to them, consistent with its nature and peculiar laws, and the just rights and liberties of rational agents, that its salutary influence have free course, and be diffused through all orders and departments of society.

Human legislation and magistratical authority have not for their direct and immediate objects supernatural doctrines and institutions, considered as such, but considered in respect of the external profession and observance of them, and of the relation in which these stand to the interests of society. Accordingly, in the exercise of their legislative authority, it is the duty of nations or their representatives, to remove from their civil constitution whatever may be found to stand in the way of the progress of revealed religion,—to have the whole of their civil laws framed, and the whole of their administration regulated in such a manner as to be agreeable to it, and subservient to its interests,—to give decided countenance and public protection to its functionaries in the discharge of their duty, and to provide all needful legal securities in behalf of the scriptural profession of it, not only against turbulent individuals or factions, but also against the attempts to undermine and supplant it, which may be made by the rulers to whom the administration of their affairs may be entrusted. But if nations may legislate in favour of revealed religion, it follows as a native inference, that it is competent to magistrates, in whom the executive power of the nation is lodged, to exercise that power by carrying the laws thus framed into execution. The doctrine now stated, while it is consistent with the principles of sound reason, runs in accordance with the stream of approved examples, precepts, and predictions relating to this subject, to be found in the Bible. It was the doctrine held in common by the Protestant Churches, and which is applied to the national reformation and settlement of religion in our own land in the public papers of the Secession. In the Act, Declaration, and Testimony, the Associate Presbytery record and approve of the legal securities given to the Protestant and Presbyterian religion in Scotland, both in the first and se-

cond periods of our reformation. And in their answers to Mr Nairn, they lay down the following proposition as the basis of their approval of our ancient civil reformation:—“As it was once a peculiar duty of the Jewish nation, so it is peculiarly incumbent upon every civil state whereinto Christianity is introduced, to study and bring to pass that civil government among them, in all the appurtenances of its constitution and administration, run in an agreeableness to the word of God, be subservient to the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, and to the interests of the true religion and reformation of the church; as otherwise they cannot truly prosper in their civil concerns, nor be enriched by the blessings of the gospel. This people (add they), considered in their conjunct and political capacity (as thus only the matter is competent to them), should, by their deed of civil constitution, provide that the magistrates be obliged to concur in the same true religion and reformation; and to rule them by laws no way prejudicial but serviceable thereunto.”

4th, That Church and State, though specifically distinct and different in their nature, and not to be confounded in the administration, are yet capable of being mutually helpful in the advancement of objects common to both.

The powers and institutions which proceed from God according to the law of nature, through the medium of society, in his moral kingdom, and those that are appointed by him in his spiritual kingdom, according to the law of supernatural revelation, must have a friendly aspect towards each other, and when they coincide and co-operate, their mutual influence must be of the most happy and beneficial kind. It has been already stated in what sense religion forms an important object of concern to nations and their governments, and it will be admitted by all, that public morals, although under a different consideration, is an object common to both societies; so that, when each casts in its influence to promote that object, their co-operation must tend greatly to advance that “righteousness” which “exalteth a nation.” This, however, is to be done by them distinctly, in a consistency with the nature of each, and in the way of pursuing their proper ends—without mixing or confounding their respective judicatories, subjecting the one

to the other, or enforcing ecclesiastical censures by punishment properly so called, such as fines and imprisonments.

5th, That the due exercise of civil authority about religious matters, as above stated, does not lead to persecution for conscience sake, or to unjust and unnecessary restraint on the rights and liberties of men.

To promote Christianity by forcible methods is a violation of its nature. It can be productive of no good effects, either in a spiritual or political point of view: Not in a spiritual view, for force cannot reach the inward man: Not in a political point of view, for it is not the mere exterior form of religion, but the hold which it takes upon the heart, which chiefly strengthens, and really improves civil society and government. Nor is it merely useless; it is productive of the most baneful effects, not only to individuals, but to the church and to society at large, as the history of the church abundantly shews. Penal laws against any religious party can only be vindicated on the principle that there is something in the sentiments, spirit, and conduct of that party hostile to the general interests of society, or threatening the safety of other professors of religion, and the lawful institutions of a particular kingdom; as is the case with regard to popery. On the same principles, it cannot be accounted persecution to restrain or punish the grosser violations of even the first tables of the divine law, such as blasphemy, profane swearing, and the open violation of the Sabbath by amusements or secular employments.

6th, That the doctrine respecting civil rulers contained in the Confessions of the Reformed Churches, and particularly in the Westminster Confession, can be defended on the principles of Scripture and reason above stated. Whatever sense may be imposed on some expressions in it, taken by themselves, yet, upon a fair and candid interpretation of the whole doctrine which it lays down upon the subject, the Westminster Confession will not be found justly chargeable with countenancing persecution for conscience sake, with subjecting matters purely religious to the cognizance of the civil magistrate, or with allowing him a supremacy over the church, or any power in it.

In the 4th section of the 20th chapter, after laying down the doctrine of liberty of conscience, the Confession proceeds to guard it against abuse, first in reference to the authority of God in his law; and, secondly, in reference to the authorities on earth, civil or ecclesiastical. On the last, it mentions certain things for which persons of a certain description may be proceeded against; but the Confession does not say, that, for these things, proceedings may be instituted against good and peaceable subjects, but against those who "oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it," who "resist the ordinance of God;" which plainly implies that the Confession, in this place, refers only to persons who are chargeable with faction and violence. The intention of this section is not to lay down the extent of the provinces of these powers, but only to remove the plea of conscience; and it ought to be understood in consistency with their acting each in its own province, without the one interfering with the causes which come under the cognizance of the other.

In the 3d section of the 23d chapter, the compilers mention certain matters connected with the church, and of a religious nature, about which it is the duty of the magistrate (or government of a country) to employ his authority; but this part of the Confession must be understood in a consistency with other parts of it, where the freedom and independence of the church upon the powers of this world are asserted and vindicated. The magistrate must not claim a lordly supremacy over the church: for "there is no head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ," (chap. xxv. sect. 6.) He must not interfere with her internal government: for "the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate;"—and "to these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed," (chap. xxx. sect. 1, 2.) He must not, as a magistrate, sustain himself a public judge of true or false religion, so as to dictate to his subjects in matters of faith: for "it belongs to synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience," (chap. xxxi. sect. 3.) Moreover, in the section now under review, the compilers of the Confession set out with declaring, that the magistrate may not take upon himself the

administration of the ordinances, or any part of the government, of the church: "The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven." After these limitations and restrictions of the magistrate's power with regard to religious matters by the compilers of the Confession themselves, the authority which they assign to him in this section cannot be fairly interpreted as implying a lordly supremacy over the church, an official power in the church, or a right, by virtue of his office, to dictate to his subjects in matters purely religious.

To understand this section, it may be proper farther to observe, that their object was to guard equally against Erastian and Sectarian principles. Accordingly, they set out with condemning Erastian principles, according to which the government and discipline of the church are devolved upon the civil magistrate, by declaring, that the magistrate may not take upon him either the ministerial dispensation of word and sacraments, or the judicial management of religious matters. But, although they deny him all ministerial or judicial power in the church, in opposition to Erastians, yet to guard against the other extreme, they assert, in opposition to the Sectarians of that age, that it is his duty to employ the influence of his high station and office for the good of the church, and the advancement of the interests of pure and undefiled religion; and, in doing so, he does not go beyond his proper sphere, as the advancement of religion in a country is the most effectual means of promoting the public good of society, as has been fully stated in the former propositions. Hence it is added, "Yet it is his duty, and he hath authority, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church," &c. These things they consider as peculiarly obligatory upon those at the head of a *Christian* community; for it must always be kept in view, that they speak of the magistrate, not merely as a magistrate, but as a *Christian* magistrate, who is bound, as by the moral law, so also by his Christian vocation not only to regulate his private conduct, but to order the whole of his public administration so as to prove subservient to the interests of evangelical truth and holiness, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ; and it is by uniting the exertions of the pious Christian and the

enlightened magistrate, that he is to endeavour to have the ends here specified accomplished.

With regard to the *means* which he is to employ for this purpose, they set out, as we have already seen, with declaring *negatively* that he must not attempt to effect these things himself ministerially or judicially. "He may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" yet they assert *positively*, "that it is his duty, and he hath authority, to take order," that it may be done otherwise, and by persons to whom the cognizance of such business properly belongs,—not by subverting ecclesiastical authority, but by endeavouring to bring it into free and legitimate operation, after the exercise of it has been in a great measure suspended,—not by taking the doing of ecclesiastical business into his own hands, but by taking order that it be done by rightly constituted ecclesiastical courts. Hence it is added in the end of the section, "For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods," &c.

This is the only means specified by the compilers, and considered by them as the most effectual; but the phrase, "for the *better* effecting whereof," obviously supposes that there are other means competent to him from which he is not precluded. To remove all difficulties as to the nature and extent of these, it may be necessary to remark, *1st*, That they are to be limited by the negative assertion mentioned above, viz. That he is not to interfere, either ministerially or judicially, in the internal affairs of the Church; *2dly*, With this limitation, the Christian magistrate may, nevertheless, in a number of particulars, bring the influence and authority of his station to bear directly upon the objects specified. *First*, As a pious Christian, he may promote these ends more effectually than others, by advice and example, as his advice and example are calculated to have more weight, owing to the high station which he fills in society; and, *secondly*, As an enlightened and patriotic magistrate, he may contribute to the same ends, in a variety of ways, as we have already seen (art. 3.) in the due exercise of his official authority, "by recognising and giving public countenance to the profession of true religion,—by removing from the civil constitution of the country, whatever may be found to stand in the way of its progress,—by

endeavouring in every way competent to him, and consistent with its peculiar nature and laws, that its salutary influence have free course, and be diffused through all orders and departments of society," &c. All this may be done without encroaching upon the proper business of the Church, or violating the rights of conscience. It is necessary, however, to remark, that, so far as any of the things mentioned in this section may be justly viewed as civil crimes, or gross violations of the moral law, the magistrate cannot be viewed as precluded from exercising his coercive authority for their suppression, as stated in the preceding article.

To return to the means specified in the section, and considered by the compilers as the most effectual, viz. bringing the matters specified under the cognizance of church-courts,—they allow him, for this purpose, "power to call synods," &c. With regard to this power, which has given rise to much discussion, we may observe, 1st, That they could not understand by it, a power lodged in him by virtue of any supposed supremacy over the Church, after the explicit manner in which they elsewhere assert the sole Headship of Christ over her as his independent kingdom,—or by virtue of any official character in her, after declaring, that the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. His calling synods must then be viewed by them, not as an ecclesiastical ordinance in the Church, but merely as a moral means to excite, and bring forward her office-bearers in the discharge of their duty; 2dly, That the doctrine of the Confession on this head, both here and in the 31st chapter, has always been received by the Secession Church, and continues to be received by us, as explained by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in their act 1647, approving of said Confession, in which they declare, that "his calling Synods, without any other call, is to be understood of kirks not settled or constituted in point of government, and not to the prejudice of the intrinsic power, of the church received from Christ, to call her own assemblies."

With respect to the last clause, where a right is conceded to him, "to provide that what is transacted in them be according to the mind of God;" it may be observed, that it cannot mean, consistently with the doctrine of the Confes-

sion itself, that the magistrate, acting as such, is directly to provide what the decisions of Synods shall be; for this would amount to sustaining himself an official judge in matters properly religious, would be inconsistent with his calling of them ministerially to judge and determine in these matters, and would amount to a very glaring assumption of the power of "the keys."

We shall only farther add, that, to assert that the Church has not an intrinsic right to call her own assemblies,—that the civil magistrate has a right to do this in ordinary cases, or that he has a right to do it in any case, by virtue of a pretended supremacy over the Church, and in matters ecclesiastical,—that his presence is necessary to give validity to their proceedings,—that he sits as a preses or director of the deliberations and votes,—that he has a right to prescribe or dictate to them what their decisions shall be,—or that, after they have deliberated and decided, he may receive appeals from their judgment, and review, alter, or reverse their sentences,—to assert any or all of these things, is to assert what is not only without countenance from the words of the Confession, but contrary to its express declarations, and utterly inconsistent with the common principles of Presbyterians, and, in particular, with the well-known principles and contendings of the Church of Scotland, and the explicit declarations which she made in her act approving of the Westminster Confession.

7th, That vowing being founded in the moral law, and resulting from God's supremacy and man's dependence, is a duty, both singly and socially, in all periods of time, and under every religious dispensation; and that religious covenants and oaths, in which persons bind themselves to God, and solemnly confederate among themselves, in the cause of religion in general, or as to any thing connected with its interests, having the same origin and warrants, and being moral-natural, and not positive institutions, are capable of various modifications, and cannot be restricted to men merely in the character of church members.

The moral law cannot be confined to men as members of the church; and moral obligations may be contracted by them in their various capacities, as subjects of the moral

government of God. No duties, moral or religious, can be acceptably performed, but by those who are savingly acquainted with the gospel, and instated in the covenant of grace; but this must not be confounded with their warrant or obligation, and does not narrow either the one or the other. Such vows to God, and confederations with one another, may relate to the intrinsic concerns of the church, or they may be extended to the external state and interest of nations, in reference to religion. Those covenants may be properly termed religious, in which there is not only a vow to God, but in whose matter or ends religion is the main thing, though other things may be introduced as connected with, and subordinate to it; as was the case in the Solemn League and Covenant of Britain.

A nation may enter into such a vow or covenant in its religious character, the public authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, concurring to promote it, and the rest of the people cleaving to them, and entering into the oath. Besides this case, we are plainly to be understood as maintaining, that the national will, however expressed in the way of engagement agreeably to the divine law, even when the rulers are not concurring, brings its members under covenant obligation. This, however, is not to be understood to the prejudice of that covenanting which is strictly ecclesiastical. Vowing and swearing to God is a religious exercise peculiarly suited to the Church, and which may be, and often has been, an eminent means of reviving religion, of establishing Christians in the present truth, and cementing the different parts of an ecclesiastical body in their adherence to their common profession in times of great temptation and danger. This may be done in countries where there never was national covenanting; and where national covenants have been entered into, although the great body of the nation, including its rulers, may have renounced the obligation of them, or may refuse to perform their stipulations, it is lawful for a minority, or a smaller number, in an ecclesiastical capacity to renew these solemn deeds, by publicly avouching their continued obligation, and engaging to promote the ends of them according to their opportunity, and agreeably to the circumstances in which they are placed; "for there is a great difference between the renewing of national covenants, and a national renewing of them." In this case, the

bond entered into should be merely a Church-bond, framed by her supreme judicatories, and entered into only by persons in her religious fellowship.

These are not to be viewed as mere general principles, founded in reason and revelation, but as bearing directly upon the cause of the Secession. One main design of the religious association formed by the ministers and people who seceded from the National Church of Scotland, was to assert and vindicate, and, by all means competent to them, to revive that religious reformation which had been happily attained in this land, agreeably to the word of God, ratified by sacred covenants, and secured by laws, both ecclesiastical and civil. Accordingly, in their Testimony, and other judicial papers, declaratory of their principles and views, they not only approve of the Westminster Formularies, as standards of uniformity for the three nations, and of what the judicatories of the Church did in the way of reforming and settling religion, but also of what was done by the public authorities of the State, especially in Scotland, in carrying on a civil Reformation, in connexion with, and subserviency to, the ecclesiastical, particularly by settling the civil constitution of this country on a reformed footing; "which deed of constitution (say they) in all moral respects is morally unalterable, because of its agreeableness to the Divine will, revealed in the word, and because it was attained and fixed in pursuance of our Solemn Covenants." At the same time, their approbation of what was done during the period of reformation was limited, and they never pledged themselves by approving all the acts or proceedings either of the State or of the Church at that time. So far as it can be shewn that any acts of the Church encroached on due Christian liberty, or that any acts of the State subjected good and peaceable subjects to punishment for matters purely religious, the principles of Seceders do not permit them to justify their conduct.

The founders of the Secession did not bring forward any new or peculiar principles, but declared their cordial adherence to those of the Reformed Church of Scotland, as stated from the word of God, in her subordinate standards, by which they were willing that all differences between them and the judicatories of the National Church should be determined. Their object was not to destroy or

overturn that Church, but to correct the evils which had defaced her beauty, and impaired her vigour; and they declared their readiness to return to her communion, as soon as the grievances of which they complained were redressed. In one word, they appeared as a part of the Church of Scotland, adhering to her reformed constitution, testifying against the injuries done to it, and the corrupt administration to which these had led, craving the redress of these, and pleading for the revival of a reformation, attained conformably to Scripture in a former period, approved of by every authority in the land, and sanctioned by public and national vows to the Most High.

It is not to be wondered at, that attempts should have been made for healing the breach which was early caused in the associate body, by the controversy respecting the burgess-oath. In consequence of numerous petitions from congregations in their respective communions, the Associate Synod and General Associate Synod, in the year 1819, appointed committees, who jointly drew up a Basis of Union, which, after some corrections, was adopted by the two courts, who thereupon coalesced into one body, in the course of the following year. This Basis was protested against by a number of ministers belonging to the General Associate Synod, nine of whom afterwards joined in forming a court under the name of the Associate Synod.

When the motion for this union commenced, it was hailed by many as the dawn of a happy day, and as promising to unite not only the two larger societies, but also the smaller sections into which the secession body had been split; and had it been gone about with deliberation, and conducted on proper principles, these pleasing hopes might have been realized. But though anxious for union, and deeply convinced that it is of the greatest consequence to the real prosperity of the secession, and the advancement of the interests of religion in this land, we cannot conceal our conviction that, by adopting the Basis referred to, the uniting body abandoned the ground occupied by the first seceders, and consequently the ground occupied by the Church of Scotland in reforming times.

1. The Basis is not laid on an adherence to the Covenanted Reformation, and Reformed Principles of the

Church of Scotland. In seceding from the established judicatories, our fathers, as we have seen, espoused that cause; declared their adherence to the Westminster Standards as parts of the uniformity in religion for the three nations; declared the obligation which all ranks in them were under to adhere to these by the oath of God; testified against several important defects in the Revolution-settlement of religion; and traced the recent corruptions of which they complained to a progressive departure from the purity attained in the second period of reformation. The United Synod, on the contrary, proceeds, in the Basis, on the supposition that the Revolution-settlement was faultless: agreeably to it, they receive the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, not as subordinate standards for uniformity for the three nations, but merely, (to use their own words), "as the confession of our faith, expressive of the sense in which we understand the Holy Scriptures;" they exclude entirely from their Basis the Propositions concerning church government, and the Directory for public worship, drawn up by the Westminster Assembly; and they merely recognize presbytery as the only form of government which they acknowledge as founded upon the Word of God, although the first seceders, in their Testimony, condemned the church at the Revolution for not asserting expressly the divine right of the presbyterian government. Besides, the exception which they make to the Confession and Catechisms, is expressed in such a manner as to give countenance to an unwarranted stigma on these standards, as teaching persecuting principles; and as it was well known that this was highly offensive to not a few, by agreeing to it, they, on the matter, perpetuated two divisions in attempting to heal one.

2. The testimony to the continued obligation of the National Covenant, and the Solemn League, is dropped. These deeds are not so much as named in the Basis. When the United Synod approve of the "method adopted by our reforming ancestors, for mutual excitement and encouragement, by solemn confederation and vows to God," this never can be considered as a recognition of the present and continued obligations of our National Covenants; and still less can we regard, in this light, the following declaration, including all they say on the subject:—"We

acknowledge that we are under high obligations to maintain and promote the work of reformation begun, and to a great extent carried on by them."

3. Though the morality of public religious covenanting is admitted by the Basis, yet the present seasonableness of it is not asserted; any provision made for the practice of it is totally irreconcilable with presbyterian principles, being adapted only to covenanting on the plan of the Congregationalists or Independents, and not for confirming the common profession of the United Body; and in the bond transmitted by the General Synod, and registered by the United Synod, to be taken by those who choose, all idea of the renovation of the Covenants of our ancestors is set aside, and the recognition of their obligation, formerly made, is expunged.

4. By adopting the Basis, any testimony which had been formerly borne against sinful oaths, and other practical evils, inconsistent with pure religion, and a scriptural and consistent profession of it, was dropped; and all barriers against the practice of what is called free communion, which has become so general and fashionable, are removed.

5. With respect to the burgess-oath, we have already expressed our views, and candidly stated what we judge the best way of accommodating the difference which it occasioned in the Associate Body. Of the method adopted for this purpose, in the Basis, we shall only say, that while, on the one hand, by making no provision for preventing the swearing of an oath which has all along been viewed as sinful by one-half of the Secession, it tends to bring all contendings against public evils, and for purity of communion, into discredit with the generation; so, on the other hand, by providing that all in the United Body "shall carefully abstain from agitating the questions which occasioned" the breach, it restrains ministerial and Christian liberty in testifying against sin; and, on the matter, absolves the ministers and elders of one of the synods from an express article in their ordination-vows.

It is painful to us to have to state these things with respect to brethren who still profess a regard to the Reformation begun and carried on by our ancestors; but impartiality, as well as regard to a cause which both they and we are under manifold obligations to support, require this

plainness. Nothing will give us greater satisfaction than to find these grounds of complaint removed by their future proceedings; but when we consider that, on more than one account, they must have been disposed to employ, as much as possible, the language of former declarations, the distressing conviction is forced on our mind, that the great body of seceders are alienated, to a degree which we could scarcely have anticipated, from the principles solemnly avouched by their fathers.

SECT. X.—*Progress of public evils from the beginning of the Secession to the present time.*

FROM the time at which the Secession from the Established Church of Scotland took place, our national defection has proceeded farther, and many things have occurred in the proceedings of both Church and State, and in the conduct of the nation at large, which afford just grounds for complaint and humiliation. The following things may be specified in the proceedings of the Established Church.

1. The National Church, instead of being reclaimed, was irritated by the public testimony lifted up against her defections. The General Assembly ordered a libel to be drawn up against the seceding ministers; and, although the latter declined their authority, as no longer a right constituted court of Christ, yet the Assembly proceeded to depose them from their ministerial office. At the same time that the Assembly declared those who were contending for the reformed constitution and principles of the Church of Scotland worthy of the highest censures, they removed the sentence of deposition which had some years before been pronounced on Mr John Glass, and restored him to the office of the ministry, although he had long been employed in inveighing against national churches, national covenants, and the reformation of Britain, as attempts to revive a Jewish theocracy, and inconsistent with the spirituality and heavenly nature of the kingdom of Christ; and was an enemy to confessions of faith and presbyterian church government.

A few ministers and a considerable number of people joined those who had made an open appearance in behalf

of injured truth, and the liberty wherewith Christ had made his people free; but the greater part, even of those who had formerly acted with them, declined the call, and "abode in their breaches." The consequence was, that they soon began to extenuate some of those evils which they had been among the loudest in condemning, and became gradually indifferent and disaffected to that reformation which they had once regarded as the glory of the Church of Scotland. What contributed in no small degree to this remarkable change of sentiment, was the countenance given to the public ministrations of Mr Whitfield, a clergyman of the Church of England, who professed an indifference to all forms of church government, and modes of public worship, and sought, under the pretext of catholic love, to unite Christians of all parties, in such a way as was subversive of any testimony against errors or public evils. From this period we are to date the adoption of that mode of thinking, which has since prevailed so generally among the serious portion of the Established Church of Scotland, and which, by limiting their regards to what immediately concerns personal religion, has paralyzed their exertions in resisting the progress of error and public corruptions within her pale, and threatened their utter extinction, as a party arrayed in opposition to those who have so long maintained the ascendant in her judicatories; until of late that symptoms of a different and better spirit have begun to manifest themselves. When such was the disposition of the better part of the church, we need not wonder to find her delegates at a later period disclaiming the supposition, "that the members of the Church of Scotland may not conscientiously communicate occasionally with the Church of England."*

2. The judicatories of the Established Church have persevered in their oppressive measures for enforcing the law of patronage. An active concurrence in violent settlements has been made a term of ministerial communion, and declining to countenance them a ground of church-censure; as in the cases of the settlement of Torphichen,† of Inverkeithing,‡ and of Nigg.§

* Address of the Committee of the General Assembly to the House of Commons concerning the Sacramental Test in 1790.

† In 1750.

‡ In 1752.

§ In 1756.

The procedure of the Assembly in the second of these instances led to another separation. Mr Thomas Gillespie, some time after he was deposed for declining to take part in intruding a presentee on a reclaiming congregation, joined with another minister in forming the *Presbytery of Relief*, which has since drawn numbers from the Establishment. This society, as its name imports, proposed it as their main object, to provide relief for those who were aggrieved with the operation of the law of patronage. They shewed no disposition to inquire into, or seek the correction of other evils affecting the public interests of religion: were indifferent or hostile to the covenanted reformation of a former period, and disposed to favour a mixed communion, ministerial and Christian, with all who are not unsound in what are called the essentials of Christianity.

This new breach did not put a stop to the harsh measures of the ruling party in the Established Church. The moderation of calls was reduced to a mere form and piece of solemn mockery: it was repeatedly determined by the Assembly that no candidate should be put on the leet but the presentee;* calls were sustained without the subscription of a single person resident in the parish;† settlements have been ordered and carried through, in cases where the calls remained mere blanks;‡ and an armed force has been employed to accomplish the induction of a presentee, who was approved of by a committee appointed by the General Assembly to examine him after a Presbytery had twice found him unqualified.§ At last the Assembly agreed to drop the annual instruction which they had given to their Commission to embrace any favourable opportunity of applying to the legislature for having the grievance of patronage removed; and came to the resolution, "That there does not appear to be any reason for making any innovation in the mode of settling vacant parishes."|| The opposition long regularly made to patronage in the judicatories gradually died away; the people either left the communion of the Established Church, or succumbed to the yoke; and the public-spirited exertions of former times have dwindled

* In 1749.

† In the case of the parish of Glendivan, in 1770.

‡ In the cases of Biggar in 1780, and of Fenwick in 1781.

§ In the case of the parish of Shotts. || In 1784.

into attempts to flatter patrons into a popular exercise of their power, or to purchase, "with a great sum," that freedom which our fathers claimed as a right belonging to them as "free born." Before the judicatories could accomplish their object, they found it necessary to relax their over-strained authority, by opening houses of relief within their own pale, for those who suffered under their oppression. Chapels of Ease are an excrescence on a presbyterian church, symptomatic of the unsound state of the body which they disfigure. In most cases they have no session, or one dependent on the kirk-session of the parish to which they belong: and their ministers, though ordained to the cure of souls, are denied the exercise of discipline, and a right to sit in the church-courts.

3. Error has continued to spread, and received great encouragement, in several instances, from the church-courts. We shall give only two instances of this. Mr Ferguson, minister of Kilwinning, had attacked the doctrines of original sin, and the satisfaction of Christ, avowed his approbation of the writings of a noted Socinian, and ridiculed the use of Confessions of Faith. In consequence of a private individual having offered himself as a prosecutor, the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr found it necessary to take up the cause, which they dismissed, without inflicting the slightest censure, in the way of resting on a report of something which Mr Ferguson had said to a committee of his own presbytery, which had befriended him from the beginning. But the most glaring instance of unfaithfulness occurred in the case of Dr. Macgill, minister of Ayr, who had taught publicly,* almost all the errors of Socinianism, either in an avowed or more disguised shape,—had made reason the judge of the supernatural mysteries of religion,—represented Christ as a person of our own order,—treated his priestly office, and his offering himself a sacrifice for sins, as metaphorical,—denied the necessity and reality of the atonement made by his death,—held forth man's obedience as more precious and acceptable to God than Christ's blood,—and taught that repentance is the proper atonement for past transgressions, and faith and sincere obedience the foundation of the hope of future happiness.

* In an Essay on the Death of Christ, published in 1786.

Gross and glaring as was this attack upon all that is valuable in the gospel, aggravated by the consideration that it proceeded from one who had professed and avowed adherence to the opposite doctrines, yet two years elapsed before the author was called to account, and it is painful to relate the issue of the process, which was chiefly managed by those deemed the most orthodox, and during which several members of court avowed that they were much of the same sentiments with the accused person. It was terminated by the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, in 1790, without the slightest censure, and without the retraction of any error. Dr. Macgill was persuaded to give in an apology of the following tenor:—"That there are in his publication ideas which may appear improper, and modes of expression, with respect to some things, ambiguous and unguarded, which he disclaims, and for which he is heartily sorry." With this, accompanied with a declaration of his submitting to the Confession of Faith, as the authorised interpreter of Scripture, the Synod declared their satisfaction. A number of serious people, offended at the issue to which the cause had been brought, presented another libel against him; but the Assembly, when the affair came before them, refused it a hearing.—Some other publications of the same strain, by ministers of the Established Church,* appeared about that time; but after the result of the late prosecutions, especially the last, it was looked on as a hopeless task, to procure the conviction of a heretical teacher before the established judicatories.

So bold and confident did the patrons of error become, that they were determined to make an effort to be released from subscription to a Confession of Faith, an attempt which had already been tried by their friends in the Church of England.† But, in the mean time, the French Revolution broke out; the security of all existing establishments, religious as well as civil, was threatened; and, from this time forth, the proposal to abolish subscription was no more heard of; it became fashionable to speak with respect of established standards; and care was generally taken not to contradict them openly from the pulpit or the press. But,

* Including Dr. Dalrymple, another of the ministers of Ayr.

† See Sir H. Moncrieff's Life of Dr. Erskine.

considering the extent to which heresy had palpably infected the minds of the public teachers, it is not to be supposed that the evil could be expelled, though its virulence might be checked by external causes. Demonstrations have been given, from time to time, that Socinianism has still its disciples within the church; Arminian tenets are openly taught; the doctrine of a new law purchased by Christ, which requires faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, or faith and repentance only, as the ground and condition of a sinner's acceptance with God, is too commonly taught; and many who profess to believe the peculiar doctrines of Christianity laid down in the confessions of the reformed churches, view them merely in the light of philosophical theories in religion, about which good men differ, which have little or no influence on the heart and practice, and which should be sparingly, if at all, brought forward in the pulpit;—an opinion which has had the most pernicious influence upon the strain, or rather the spirit, of public preaching; for it is hard to say which is most criminal,—to poison the souls of the people by error, or to starve them, by keeping back the food of their souls, and suffering them to perish for lack of knowledge.

4. To these evils we have to add the general neglect of discipline by the church courts. From many instances it has appeared, that it is nearly as difficult to procure a conviction for immorality as for error. No due care is taken to separate between the precious and the vile in the admission to the seals of the Covenant of Grace, and particularly that of Baptism. Public discipline is almost totally laid aside; and, with respect to the only vice, which, in some places becomes the object of cognizance, glaring partiality is often shewn to the man with the gold ring. While they have allowed the internal discipline of the church to fall into desuetude, the judicatories have not been jealous in guarding their rights against invasion from without. The General Assembly has long yielded up to the government the sole appointment of national fasts and thanksgivings, and left to it the power of judging both as to the seasons and the causes of these religious and solemn acts; in consequence of which, they have generally been subordinated to political purposes and views.

In addition to the corruptions in the Established Church,

we have to lament, that the nation at large, and the government in particular, have involved themselves still farther in defection from the purity of reformation.

The corruptions both of prelacy and popery have of late received great countenance.—By the incorporating union between Great Britain and Ireland, formed at the beginning of this century, the consent of Scotland was a second time given, by her representatives, to the perpetual establishment of Episcopacy. In all our colonies and foreign settlements, too, an episcopal establishment has now been set up, which, besides its contrariety in many things to the word of God, is singularly unadapted, by its secular character and cumbrous appendages, to the work of evangelizing a heathen country, or of instructing a race of people whom Britain has so long unrighteously retained under slavery, degradation, and ignorance.—Public countenance has also been given, in various ways, to the Church of Rome, notwithstanding all that we have suffered from it, and all our vows, protestations and contendings against it. In the war which lately raged so long on the Continent, and in the maintaining of which she took so active a part, Britain was involved in measures which tended directly to support the antichristian interest, and to revive and re-establish it in countries where it had been overthrown or weakened. In the territories which were permanently ceded to us by the peace, and in which popery is the received religion, the authorities appointed by this country have given the most open and decided countenance to some of its grossest corruptions. These measures, together with the apathy which has seized the minds of British protestants, and the alienation of many of them from the most important principles of the Reformation, have emboldened the adherents of the Romish religion in this country. Not contented with the freedom which they had obtained from all restraints on the public exercise of their religion, they have clamorously and pertinaciously demanded the right of admission to the highest offices of the state; and, although their well-known and unalterable principles, together with their conduct on many occasions, shew that the affairs of a Protestant nation cannot be safely entrusted to them, yet their claims have met with a support from Parliament, which was denied to the modest petitions of

some of the most conscientious protestants for relief from the iniquitous sacramental test. The national sin, in this matter, has been highly aggravated by the conduct of the generality of presbyterians and protestant dissenters, who have either pleaded in behalf of the Roman Catholic claims, or supinely and silently acquiesced in their justice.

While we testify against the growth and encouragement of popery and prelacy, we have to lament that there has been a great departure from reformation principles, in consequence of many turning to the opposite extreme. Congregations formed on the Independent model, including those which reject infant baptism, are now to be found in all parts of our land. Their number was greatly increased at a time when the public mind was in a state of high effervescence, by a few individuals who proposed at first, by means of itinerancies and lay-preaching, to convey the knowledge of the gospel to the unenlightened parts of the country, and who afterwards set up tabernacles in the principal towns, which ultimately settled into Independent congregations. Among the most of them the doctrine of grace is retained, and they profess more than ordinary strictness of communion; but their rejection of tests of orthodoxy, together with their mode of discipline, proves an inlet to divers and strange doctrines, and has actually unhinged the minds of not a few. Independency is in itself inconsistent with the visible unity and peace of the church, and must preclude, where it is rigidly acted upon, all general and combined efforts for extending the kingdom of Christ, maintaining the purity of religion in a land, or recovering it from the corruptions by which the profession of it may have been depraved. Among the other sects which have come among us from England are the Quakers, who are now to be regarded chiefly in the light of a quiet secular society; and the Methodists, who have embraced the leading errors of Arminianism, and whose internal regimen is as strongly marked by human policy as their external worship is with enthusiasm. Of late years congregations, under the name of Unitarian, have been erected in our chief towns, for the dissemination of the dangerous and soul-ruining errors of Socinianism and universal restoration.

Wherever we turn our eye in surveying the present state

of religion on the Continent, we see reasons for deep regret and lamentation. The deadly wound which Antichrist had lately received has been healed; the popish religion has been restored in all those countries where its power had for a time been taken away, and many individuals, panic-struck with the horrors and impiety which accompanied the French Revolution, or willing to secure the favour of the restored governments, have deserted the protestant standard, and retired within the pale of the church calling herself catholic and infallible. The state of all the protestant churches is truly melancholy. The reformed church of Holland, which, after being refined by the Arminian controversy, continued long to resist the innovations by which those around her were corrupted, now maintains the standard of a dubious orthodoxy, with an arm palsied by deep decay in vital Christianity. The Churches of Switzerland, including Geneva, have been overrun by Arian and Pelagian errors, accompanied with a spirit of persecution against all who are disposed to testify against notorious departures from the ancient faith. The same errors have also seized on the reformed Church of France, which has not been purified by the severe process of refining, through which Providence has made it to pass, and out of which it was so wonderfully brought. The Protestant Churches of Germany have passed through the intermediate stages of Arminianism, Arianism, and Socinianism, until they have settled in a species of refined Deism and thinly-veiled Infidelity. The canon of Scripture has been unsettled, its inspiration denied, its mysteries ridiculed, and its miracles turned into fables, by those who were entrusted with the education of candidates for the ministry.

We have reason to bless God that matters are far from being so bad in Britain; but we have need to take warning, lest we fall after the same example of unbelief. Infidelity has long prevailed in our land, and after corrupting our literature, and poisoning the minds of the higher and better educated classes, has, of late, descended to the lower orders, and broken out in the most indecent and blasphemous attacks against Christianity, and all the principles of religion. In England, Arianism has given place to Socinianism, which has overthrown the faith of a large proportion of the Protestant dissenters, belonging to the Presbyterian,

Independent, and Baptist persuasions; although it is pleasing to us to have to record that by many of these the doctrines of the Gospel are still maintained in purity.

We are not ignorant, and we rejoice to think, that, of late years, there has been a visible increase in the number of evangelical ministers in the Established Churches of this country; and that this has contributed to awaken a concern about religion in the minds of many, especially of the higher ranks. Our hope and prayer is, that this may not only continue, but increase more and more, and that it may be a means of "provoking to love and good works" those who have long made a distinguished profession of regard to the doctrines of the gospel, and of recovering them from that deadness in respect of practical religion under which many of them have fallen. Zealous exertions have also been made for disseminating the knowledge of Christianity at home and abroad, circulating the Scriptures, and promoting the religious instruction of youth. But such tokens for good ought not to betray us into indifference about corruptions deeply and permanently affecting the interests of religion, which are patronized by many who take an active part in these benevolent schemes; nor are we permitted to retract or practically contradict our testimony against public evils, for the sake of doing good, or what we may reckon more extensive good. Laudable as the object of the Missionary Societies is, we think it can scarcely be denied, that, though secular and self-constituted associations, all of them, in one way or other, assume the power which properly belongs to churches organized and acting in the name of the Lord Jesus. With respect to those which are composed of persons of different denominations, although sensible that a union among all the friends of Christianity is exceedingly desirable for this as well as other purposes, yet we cannot conceal our conviction, that their present divided state, as to sentiment and communion, prevents them from co-operating consistently and efficiently. Such societies must either run the risk of their missionaries disagreeing in the doctrine which they teach, and in the public worship and church-order which they set up; or they must send them out with instructions, and under engagements, tacit or expressed, that they shall abstain from and avoid all those points about which

those who mission them may differ. The former would be discredit and ruinous to a Christian mission; and does not the latter imply, either that there is no conscientious ground for keeping up a separate communion at home, or else that it is lawful to dispense with the injunction of "teaching" men "to observe all things whatsoever" Christ "hath commanded?"

Nothing characterizes the present age more than the extensive spread of the latitudinarian principle, which limits the attention of Christians to a few plain, leading, and general articles in religion, termed essential or fundamental, and represents every thing else as unimportant, or, at least, as what ought not to regulate or affect church-communion. Though this scheme of religion makes great pretensions to liberality, we cannot but regard it as narrow and contracted, whether it be viewed in connection with the glory of God, or the best interests of mankind; but it is of more importance to point out its dangerous tendency to set aside divine authority, and gradually to weaken and subvert Christianity. While some plead that the differences between Presbyterians, Independents, and Episcopalians, are unimportant, others extend the plea to the differences between those who practise and those who reject infant baptism, between Calvinists and Arminians, between Papists and Protestants. Even in the more modified form in which it is commonly held in the present day, it encourages persons to make a compliment of one article of truth after another, and to remain indifferent spectators of the gradual encroachments made by error and corruption, provided only they do not directly attack the foundations of religion.

On this, as well as the other grounds which have been brought forward, we judge it necessary, in the following part of our Testimony, to be more particular in specifying the different articles of truth, confronting the doctrines of our Confession of Faith with the opposite errors which are prevailing, and giving a more explicit statement of some of them, which are only generally stated in the Confession, because they were opposed by few at the time when that standard was composed. And, in doing this, we shall subjoin to each article the principal Scripture-grounds on which it rests, for confirming the faith of the friends of truth, and convincing gainsayers.

PART II.

DOCTRINAL PART OF THE TESTIMONY.

CHAPTER I.

OF NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

1. IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. i. sect. 1, and in opposition to those who deny the existence of natural religion, and maintain that all the knowledge mankind have of the existence of God, and moral obligation, is derived from supernatural revelation,—WE DECLARE,

That the law of nature in man, and the works of creation and providence, without the aid of supernatural revelation, shew that there is a God, whose kingdom ruleth over all, and so far manifest his wisdom, power, and goodness, as to leave all men inexcusable.

In proof of the above statement, we would observe, That the Scriptures take for granted the first principles of natural religion, and, instead of first proving the existence of God, begin with telling us what God did:¹ That they frequently appeal to these natural principles in support of their doctrines respecting the Deity:² That they teach us, that the works of creation proclaim the existence, and discover several of the attributes of God, and that the dispensations of Providence bear witness to every nation under heaven, of his bounty, on the one hand, in supplying the wants of his creatures, and of his awful but holy severity,

¹ Gen. i. 1.

² Acts xvii. 24—28; Ps. cxlvii. 4; Isa. xl. 26.

on the other, in punishing transgressors:¹ That these discoveries of God are calculated to excite a sense of moral obligation; and that such a moral feeling, arising from the remains of the law of nature, exists among those who were never favoured with the written law.²

2. In defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. i. sect 1, and in opposition to the Deists, who maintain the sufficiency of the light of nature to guide men to eternal happiness; and also to those who maintain, that, "by the works of creation and providence, including tradition, God hath given an obscure objective revelation to all men, of his being reconcilable to sinners; and that the heathen may know that there is a remedy for sin provided, which may be called an implicit or obscure revelation of the gospel,"—WE DECLARE,

That the light of nature is insufficient to instruct fallen man how he is to glorify or enjoy God, as it does not reveal a method for his recovery from the ruins of the fall.

The truth of this declaration appears from the following considerations:—That reason itself dictates, that man cannot now be in that condition in which he was originally created: That daily experience teaches, that man's fall has not only, in a great degree, effaced the law of nature originally engraven on his heart, but also debased his faculties, so as to render him, in a great measure, incapable of discerning the evidences of natural religion, and of forming proper conclusions from them with regard to his duty: That the extent of man's powers, in his present state, for these purposes, cannot be ascertained from the writings of modern Deists, who, how much soever they affect to despise supernatural revelation, have derived the greater part of their sentiments respecting God, and moral obligation, from that source: That, in every country destitute of supernatural revelation, the most erroneous notions respecting God, and the manner in which he is to be worshipped, have prevailed:³ That even the more refined sentiments

¹ Rom. i. 20; Acts xiv. 17; Ps. lxx. 8.

² Acts xvii. 26, 27; Rom. ii. 14, 15.

³ 1 Cor. i. 21; Rom. i. 22, 23.

of the heathen philosophers were found insufficient for the practical purposes of leading them to the worship of the true God, or deterring them from the commission of the most gross and unnatural crimes :¹ That the works of creation and providence afford no notices that God will pardon sinners, and restore them to favour ; and that any tradition to that effect, found in the early ages of the world among Gentile nations, must have been derived from supernatural revelation : That the Scriptures describe those who are destitute of divine revelation as having no hope, and without God in the world ; and that the method of reconciliation, with respect both to its contrivance and manifestation, is a plan which eye had not seen, ear had not heard, and which could not have entered into the heart of man, if God had not revealed it to us by his Spirit.²

3. In defence of the doctrines of the Confession, chap. i. sect. 3 and 5, and in opposition to the Deists, who deny that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God ; and to others, who reckon the apocryphal books of equal authority with the Scriptures,—WE DECLARE,

That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and holy obedience, to which nothing is to be added by pretended new revelations of the Spirit or by tradition.

In support of this statement we observe,—That the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures is sufficiently proved by many External Evidences, such as the miracles wrought by the penmen of Scripture, for the declared purpose of attesting their divine mission and inspiration ; the prophecies of Scripture, and their exact accomplishment ; the striking effects of the Scriptures, in the moral reformation of all who cordially embrace them,—effects which could not be produced by the lessons of philosophy, nor the force of human laws ; and the influence which the Scriptures have had in civilising the most barbarous nations, and in meliorating the condition of society at large, wherever the

¹ Rom. i. 26—28.

² 1 Cor. ii. 8—10; Eph. ii. 11, 12.

knowledge of them has been disseminated: And that their Internal Evidences are most complete and satisfactory; such as their spirituality, and the incomparable sublimity of their doctrines; the extent and purity of their precepts; the consistent view they give of God, and of his moral administration; the harmony of their several parts, though written by different persons, and in different ages; the design and tendency of the whole to advance the glory of God and secure the salvation of men; and especially, the divine majesty and authority impressed upon them, and the irresistible power with which they are accompanied on the minds of them who believe, by which they evidence themselves to the heart and conscience to be, in truth, not the word of men, but the word of God.¹

We further observe, That the apocryphal books are destitute of the evidences of a revelation from God, and contain many things erroneous, superstitious, and immoral:—That they were never recognised by the ancient Jews, or acknowledged by our Lord, his Apostles, or the primitive Christians, as a part of the sacred canon, and the use of such writings is actually forbidden to the Christian Church:²—In fine, that whoever attempts to add to the sacred volume, by pretended new revelations of the Spirit, or setting up oral tradition as of the same authority with the written word, exposes himself to the awful threatening with which the canon of Scripture is closed.³

4. In opposition to those who maintain, that the sacred penmen had no full or particular inspiration, but were so left to themselves that they might err as to matters of less importance, and that their reasonings from facts and doctrines are often inconclusive,—WE DECLARE,

That all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and that the sacred penmen, in committing these holy oracles to writing, were under the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit, both with respect to matter and language.

In support of this statement we would urge, That

¹ 1 John ii. 20—27; John xvi. 13, 14; 1 Cor. ii. 10—12; Isa. lix. 21; Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 4; Jer. xxiii. 29.

² Tit. i. 14.

³ Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

although the inspired penmen wrote agreeably to their respective talents for composition, and although this accounts for the diversity of style throughout the Scriptures, yet in all that they wrote, as inspired, they were infallibly directed, not only as to the sentiments to be expressed, but also as to the phraseology best adapted to express these sentiments:¹—That we cannot conceive how supernatural doctrines, with which they had no prior acquaintance, and future events, of which they could form no conjecture, could be conveyed to the minds of men accustomed to think in words, but by admitting that they were suggested to them in language dictated by the Spirit; and that it is still more inconceivable how they could have written intelligibly on subjects above their comprehension, when revealed, had not the language as well as the matter been furnished to them by inspiration:²—Nor is inspiration less necessary in the plainest historical narrative; for, while profane history has for its object only the civil and political benefit of individuals and nations, the inspired historians propose a much higher aim,—the advancement of salvation in subserviency to the glory of God in Christ,—an aim which requires a manner of thinking and writing peculiar to itself.

We further observe, That, to suppose that they might err in matters of less importance, or to affirm that their reasonings are often inconclusive, is to undermine the authority of the Bible, as it throws a suspicion over the whole, by leaving the mind in an uncertainty what to admit as truth, and what to reject as error: That these suppositions throw an injurious reflection upon the wisdom of God; for though the avowed design of Scripture is to rescue men from error, yet, according to these sentiments, the means are not adequate to the end, but are, in many respects, calculated to increase instead of removing the evil; That they are injurious to his holiness, since, according to them, God has given to his creatures a rule of faith and manners calculated in many respects to lead them into error: And that they are not less injurious to his veracity, since they suppose that writings sanctioned by his authority,

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

² 1 Pet. i. 11; Dan. xii. 8; Zech. iv. 11.

and claiming infallibility on that very account, may, notwithstanding, be mingled with error and falsehood.

5. In defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. i. sect. 7—9, and in opposition to the Socinians, who maintain, that reason is the rule or standard by which we are to judge of the doctrines of supernatural revelation, and that we are bound to receive nothing as true which reason cannot comprehend,—WE DECLARE,

That the Scriptures, from the subjects of which they treat, must contain many things mysterious; that the ground of faith is not the wisdom of man, but the authority of God in his own word; and that we are bound to believe whatever is contained in the Scriptures purely upon his authority, however far above our comprehension.

In support of the above statements, we observe, That it is the province of reason to examine the evidences of the divine origin of any system proposed to us as a revelation from God; but that the claims of that system being ascertained, we are bound to submit our reason implicitly to the authority of God: That if the mysterious doctrines revealed in Scripture contained any thing contradictory, or of immoral tendency, it would be a sufficient reason for questioning the divine authority of the Scripture itself; but since no such charge can be established against these doctrines, their mysterious nature, instead of weakening, greatly strengthens the evidence of its divine origin: That reason itself suggests, that should God, who is unsearchable, be pleased to grant us a supernatural revelation of his nature, perfections, and purposes, such a revelation must contain many things above our comprehension: That it may be expected there will be an analogy between the discovery which God gives of himself in his word, and that discovery which he has given of himself by his works; but all God's works are wonderful; it must, therefore, be unreasonable to reject the doctrines of his word because they are mysterious: In fine, that the objections brought against some of the doctrines of revelation on this ground are equally applicable to many of the first principles of

natural religion, so that the Socinians, to act consistently, must abandon all religion, and become atheists.

6. In defence of the Confession, chap. i. sect. 4—10, and in opposition to the Papists, who maintain that the authority of the Scriptures is derived from the Church, or the sense which she puts upon them,—WE DECLARE,

That the Scriptures themselves are the supreme standard of truth and duty, and that the supreme judge, by whom all controversies in religion are to be tried, is the Spirit of God speaking to us in the Scriptures.

In support of this statement, we observe, That although the Church or her ministers are the official guardians of the Scriptures, and although it belongs to them to explain and enforce their doctrines and laws, yet their authority is only ministerial, and their interpretations and decisions are binding on the conscience, only in so far as they accord with the mind of the Spirit in the Scriptures:¹ That the Church is founded on the Scriptures, and that the authority of the Scriptures does not depend on the Church;² that it is by the rule of the word that the constitution, and the whole administration of the Church, are to be tried; and that it is by it that their truth or falsehood is to be determined.³

7. In defence of the Confession, chap. i. sect. 8, and in opposition to the Papists, who lay restrictions upon the use of the Scriptures, and upon the translation of them into the vulgar languages,—WE DECLARE,

That, as salvation is intended by God for all ranks and classes of mankind, and as the Scriptures are designed by God as a means of making men wise unto salvation, so they must be intended for general use; and that in order to this, it is necessary that they should be translated into the language of every nation.

In proof of this we observe, That the Scriptures must have been intended for all classes, since all are enjoined to

¹ Matt. xxii. 29—31.

² Eph. ii. 20.

³ Acts xv. 13—16.

read them :¹ That a divinely approved practice must have a divine warrant ; but the young as well as the old, and the laity as well as their teachers, are commended for reading the Scriptures :² That all classes are condemned on account of their ignorance of the Scriptures, which implies that it is their duty to become acquainted with them :³ In fine, that the laity are commended not only for searching the Scriptures, but for trying the doctrines of their public teachers by them.⁴ We observe farther, That, since the gift of tongues ceased, the Scriptures could not have been of general benefit without translations from the original into vulgar languages ; and that the use of such translations is sanctioned by the example of the Apostles, who frequently quoted passages of the Old Testament from the Septuagint.

CHAPTER II.

OF GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY.

SECT. I.—*Of the Trinity.*

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. ii. sect. 3, and in opposition to the Antitrinitarians, who maintain, that God is one in respect of personality, as well as of essence ; and that the doctrine of the Trinity involves in it a contradiction,—WE DECLARE,

That God is one in nature or essence, but that in the one Godhead are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the same in essence, and equal in power and eternify : and that the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity, though above reason, is not contrary to it, since it is not asserted that God is ONE in the same sense in which he is THREE, but that he is ONE in NATURE, and THREE in respect of PERSONALITY.

In proof of this we observe,—That it appears there are

¹ John v. 39.

² 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15.

³ Matt. xxii. 29 ; John v. 46.

⁴ Acts xvii. 11.

more persons in the Godhead than one, from those passages in Scripture where God speaks of himself in the plural number, and from other passages where one divine person is introduced as speaking of, or to another:¹ That these divine persons are three, appears from the ascription of the Works of Creation and Providence to the agency of Three distinct persons:² That this doctrine is still more clearly unfolded in the history of redemption, in which each of the persons in the Trinity is represented as acting a distinct part in carrying the plan of mercy into effect, and in bearing witness to it;³ and particularly, from the account of the mission and incarnation of Christ, and the mission and works of the Spirit;⁴ from the history of our Lord's baptism;⁵ from the institution of Christian baptism, and the form in which it is to be dispensed;⁶ and from the Aaronical taken in connection with the Apostolic benediction.⁷

SECT. II.—*Of the Divinity of Christ.*

1. In opposition to the Socinians, who maintain that Christ is a mere man, and that he had no existence prior to his conception or birth,—WE DECLARE,

That although our Lord was a real partaker of human nature, derived from the common stock of mankind, but without sin, in virtue of his miraculous conception; yet the Scriptures plainly teach, that he existed in another nature before he became man.

Scripture declares, That he was God before he was manifested in the flesh, and in the *form* of God, before he took upon him the *form* of a servant, and was made in the *likeness* of men:⁸ That he was *with* the Father as a divine person, before he came *into* the world by his assuming human nature:⁹ That he was the angel Jehovah, who gave

¹ Gen. i. 26 ; iii. 22 ; xi. 6, 7 ; Ps. xlv. 6, 7 ; cx. 1 ; Is. vi. 8.

² Ps. xxxiii. 6 ; John i. 3 ; Col. i. 16, 17 ; Heb. i. 2, 3 ; Ps. civ. 30.

³ 1 Pet. i. 2 ; Eph. ii. 18 ; John viii. 18 ; John xv. 26 ; 1 John v. 7.

⁴ Is. xlviii. 16 ; Luke i. 35 ; John xiv. 26 ; xv. 26.

⁵ Luke iii. 16.

⁶ Matt. xxviii. 19.

⁷ Num. vi. 24, 25, 26 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

⁸ 1 Tim. iii. 16 ; John i. 14 ; Phil. ii. 6, 7.

⁹ John xvi. 28.

the law from Mount Sinai, and conducted Israel from Egypt into the land of promise:¹ That he was with God as his personal *Word* at the commencement of time; and that all things were made by him:² That he had a personal glory with the Father before the world was:³ And that his goings forth were of old from everlasting.⁴

2. In opposition to the Arians, who, though they admit the pre-existence of Christ, deny, with the Socinians, his proper Deity, and maintain, that he existed before his incarnation only as a superangelic and created spirit,—
WE DECLARE,

That our Lord not only existed before he appeared in our world, but that he was also the true and supreme God, not deriving existence from the Father, but being equal with him in perfections and glory.

In proof of this we observe, That our Lord's true and proper divinity is evident from the names peculiar to God which are given to him in Scripture, such as Jehovah, the incommunicable name of God,⁵ the Mighty God,⁶ the Great God,⁷ the True God,⁸ the only Wise God,⁹ God over all blessed for ever:¹⁰ That his proper divinity also appears from the attributes ascribed to him, such as, necessary existence,¹¹ eternity,¹² omnipresence,¹³ omnipotence,¹⁴ omniscience,¹⁵ and unchangeableness:¹⁶ That he is a Divine Person is also evident from his performing those works which are peculiar to God, such as creation,¹⁷ providence,¹⁸ redemption,¹⁹ forgiving sin,²⁰ raising the dead,²¹ judging the world:²² In fine, that he must be a Divine person, since he is to receive the same religious homage which is due to the Father from men and from angels.²³

¹ Acts vii. 38; Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

² John i. 1, 2, 3.

³ John xvii. 5.

⁴ Micah v. 1, 2.

⁵ Ps. lxxxiii. 18; Is. xlii. 8, compared with Jer. xxiii. 6; Mal. iii. 1.

⁶ Is. ix. 6.

⁷ Titus ii. 13.

⁸ 1 John v. 20.

⁹ Jude 25.

¹⁰ Rom. ix. 5.

¹¹ John i. 4; Exod. iii. 14, compared with John viii. 58.

¹² Rev. i. 8, 17.

¹³ Matt. xxviii. 20.

¹⁴ Rev. i. 8.

¹⁵ John xxi. 17.

¹⁶ Heb. i. 10, 11, 12; xiii. 8.

¹⁷ John i. 3; Col. i. 17.

¹⁸ Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3.

¹⁹ Gal. iii. 13.

²⁰ Matt. ix. 6.

²¹ John v. 21, 28.

²² Acts xvii. 31.

²³ Heb. i. 6; John v. 23.

SECT. III.—*Of the Sonship of Christ.*

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. ii. sect. 3, and in opposition to those who deny the proper and eternal sonship of Christ,—WE DECLARE,

That Christ is the Son of God in respect of his natural, necessary, and eternal relation to the Father; and that his Sonship is not founded on his mission, incarnation, or resurrection; nor is it of the same kind with that of angels or believers.

In proof of the above doctrine we would urge, That Sonship is a natural, necessary, and eternal relation in Godhead: that our Lord Jesus Christ is called *the* Son as expressive of his divine glory, and in distinction from the most eminent and favoured servants of God among mankind and the highest angels; and that it must, therefore, be a name descriptive of his true Deity:¹—That the term Father, as applied to the first person in Trinity, is a divine name; that Father and Son are correlates, and, when used in a proper sense, always imply identity in nature; that Christ and his Father must be one in nature, for his Sonship is of a proper kind, God is his (*ιδιος*) proper Father, and he is God's own, his only-begotten Son; and that this identity in nature excludes every idea of priority of existence in the Father, and of natural inferiority in the Son:² That the Jews understood our Lord's claim to Sonship as a claim to identity of nature with the Father, and consequently to proper Deity; and that he sanctioned the interpretation put upon his words, by the declaration, "I and my Father are one:"³—That the same idea runs through his declarations, that, as the Son, he had the same comprehensive knowledge,⁴ did the same works, and in the same manner,⁵ and was entitled to the same honours with the Father:⁶ That since our Lord's Sonship is a natural relation in Godhead, it must be necessary, and not dependent upon the divine will, like the sonship of creatures; and that, if necessary, it must be eternal.⁷

¹ Heb. i. 1—8; iii. 3—6.

² John v. 17, 18; i. 14.

⁴ Matt. xi. 27; John vi. 46.

⁶ John v. 22, 23.

³ John x. 30, 33.

⁵ John v. 19, 21.

⁷ Micah v. 2.

We also observe, That our Lord's Sonship cannot be founded on his office, for, in his appointment to office in the eternal decree, the Father recognised him as the Son; nor upon his mission, for he was God's Son before he was sent into the world;¹ nor upon his incarnation, for the formation of his human nature is immediately ascribed to the third person, and the assumption of it was the act of the Son himself; nor upon his resurrection, for, in his resurrection, he was not constituted the Son of God, but only declared to be so in a special and peculiar manner.²

We farther observe, That the denial of our Lord's eternal Sonship tends (though many who deny it have no such design) to invalidate the doctrine of the Trinity: That the terms Father and Son are personal titles, descriptive of personal properties; and that, from their relative nature, the setting aside of the one is eversive of the other: That the term Father is the only one in Scripture by which the first person in Godhead is made known as a distinct person; and that by denying the proper and necessary Sonship of Christ, we are in danger of losing the idea of the personal property, and, consequently, of the distinct personality of the Father, and of the relations in general subsisting among the divine persons, which has a tendency to lead to the ancient error, which made the Trinity only three names of one person:³—In fine, we would urge, That the denial of this doctrine throws a veil over the glory of the work of redemption; for the grace and condescension of the second person in becoming incarnate, obeying, and suffering,—the love of the first in sending him, and in subjecting him to suffering and death for us,⁴—the dignity and efficiency of his offices,—and the inherent value of his work,—are all, in Scripture, made to turn upon his essential dignity as the Son of God.⁵

SECT. IV.—*Of the Personality and Supreme Deity of the Spirit.*

IN opposition to the Socinians and others who deny the

¹ Ps. ii. 7, 8; John iii. 16, 17.

² Luke i. 35; Heb. ii. 16; Is. ix. 6; Rom. i. 3, 4.

³ 1 John ii. 22, 23.

⁴ Gal. ii. 20; Heb. v. 8; John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32.

⁵ Heb. iii. 5, 6; vii. 28; i. 3; John i. 18; v. 25.

distinct personality and true Godhead of the Spirit,—WE DECLARE, †

That the Holy Spirit is the third in the order of personal subsistence in Godhead, and that he is a true and proper person, distinct from the Father and the Son, and equal with them in all essential perfections and glory.

In proof of this doctrine we observe, That the Spirit must be a person, since personal properties are ascribed to him, such as understanding, will, and power;¹ and since acts characteristic of persons are performed by him, such as teaching, leading, witnessing, sanctifying, comforting, and interceding:² That he must be a person distinct from the Father and the Son, for he is said to proceed from the Father, to be the Spirit of the Son, and to be sent by both.³ That his true and proper divinity is evident from the names given to him, such as Jehovah, God, and the Lord the Spirit;⁴ from the divine attributes ascribed to him, such as eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence;⁵ from the divine works ascribed to him, as creation, providence, searching all things, the sovereign dispensation of gifts to men, quickening the dead, and the sanctification of the Church;⁶ from sin being said to be committed against him as well as against the Father and the Son; and from his being connected with the Father and the Son in prayer, baptism, and other acts of divine worship.⁷

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11; xii. 11.

² John xiv. 26; xvi. 13; Rom. viii. 14, 16; 2 Thess. ii. 13; John xv. 26; Rom. viii. 27.

³ John xv. 26; Gal. iv. 6; John xiv. 16; xvi. 7.

⁴ Is. vi. 9; compare Acts xxviii. 25; Acts v. 3, 4; 2 Cor. iii. 18.

⁵ Heb. ix. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 10; Is. xi. 2; Ps. cxxxix. 7.

⁶ Gen. i. 2; Job xxxiii. 4; xxvi. 13; Ps. xxxiii. 6; civ. 30; Is. xl. 7; Is. lix. 19; lxiii. 14; Zech. iv. 6, 7; 1 Cor. ii. 10; xii. 11; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Rom. viii. 11.

⁷ Matt. xii. 32; Heb. x. 29; Matt. xxviii. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 9; Rev. i. 4.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE DIVINE DECREES.

SECT. I.—*The Decrees of God in general.*

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. iii. sect. 1, 2; and in opposition to the Socinians, who maintain that God's decrees are not eternal and necessary, but temporary and accidental; and to the Arminians, who maintain that they are not absolute but conditional,—WE DECLARE,

That God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, absolutely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass in time.

In support of the above statement we observe, That, as God's knowledge is infinite and unchangeable,¹ so he must have known from everlasting every thing that comes to pass:² That, as he is the first cause, and as the existence of all things depends on his will, so he must have foreknown them as the matter of his own decree:³ That, in the decree, the means, how contingent soever with respect to creatures, were fixed as well as the end;⁴ and that as God is absolutely independent and immutable, all his decrees must infallibly be carried into execution.⁵

SECT. II.—*Of Divine Predestination.*

1. IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. iii. sect. 3—6; and in opposition to the Arminians, who maintain that election is only general and conditional, and that the doctrine of absolute and unconditional election tends to make men careless about the means of grace, and to encourage licentiousness,—WE DECLARE,

That God, from everlasting, viewing all mankind as fallen

¹ Eph. i. 11 ; Heb. vi. 17.

² Acts xv. 18.

³ Is. xlvi. 10.

⁴ Prov. xix. 21 ; Acts iv. 27, 28.

⁵ Job xxiii. 13.

and ruined in the first Adam, out of his mere good pleasure, and without regard to any foreseen good in them, or to be done by them, did, by an absolute and unchangeable decree, elect a definite number of our family in Christ to salvation, and to the enjoyment of all the means leading to it; and that this doctrine, instead of encouraging licentiousness, furnishes powerful motives to the study of holiness.

In proof of the above doctrine, we observe, That the Scriptures invariably represent the salvation of sinners in time as the effect of their election from eternity:¹ That they assert that this was not a choice merely of nations to the means of grace, but of particular persons to salvation; and that these, in distinction from others, are said to be foreknown of God as his, given to Christ, and predestinated to be conformed to his image:² That the purpose of election was free, sovereign, and unconditional; and that faith, repentance, and good works, are fruits of election, and could not, therefore, be the influencing causes of it:³ That those who were chosen of God were also predestinated by him to eternal life, including all the blessings of grace here and glory hereafter:⁴ That, in the same decree in which God elected some to salvation, he also appointed the means by which they were to be brought to the enjoyment of it; and that, from this connection of the means with the end, the doctrine of election, instead of leading to carelessness, is calculated to excite to a diligent improvement of the means of salvation, as it lays a solid foundation for hope that our labour shall not be in vain.⁵

2. In defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. iii. sect. 7, and in opposition to those who insist that the doctrine of predestination, as it relates to those who were passed by, represents God as partial, cruel, and unjust towards his creatures,—WE DECLARE,

¹ 2 Tim. i. 9; Rom. viii. 29, 30.

² Rom. ix. 4, 5, 7; 2 Tim. ii. 19; John xvii. 6; Rom. viii. 29.

³ Rom. xi. 5, 6; ix. 15, 16; ix. 11, 12; Eph. i. 4; Acts xiii. 48; Eph. ii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.

⁴ Eph. i. 5, 11; Matt. xxv. 34.

⁵ 1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 58.

That the eternal election of some of mankind to salvation, through Christ, supposes the preterition or passing by of others; that, in both cases, God acted as an absolute sovereign, who is debtor to none of his creatures, but who has a right to give or withhold his favours at pleasure; and that his decree, as it regarded them who perish, was consistent with perfect equity.

In support of this we observe, That it would have been just in God to pass by the whole of our race, and to deal with them as he did with the angels who sinned; and that, in electing some to life, he did no injustice to those who were left to perish: That their own sin is the procuring cause of the final ruin of the reprobate, although the decree of God gives certain futurity to that event; and that his decree is only a purpose of acting towards them according to the natural course of justice:¹ That to afflict a creature unnecessarily, or merely to render that creature miserable, would be cruelty; but that punishment has no existence in the moral administration of God as an *end*—it is only a *means* necessary to secure the ends of his glory.² We only add, That while these remarks serve to obviate the objections of adversaries, the doctrine itself is among the deep things of God, which we cannot comprehend, but which we are to receive upon the authority of his word, and in which we are bound to acquiesce with holy wonder and humble reverence.³

SECT. III.—*Of the eternal Establishment of the Covenant of Grace.*

IN opposition to those who deny that there was a federal transaction between the Father and the Son from everlasting about the redemption of fallen men; and to those who maintain that the Covenant, as dispensed by means of the gospel, is conditional,—WE DECLARE,

That the purpose of mercy, from its very nature, as-

¹ Jude 4. ² Ezek. xviii. 23; Psal. xi. 6, 7; Rom. ix. 22.

³ Matt. xi. 25, 26; Rom. ix. 17—21; xi. 33.

sumed, in the decree of election, the form of a covenant between the Father, on the part of Godhead, and the Son, as the representative of the elect, who was to fulfil its condition.

In proof of this we observe, That the decree of election, and the covenant of grace, as established between God in the person of the Father, on the part of Godhead, and God in the person of the Son, as the representative of the elect, are not to be viewed as distinct in the divine mind, which admits of no succession of thought, but comprehends in one design all the parts of the grand plan of mercy: That as the persons of Trinity are one in will as well as in nature, so the decree of election must be the decree of each of these persons, according to the order of their personal subsistence in Godhead; and it takes the form of a covenant from the character the Son was to sustain, and the part he was to act in carrying that decree into effect: That, considered as the purpose of the Father, it was a purpose to confer eternal life upon a number of the human race, in the way of his own Son assuming their nature, and in that nature fulfilling all righteousness in their room;—"they were chosen IN him;"—"were predestinated THROUGH him into the adoption of children;"—"had grace given them IN him before the world was:"¹ and accordingly this purpose of the Father contained, in relation to the Son, the stipulations of a covenant, that he should see his seed, on condition of his soul being made an offering for sin:² That, as the Son is one in will with the Father, he must have purposed to assume human nature, and in that nature to fulfil all righteousness in the room of his people, that they might have life through him; and that, as the Divine purpose, on the part of the Father, bears the form of a *promise* made, and a *condition* proposed, to the Son; so the same purpose, on the part of the Son, bears the form of an *undertaking*, in relation to the will of the Father; in this joint purpose, therefore, respecting man's redemption, we have all the parts of a proper covenant.³

We further observe, That although the parties in this

¹ Eph. i. 4, 5; 2 Tim. i. 9.

² Isa. liii. 10; Tit. i. 2.

³ Psal. lxxxix. 3; Isa. xlii. 6.

Divine covenant were, more especially, the Father representing Godhead, and the Son as the representative of the elect, yet the Holy Spirit being one with them in will, must be viewed as a party concurring in it, and engaging to fulfil its stipulations, in as far as these regarded the part he was to act in carrying into effect the plan of redemption: That it is from this divine purpose or covenant, that the economical characters which the three persons in Godhead sustain in the work of redemption take their rise; that the Father appears representing Deity in this economy, and sustaining at once the character of a righteous Judge, exacting from his own Son the punishment of our iniquities as the condition of the covenant, and the character of a gracious Sovereign,—his covenant God conferring upon him the grace of the covenant; that the Son appears in the character of the Father's servant, and our surety; and that the Spirit assumes the appropriate character of the Spirit of Christ, is sent by him, and comes in his name to apply the blessings of salvation to his chosen seed:¹ In fine, that these relations, being voluntary, do not imply any natural inferiority in the Son to the Father, or in the Spirit to the Father or the Son.

We observe further, That God's covenant for the recovery of fallen men, is one; that the covenant made with Christ from everlasting, is the same which is tendered to sinners in the Gospel for their acceptance; and that it is not by a new federal transaction between God and them, but by their taking hold of that covenant, that they are put in possession of the blessings of salvation.² In fine, we observe, that the righteousness of Christ is the only condition of the covenant of Grace; that its condition being fulfilled by our Lord's obedience unto death, it is exhibited to sinners in the form of a free promise; that it is by faith alone, as opposed to works of every kind, that we come to be instated in the promise, and it is by faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the promised seed.³

¹ Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6; John xx. 17; Isa. xlii. 1; Heb. vii. 22; John xvi. 7, 14.

² Isa. lv. 3; Isa. lvi. 6.

³ Acts ii. 39; Gal. iii. 18; Rom. iv. 16.

CHAPTER IV.

OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. v., and in opposition to the Fatalists, and those modern philosophers who maintain, that, in the original constitution of all things, God gave to the material creation physical, and to the intelligent creation moral laws, by which they are sustained and governed, independently of his continued influence,—WE DECLARE,

That, as God is the Creator of all things in the heavens and on the earth, so he necessarily supports, preserves, and governs them all; and that, although in the original constitution of all things, he gave laws to the several parts of the Creation suited to their nature; yet these laws are not independent on his continued influence, which is employed by him in accomplishing his holy and wise purposes.

In proof of this we observe, That the errors to which the above declaration is opposed, are contrary to reason, as well as Scripture, as they either deny the existence of God as the first cause, or assign to what are called the laws of nature, that independence which belongs to God alone:¹ That although the Scriptures admit of second causes, both in the physical and moral world, and that God, in ordinary cases, employs them as the instruments of his providence, yet they teach, that the connexion of these causes and their effects, is not fixed by a fatal necessity, but that it is dependent on the will of God, and subject to his control:² That the providence of God, including sustentation and government, extends to all creatures, from the highest angel to the meanest reptile; and that the same providence which sustains the sun in the firmament, and directs the stars in their courses, clothes the grass of

¹ Rom. xi. 34, 35, 36.

² Psal. ciii. 20, 21; cxxxvi. 7—9; cvii. 33—35; lxvi. 6; Dan. iii. 23—25.

the field with verdure, and regulates the motions of the smallest particle of matter: ¹ That, although the physical world is governed by physical laws, according to which one thing is instrumental in producing another, yet their efficiency, as second causes, depends on the continued influence of God, the great first cause, and is subject to his control; and that, to assert the contrary, is to deny the existence, and even the possibility of miracles, and to undermine the whole of revealed religion, as far as it rests upon their evidence: ² That while the providence of God extends to his rational creatures, and to all their volitions and actions, yet his providential influence is not destructive of their rational liberty, for they are under no compulsion, but act freely; and that to teach that they act from a fatal necessity, is to deny them that natural liberty necessary to them as responsible agents: ³ That, although God governs the rational creatures by moral laws, and although the upright part of them, in obeying these laws, act freely, yet their holy volitions proceed from divine influence, disposing and inclining them to will and to do that which is good; and that to assert the contrary, would be to deny the moral dependence of the rational creation on God, and, in particular, to contradict the whole doctrine of Scripture respecting the nature and necessity of divine grace: ⁴ That although God is not the author of sin, but only permits it, yet his providence extends to sinful actions, but in such a way, that he does not concur with or countenance the sinner in the sinfulness of these actions; and that his providence is employed in restraining the wickedness of the creature, in overruling his sinful actions for accomplishing his own holy and wise purposes, and in punishing them both in this life and that which is to come: ⁵ In fine, that there is no event casual with respect to God; and that those things which are accidental with regard to us, are foreknown to Him, “who declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient

¹ Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3; Psal. ciii. 19; Matt. vi. 26; x. 29, 30.

² Hosea ii. 21, 22; Josh. x. 12—14; Dan. vi. 22; Matt. viii. 26, 27.

³ Dan. iv. 35; Isaiah x. 6, 7; Ps. xxxiii. 10.

⁴ Phil. ii. 13; John xv. 5.

⁵ James i. 13; Ps. lxxvi. 10; Acts iv. 27, 28; Ps. xi. 6, 7.

times the things which are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."¹

CHAPTER V.

OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS, AND ORIGINAL SIN.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. vi. sect. 3, 4, and in opposition to the Socinians, Arminians, and others, who deny that a covenant was made with Adam, as the representative of his posterity, that Adam's first sin is imputed to them, and that infants come into the world guilty and polluted,—WE DECLARE,

That when God created man after his image, by an act of infinite condescension, he entered into covenant with him, not only for himself, but for all his natural posterity, promising him life, on condition of his perfect obedience to the law he was under, as virtually summed up in the positive precept respecting the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and threatening death in case of disobedience; and that when he brake the covenant, as a public representative, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him; and that, in consequence of his first transgression, all his natural posterity come into the world guilty and polluted.

In support of this we observe, That man, as a rational creature, must be under a moral law to God, and that Adam had that law, commonly called the law of Nature, engraven on his heart;² That, although it is a dictate of natural law, that punishment must follow crime, and happiness obedience, under the government of a holy and good God, yet that law afforded no positive assurance to man, even in a state of innocency, of the perpetuity of his existence, much less of any higher state of being than that

¹ 1 Kings xxii. 28, 29, 34; Isaiah xlvi. 10.

² Rom. ii. 14, 15.

which he presently enjoyed; it was therefore a great act of kindness and condescension in God to bring him under the law in a covenant form, promising him life as the reward of his obedience, which he did in the ordinance respecting the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:¹ That Adam being perfect, must have given his consent to the terms proposed to him by God, as the condition of his eternal happiness:² That a promise of life was annexed to his obedience, may be inferred from the threatening of death in case of disobedience;—from the description which Moses gives of the righteousness of the law, “the man that doeth these things shall live by them;”—from our Lord’s answer to the young man who inquired what he should do to inherit eternal life;—from the declaration of the apostle that the commandment was ordained to life; and from his assigning man’s inability, in his fallen state, as a reason why the law cannot give life:³ That the death threatened in the covenant must have included not only temporal and spiritual, but eternal death, may be inferred from the infinite desert of sin, which must subject the guilty creature to punishment of infinite duration, since he cannot endure punishment infinite in degree; and that the life promised must have been of the same extent as to its duration with the death to which it was opposed:⁴ That the representative character of Adam appears from his being called the figure of Christ, who is the representing head of the elect in the covenant of grace, and from the comparison stated in scripture between Christ, who is called the second man, and Adam, who is called the first man, and the manner in which sin and death came by the disobedience of the one, and righteousness and life by the obedience of the other,—which comparison can only refer to them respectively, as covenant representatives, and the consequences of that representation to those represented by them:⁵ And that unless the public character of Adam, as a representative in the covenant, be admitted, no satisfactory reason can be assigned why we are affected by his first sin in a way

¹ Gen. ii. 17.² Hosea vi. 7.³ Gen. ii. 17; Rom. x. 5; Matt. xix. 16, 17; Rom, vii. 10; viii. 3.⁴ Rom. v. 12—21.⁵ Rom. v. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 45—47; Rom. v. 17—19.

that we are not affected by his subsequent transgressions, or the transgressions of our more immediate progenitors.¹

We observe further, that this was a most favourable constitution both with regard to Adam and to his posterity: That, although he was brought under the whole moral-natural law in a covenant form, yet his acting for life, or death, was made to turn upon the positive precept respecting the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and that precept in a negative form: That, from the ample grant of all the other trees of the garden for his use, he was under no temptation from external circumstances to violate that precept: And that, as the common parent of mankind, he had motives to steadfastness which none of his posterity could have had, (had they been called individually to act for themselves,) arising from the knowledge, which there is every reason to suppose he possessed, of the consequences which would result from his conduct to his latest posterity.

We observe further, That it is a plain dictate of Scripture, that, when Adam broke the covenant, all mankind sinned in him, and fell with him, his guilt being accounted theirs in law, as really as if contracted in their own persons:² That death, the wages of sin, comes upon all mankind by Adam's first transgression;—the guilt of that transgression must therefore be imputed to all mankind:³ That there is no satisfactory way of accounting for the distress and death of infants, who are incapable of actual transgression, but by admitting the imputation of Adam's first sin to them, and that this is the principle on which it is explained in Scripture:⁴ That death is represented in Scripture as coming to Adam's posterity through him in a way similar to that in which life comes to Christ's spiritual seed through him: but life is obtained through Christ by the imputation of his righteousness; death must therefore come through Adam by the imputation of his sin:⁵ In fine, that the Scriptures clearly teach, that, in consequence of Adam's fall, all his natural posterity come into the world, not only

¹ Ezek. xviii. 20.

² Rom. v. 19.

³ Rom. v. 12.

⁴ Rom. v. 13, 14.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 22; Rom. iv. 11.

guilty, but destitute of original righteousness, and with a nature totally corrupted.¹

CHAPTER VI.

OF MAN'S INABILITY IN HIS FALLEN STATE TO WILL OR DO WHAT IS SPIRITUALLY GOOD.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. ix. sect. 3, and in opposition to the Pelagians, Arminians, and others, who deny the total depravity of man since the fall, and maintain that he has still an ability to will and to do that which is spiritually good; that his not doing so is more owing to the influence of example than depravity of disposition; and that to deny him that ability is inconsistent with his responsibility as a moral agent,—WE DECLARE,

That man, as fallen, is dead in trespasses and sins; that, under the power of spiritual death, he must be incapable of willing or doing that which is spiritually good; and that this being a moral inability, it is not inconsistent with his responsibility.

In support of this we observe, That the influence of example and temptation, though powerful, is insufficient to account for the universal prevalence of moral evil among mankind, since it is often found predominant in those who are placed in external circumstances the most favourable to a life of holiness:² That this is an universal effect, which must have a cause of the same extent; and that it cannot be accounted for in a satisfactory manner, but by admitting the scripture doctrine of the total depravity of human nature in its fallen state: That the Scripture represents man in that state as wholly under the power of sin, having his understanding darkened, his will depraved, his conscience defiled, and his affections corrupted; and de-

¹ Eccl. vii. 29; Psa. li. 5; Job xiv. 4; Rom. iii. 9—19.

² Heb. xii. 16; John xiii. 21—26.

clares that his actions, taking their moral character from the state of his heart, are only evil, and that continually;¹ That the causes of every volition in all moral determinations, are the state of the intellect and moral dispositions of the agent willing; that a wicked man must therefore invariably will that which is evil, since his understanding is darkened, and his dispositions totally depraved—"alienated from the life of God, by the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart;" and that, notwithstanding this, as in sinning he acts not from compulsion but from choice, he must retain all that liberty which is necessary to render him a responsible agent:² That the depravity of man's nature can form no excuse for the sin of his life, else his first sin, by which he lost the rectitude of his nature, would have rendered him incapable of future transgression; that his depravity is from himself; that although he has, by his own delinquency, lost his ability to obey, yet God retains his right to demand obedience; and that he is accountable to God for the depraved tendencies of his nature, as well as for the evils of his life which spring from them:³ In fine, that man's inability, in his fallen state, to do that which is spiritually good, is plainly supposed in the Scripture doctrine of the necessity of a change of state and heart, in order to his walking with God in newness of life.⁴

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

In defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. vii. sect. 3, 4, 5, 6; chap. viii. sect. 6; and in opposition to

¹ Jer. iv. 22; 1 Cor. ii. 14; Rom. viii. 7; Tit. i. 15; Rom. viii. 5; Phil. iii. 19; Matt. xii. 33, 34, 35.

² Eph. iv. 18, 19; James i. 13, 14, 15; Hosea v. 11; Eccles. viii. 11.

³ Eccl. vii. 29; Psa. xcvi. 8, 9, 10.

⁴ Rom. vii. 4; Eph. ii. 10; Phil. ii. 13.

the Socinians, some Anabaptists, and others, who maintain that the Old Testament dispensation was not a dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, but a mere political economy, securing only temporal benefits to God's ancient people; that they were ignorant of the blessings of spiritual salvation, and particularly of a future state of happiness; and also, in opposition to those who maintain that the Old Testament Scriptures are not of the same use, or authority in the Church, since the introduction of the new dispensation,—WE DECLARE,

That the Church, from her first erection, existed under the charter of the Covenant of Grace, of which Christ is the alone mediator; that the Old and New Testament economies are but two dispensations of the same covenant; that the civil polity, and temporal privileges, of God's ancient people, were subordinate to, and, in some instances, typical of, spiritual blessings; that believers then, as well as now, were saved by faith in Christ, and lived and died in the hope of a blessed immortality; and that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament constitute but one rule of faith and manners to the Church in New Testament times.

For illustrating these statements we observe, That our Lord Jesus Christ is the alone mediator of the Covenant of Grace, and that Moses, and others, who acted between God and the people under the former dispensation, were only types of Christ, the one mediator between God and man:¹ That our Lord is the surety of the covenant as a sacrificing priest, and the administrator of it as an advocate, prophet, and king:² That, though the covenant was not ratified by his death till the end of ages, yet, by virtue of his Father's appointment, and his own undertaking to lay down his life for that end, he entered upon the administration of it immediately after the fall; and that, until the period arrived for its substantial ratification by his own blood, it was ratified by the blood of slain beasts, as a type of his future sacrifice:³ That, in consequence of its ratification by the shedding of blood, its administration from

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5. ² 1 John ii. 1, 2; Acts vii. 37; Psa. ii. 6.

³ Gen. iii. 15; xv. 7—11; Exod. xxiv. 5—8.

the beginning was testamentary, or in the form of a free promise:¹ That, although the administration of the covenant before, and its administration after the coming of Christ, differ in several respects, especially in what related to its ratification; and although, on that account, they are distinguished by the appellations, the Old and the New Testaments, yet these are but two dispensations of the same covenant,—God's Covenant of promise made to Abraham and to his seed, is the same that is tendered to us and to our children,—the covenant God of the Jews, is the God of the Gentiles also,—the blessing of Abraham is the blessing which is come upon the Gentiles,—and Jews and Gentiles are fellow-heirs of the same spiritual inheritance.²

We observe further, That our Lord Jesus Christ was the administrator of the Covenant of Grace under the former as well as under the present dispensation, though not in the same visible form; that the visible agents then employed, such as Moses, the Levitical priests, and the Prophets, were commissioned by him, and acted under the direction of the Holy Spirit, in the appropriate character of the Spirit of Christ; and that, to show that he was the one mediator between God and man then, as well as after he assumed human nature, he, on extraordinary occasions, and particularly at the commencement of any new era in the Church, appeared in a visible form, and communicated the will of God to man:³ That there is reason to believe that all the appearances of Deity under that dispensation, to converse with men, were appearances of God, not in his absolute character, nor in the person of the Father or Spirit, but in the person of the Son, and in the character of Mediator: that he was the *voice* or personal word of God, who revealed the plan of mercy to our first parents in Paradise; the angel Jehovah, who gave the promises to Abraham; and the angel who gave the law from Horeb, and conducted the chosen tribes through the wilderness into the land of promise.⁴

¹ Gal. iii. 18.

² Gen. xvii. 7; Acts ii. 38, 39; Gal. iii. 13, 14; Rom. iii. 29, 30; Eph. iii. 6.

³ 1 Pet. i. 11; Gen. xvii. 1; xviii. 1.

⁴ John i. 18; Gen. iii. 8—18; xvii. 1—7; Acts vii. 38; Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

Again, we observe, That God's Covenant of promise under the former dispensation, contained a revelation of a spiritual and eternal salvation through the promised Messiah; and that all the subsequent revelations of God's will to his ancient people, and all his dispensations towards them, were subservient to the carrying into effect of the promise of the mission of Christ, and the spiritual redemption of the Church through him:¹ That the promise was of avail then, as well as under the present dispensation, for all the purposes of a spiritual salvation to believers;² that they were acquainted not only with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but also with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body;³ that they lived and died in the faith of a blessed immortality beyond death; and that, under the influence of this faith, many of them obtained the crown of martyrdom.⁴

We observe, further, That although the new dispensation of the Covenant exceeds the old in glory, from the manifestation of the Son of God in our nature—its substantial ratification by his obedience unto the death—the more full and clear exhibition of its blessings by means of the gospel—the more abundant outpouring of the Spirit—the introduction of a more spiritual form of worship—and from the whole administration under the present economy being in a more immediate and visible manner in the hand of Christ, as the Son over his own house; yet New Testament revelation does not invalidate the authority, or supersede the use of the Old Testament Scriptures:⁵ That Christ came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them; that the Church, in New Testament times, is built upon the foundation of the Prophets, as well as of the Apostles; that the Scriptures of the Old Testament serve to confirm those of the New, and that they throw light upon and explain each other; that while the Old Testament, as a revelation of a plan of mercy, is perfected by the New, the New Testament, so far as regards moral worship and law, would be incomplete without the Old Testament; that we are

¹ 1 Pet. 10—12.

² Gen. iv. 4; v. 22; Rom. iv. 1—3.

³ Ps. lxxiii. 24—26; Job xix. 25—27.

⁴ John viii. 56; Heb. xi. 9, 10, 13, 14, 15; Acts xxvi. 7; Heb. xi. 33—35.

⁵ 2 Cor. iii. 7—11; John i. 14; Heb. vii. 22; ii. 1—3; Acts ii. 16, 18; John iv. 23, 24; Heb. iii. 5, 6.

enjoined by our Lord and his Apostles to search the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and that these are still profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.¹

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE SURETYSHIP AND SATISFACTION OF CHRIST.

SECT. I.—*Of the Necessity of a Satisfaction for Sin, in order to Forgiveness.*

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. ii. sect. 1, and in opposition to the Socinians and others, who deny that retributive justice belongs necessarily to God, and maintain that he may pardon sin without a satisfaction,—
WE DECLARE,

That while the exercise of mercy is sovereign in God, who says, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” the exercise of his retributive justice is necessary, and accordingly there is a necessity for satisfaction, in order to the forgiveness of sin.

In support of this statement we observe, That the necessity of the punishment of sin, in order to forgiveness, appears from the *Holiness* of God, which requires that his hatred of sin, and delight in rectitude, be vindicated by the punishment of his dependent creatures, when they commit iniquity;² from his *Justice* as a lawgiver and judge, which requires that his moral supremacy, and the honour of his law be supported, by his rendering indignation and wrath to every soul of man that doeth evil;³ from the immutability of his *Truth*, in the penal sentence of his law, which denounces death as the punishment due to transgressors;⁴

¹ Matt. v. 17; Eph. ii. 20; Heb. xi. 40; Matt. xxii. 37–39; John v. 39; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

² Psal. xi. 6, 7; Ezek. xxxviii. 22, 23.

³ Psal. ix. 8; Rom. ii. 6–9.

⁴ Gen. ii. 17; Rom. vi. 23.

and from his *Goodness*, as a moral governor, which requires that sin, which introduces disorder and moral insubordination into his dominions, be punished for the general welfare of the intelligent creation :¹ That the Scriptures expressly declare, that vengeance and recompense belong to God, and that the wicked shall not go unpunished :² That the dictates of natural law, in the conscience even of the most barbarous nations, coincide with the testimony of Scripture ; and that the same thing may be inferred from the history of the divine government in the present life.³

We observe further, That sin being of infinite desert, no creature can endure its punishment, so as to procure his own forgiveness ; and that if God, in his infinite wisdom and grace, had not found out a plan for satisfying the claims of his justice, the whole of our race had remained eternally in a state of guilt and ruin.⁴

SECT. II.—*Of the Substitution of Christ in the room of Sinners.*

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. viii. sect. 4, and in opposition to the Socinians, who deny our Lord's substitution, and assert, that he did not suffer and die in our stead, but only for our good, to confirm his doctrine, and to leave us an example of patience and resignation under suffering,—WE DECLARE,

That God, in his infinite grace and wisdom, devised the glorious method for satisfying the claims of his justice, in order that pardoning mercy might be extended to sinners of our race, in the choice, appointment, and mission of his Son, to be our surety ; and that his sufferings, even unto the death, in human nature, were VICARIOUS, or in the ROOM of his people, whom he came to redeem.

In proof of this doctrine we observe, That the Scriptures

¹ Isa. xxvi. 9 ; 2 Thess. i. 6, 7, 8.

² Heb. x. 30, 31 ; Prov. xi. 21.

³ Acts xxviii. 4, 5 ; 2 Pet. ii. 1—9.

⁴ Psal. xlix. 7, 8, 9 ; Job xxxiii. 24.

declare that our Lord, in assuming human nature, was made under the law, by a supernatural constitution, in the room of his people;¹ and that all which he did and suffered in our world, as the subject of law, was vicarious, or in the room of others²—“He suffered, the just FOR (or, instead of) the unjust” —“He gave his life a ransom FOR many” —“He was wounded FOR our transgressions, and bruised FOR our iniquities:”³ That the whole sacrificial ritual under the legal dispensation, was typical of the death of Christ; but that if his death was not vicarious, that ritual had no meaning, for all the legal sacrifices were vicarious—their blood went for man’s blood, and their life for man’s life:⁴ That, under that dispensation, the guilt of the offender was transferred to his sin-offering or trespass-offering, by the laying on of his hands and confession, and, bearing this imputed guilt, the animal was considered as accursed, and went by the name of *sin*, or *trespass*, among the Hebrews; and that, to shew that the type is realised in our Lord’s substitution in the room of his people, he is said to have borne their sins in his own body on the tree—to have been *made sin* for us—to have been *made a curse* for us.⁵ That it is impossible to reconcile his death with the justice and goodness of God in any other way, than by admitting the doctrine of his substitution: That as he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, a righteous God would never have dealt with him as a sinner, by inflicting on him death, the punishment of sin, had he not sustained the character of our surety; and that, to deny the doctrine of his substitution, is to fix upon the Father of Mercies the charge, not only of injustice, but also of cruelty, towards his *own*—his *only-begotten* Son:⁶ That example, and the confirmation of his doctrine, were ends of his sufferings and death; but they were only subordinate ends, and that the principal end of them was to make atonement for the sins of his people.⁷

¹ Gal. iv. 4.

² Dan. ix. 26.

³ 1 Pet. iii. 18; Matt. xx. 28; Isaiah liii. 5, 6.

⁴ Lev. xvii. 11; Heb. x. 1, 2.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 24; Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁶ Isa. liii. 10; Rom. viii. 32.

⁷ Dan. ix. 24; Heb. ix. 26.

SECT. III.—*The Nature and Extent of Christ's Satisfaction, with respect to the Law.*

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. viii. sect. 5, and in opposition to the Socinians, who deny the penal nature of our Lord's death, and limit his sufferings to what he endured from men;—to the Papists, and others, who restrict his satisfaction to his enduring the curse of the law, and deny that he obeyed its precept to procure our title to life;—and to the Neonomians, who assert that “He only satisfied divine justice for sinners, in so far as to render it consistent with God's honour, to enter upon lower terms of salvation with them,”—WE DECLARE,

That Christ, as our surety, was made under the law as a broken covenant of works; that, by enduring in his soul and body all the penal evil which we had incurred by our fall in Adam, and our own personal transgressions, and yielding perfect obedience to the precept, he procured our freedom from condemnation, and our title to life; and that, by his obedience even unto the death, he wrought out a perfect righteousness, on the ground of which we are justified, to the exclusion of all works of ours whatsoever.

In proof of this we observe, That since our Lord suffered and died under the curse, his sufferings and death must have been strictly of a penal nature:¹ That all that he suffered through life, and at his death, by the agency of Satan and wicked men, was from God, as a righteous judge, as they did only what his hand and his counsel had determined before to be done:² That his principal sufferings arose from the power of God's judicial displeasure upon his soul, and the suspension for a season of the manifestations of his favour; that these constituted the essence of that death which is the wages of sin; and that unless we admit that he suffered these immediately from God, it is impossible to account for his amazement and agony in the garden, and his bitter lamentation on the cross:³ That our Lord's suffer-

¹ Gal. iv. 4; iii. 13.

² John xix. 11; Acts ii. 23; iv. 27, 28:

³ Isaiah liii. 10; Luke xxii. 42, 43, 44; Mark xv. 34.

ings unto death, as our surety, possessed every thing requisite to a true and proper satisfaction for sin,—he suffered by the appointment of God, who alone had a right to admit of the death of a surety in the room of transgressors;—he suffered in the same nature that had sinned;—his sufferings were voluntary and obediential, and therefore possessed a moral fitness for making reparation to the injured honours of the divine law;—he was Lord of his own life, and had a right to lay it down in the room of others;—and his sufferings were, from the dignity of his person, of infinite value for the expiation of our sins.¹

We further observe, That it was necessary that Christ, as our surety, should not only endure the penalty of the law, to obtain our deliverance from condemnation, but also that he should obey its precept, to procure for us a title to life :² That in the Covenant of Works, obedience was the condition on which life was to be enjoyed by Adam and his posterity ; and that, although the law of that covenant ceased to be a law which could give life to Adam or to his posterity, on the ground of their own obedience, the moment the covenant was broken ; yet it was necessary, for the vindication of the equity and goodness of God in that transaction, that any other covenant for man's recovery should make obedience to the precept of the law the condition of life :³ That life was accordingly promised in the eternal covenant to our Lord's spiritual seed, on condition of his fulfilling all righteousness in their room ; that they enjoy the inheritance of eternal life, as well as the redemption of their persons, through his obedience unto the death ; and that his suffering the penalty of the law, and his obedience to its precept, constitute but one righteousness, which in scripture is sometimes denominated from the one, and sometimes from the other :⁴ That, had not Christ procured our title to the eternal inheritance, by obeying the precept of the law, he could not have been the antitype of the Goel (or kinsman) among the Hebrews ; for redemption, by the Hebrew Goel, was to extend to inheritances, as well as to persons :⁵ That eternal life is not the less free, that it flows

¹ 1 John iv. 10 ; Heb. ii. 17 ; Phil. ii. 6, 7 ; John x. 18 ; Acts xx. 28 ; Heb. i. 3.

² Rom. v. 17.

³ Matt. v. 17.

⁴ Tit. i. 2 ; Eph. i. 11.

⁵ Lev. xxv. 25.

through a mediatorial righteousness ; for great as the grace of God appears in conferring this life, it appears still greater in the mission of his Son to procure it ; and, though conferred on the ground of the righteousness of the surety, yet it is of pure, unmerited, and unsolicited grace to the sinner. ¹

We observe further, That the opinion that Christ satisfied divine justice for sinners, in so far only as to render it consistent with God's honour to propose lower terms of salvation to them, has no foundation in Scripture ; for Christ came not to mutilate or destroy the law originally given to man, but to fulfil it :² That to suspend salvation upon any terms to be performed by us, such as faith, repentance, or sincere obedience, is to frustrate the grace of God, to teach that righteousness is still by the works of the law, and to assert that Christ died in vain :³ And that the idea of dividing the work of satisfaction between the surety and the sinner, is in express contradiction to the perfection ascribed to the work of Christ in Scripture, where we are told, that "he finished transgression, and made an end of sin"—that "he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"—and that "by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."⁴

SECT. IV.—*Of the Extent of Christ's Death, with respect to its objects.*

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap .viii. sect. 5—8, and in opposition to the Arminian tenet, that Christ died for all men—for those who finally perish, as well as for those who shall be eventually saved—WE DECLARE,

That the intrinsic value of the death of Christ being infinite, it must have been sufficient as a ransom for all mankind, had it been the will of God that all mankind should be redeemed by it ; but that in his Father's design, and his own intention, he laid down his life for the elect only, who shall be saved from wrath through him.

¹ Rom. iii. 24 ; Eph. i. 7 ; Rom. v. 21. ² Matt. v. 17 ; Rom. x. 4.

³ Gal. ii. 21.

⁴ Dan. ix. 24 ; Rom. x. 4 ; Heb. x. 14.

In proof of this we observe, That he laid down his life “for the sheep,” and these sheep are the objects of his special knowledge; but he himself declares, that all are not of his sheep, and that he will say to a number of mankind, “Verily, I say unto you, I know you not:”¹ That those for whom he died are called his Church, a term which is never put for the whole human race; and that he gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctify, and eventually glorify it,—his intention in dying must therefore have been limited to those who should be saved by him with an everlasting salvation:² That the term *Redemption*, as used with reference to the death of Christ, signifies deliverance on the ground of a ransom; that the ransom was the life of Christ; that, in giving his life a ransom to law and justice, he is said to have obtained eternal redemption for us; and that justice must require that all for whom he died be put in possession of that eternal redemption:³ That Christ died to fulfil the condition of the covenant of redemption; but had his death, in fulfilling that condition, been for all mankind, divine faithfulness would have required that the redemption promised in the covenant should be extended to all mankind:⁴ That the apostle infers, from the greatness of God’s love in delivering up his Son to the death for sinners, that he will not withhold from them any of the blessings of salvation; but those are not conferred on all mankind; we must therefore conclude, that he did not die for all mankind:⁵ That the same apostle infers the certainty of our complete salvation by the life of Christ, from our reconciliation to God by his death; but if his reasoning proves any thing, it proves that all mankind were not reconciled to God by the death of Christ, since all are not saved by his life:⁶ That we are told that the Father’s design in making Christ a sin-offering for us, was, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; but all mankind are not made righteous in him; his death could not, therefore, be intended by God for all mankind:⁷ That our Lord’s intercession proceeds on the ground

¹ John x. 15—26, 27; Matt. xxv. 12.

² Acts xx. 28; Eph. v. 25, 26.

³ Tit. ii. 14, 15; Heb. ix. 12.

⁵ Rom. viii. 32.

⁶ Rom v. 10.

⁴ Isa. liii. 10.

⁷ 2 Cor. v. 21.

of his sacrifice for sin ; they must therefore be of the same extent with regard to their objects ; but he does not pray for the world, but only for them who were given him out of the world ; his sacrifice must therefore be restricted to that definite number :¹ That the doctrine of his dying for all mankind, leads to the absurd notion that he shed his blood for many in vain : In fine, that the advocates for universal purchase also plead for conditional salvation,—or that God gave his Son to die for all, that the salvation of all might be possible, upon condition of their faith, repentance, and sincere obedience ; but to render this scheme consistent, God must have favoured all mankind with the means of faith, which is not the case ; we must conclude, therefore, that their scheme is not only unscriptural, but inconsistent with itself.

We observe further, That the meaning of the universal terms used in reference to the death of Christ, is to be determined by the context, from which it appears that they refer, not to every individual, but sometimes to all classes and descriptions of men ; as when the atonement of Christ, which extends to some of all nations, is contrasted with the Levitical atonement, which was restricted to one nation ;² and in other passages where these terms are used, the reference is not to the intention of his death, nor to its ultimate effects with regard to individuals, but to the exhibition made of him in the gospel, as God's ordinance for salvation to all who hear it.³

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL, AND THE GOSPEL CALL.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. x., and in opposition to the Neonomians, who maintain, that the Gospel is a new law, according to which faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, are the conditions of life ; and

¹ John xvii. 9.

² Rom. iii. 22, 23, 29 ; 1 Tim. ii. 6.

³ 1 John ii. 2.

that we are called to repent and forsake sin, in order to our coming to Christ;—and to the Baxterians, who restrict the Gospel call to sensible sinners, or those who are convinced of their sin and their need of the Saviour, and who feel certain desires after him,—WE DECLARE,

That the law, in a strict and proper sense, consists of precepts and sanctions, the former prescribing rules of duty, and the latter denouncing penalties in case of disobedience; that the gospel, in a strict sense, and as distinguished from the law, has neither precepts nor sanctions, but is a revelation of a free, full and everlasting salvation to sinners of mankind through the mediation of Christ; that to teach that sinners are called to repent and forsake sin, in order to their coming to Christ, is to frustrate the grace of God, by making righteousness still to be by the works of the law; and that to restrict the Gospel call to sensible sinners is a refined species of Arminianism, since it makes our access to Christ, and his salvation, to depend on something in ourselves, and not upon the free offer which God makes of him to sinners in the gospel.

In support of this we observe, That the law is sometimes used in Scripture, in a large sense, for the whole of divine revelation; that the gospel also is sometimes used in a large sense, for all that Jesus began to do and teach until the time he was taken up into heaven; that, in this sense, faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, belong to the gospel, not as a new law, but as acts of evangelical obedience to the moral law; not as conditions of salvation, but as the effects of it wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ: That the Neonomian opinion of the gospel's being a new law, according to which faith, repentance, and sincere obedience are the conditions of life, implies that the original law given to man was too severe: That this opinion is at once opposed to the immutability of the divine law, and to the freedom and sovereignty of divine grace:¹ That the gospel is good news and glad tidings to perishing sinners of mankind, expressed in supernatural doctrines respecting the person and mediation of Christ, in unconditional promises, and in free

¹ Matt. v. 17, 18; Rom. iii. 31; ix. 11; Eph. ii. 8, 9.

offers of salvation through him :¹ That our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled the condition of the covenant of grace, its promises, as tendered to us, are absolutely free : That some of them refer to the beginning, others to the progress, and others to the consummation, of salvation in the souls of men ;² which accounts for the conditional form in which some of them are expressed—those promises which refer to progress in salvation being addressed to persons already in a state of grace, and those which refer to its consummation, to persons who have made progress in holiness ; but that these attainments are mentioned, not as the conditions of the blessings promised, but only as characteristic of the persons to whom these promises are applicable, and to point out the relation they have to other promises of which those persons are already in possession :³ That this serves, in particular, to explain the connection between faith and an interest in the promises which refer to the progress and consummation of salvation ; that faith itself is the gift of God,—a promised blessing ; that it is the first principle of spiritual life, and the instrument by which we receive and realize all the promises which refer to the progress and consummation of that life ; and that it is for this reason that these promises are addressed to faith, and contain assurances of actual interest in the blessings promised only to them who believe.⁴

We also observe, That God makes a free grant of Christ and salvation through him, in the offers of the Gospel, to sinners of mankind who hear it, without exception : That this grant is made in the Gospel offer as really to those who eventually reject it, as it is to those who eventually receive it ; and that, if this were not the case, the former class of Gospel hearers could not be condemned for their unbelief.⁵

We further observe, That although the Gospel, strictly taken, contains in itself neither precepts nor sanctions ; yet, from the dignity and moral supremacy of its author, and the obligation which mankind, to whom it is addressed, are

¹ Luke ii. 10 ; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2 ; Rom. xi. 28 ; Tit. 1. 2 ; Acts xiii. 26.

² Gal. iii. 18 ; 2 Cor. i. 20.

³ Job xvii. 9 ; Isa. xl. 31 ; 1 Tim. iv. 8 ; Rev. iii. 12, 21.

⁴ Eph. ii. 8 ; Isa. xi. 10 ; Acts xiii. 38, 39 ; John xi. 25, 26.

⁵ John iii. 18, 19.

necessarily under, from the moral law, to believe whatever God may be pleased to reveal as a rule of faith; it must come to all who hear it with divine authority, binding them to receive and improve it for all the purposes of their salvation:¹ That this authority, which is only implied in the promises and offers of the Gospel, is expressed in its call; and that the call of the Gospel, on this account, partakes both of the nature of the Gospel, and of the Law; of the Gospel, as it exhibits privilege, and of the Law, as it contains a divine injunction to improve it:² That the Gospel is not, on that account, a new law; for the obligation to believe it, whether implied or expressed, does not spring formally from the Gospel itself, but from the moral law, under which Gospel hearers necessarily are, as rational and responsible agents:³ That although it must be always the duty of sinners to repent and forsake sin, yet the Gospel call is not a call to do so in order to their coming to Christ; for Christ, in his righteousness and salvation, is brought near to those who are stout-hearted, and far from righteousness:⁴ That this call is not restricted to those who are convinced of their sin, and of their need of the Saviour; for it is addressed to persons sunk in total insensibility as to their own miseries and wants:⁵ Finally, we observe, That the universality of the Gospel call does not interfere with the doctrines of particular election and redemption; that the objects of both of these must remain a secret in the mind of God till unfolded by their being actually brought into a state of salvation; but that the call of the Gospel proceeds upon the general relation in which Christ stands to sinners of mankind, in distinction from fallen angels, as a kinsman redeemer,—the intrinsic value of his death for the redemption of mankind sinners, however many and aggravated their transgressions may be,—and the suitableness of his offices for all the purposes of their salvation.⁶

¹ Heb. ii. 1, 3.

² Prov. i. 24, 25.

³ John v. 45, 46, 47; vii. 19.

⁴ Isa. i. 18; xlv. 12, 13.

⁵ Rev. iii. 17, 18; John v. 25.

⁶ Heb. ii. 16, 17; John iii. 16, 17; Matt. xviii. 11; Heb. vii. 24, 25.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. x., and in opposition to the Arminians and others, who make the success of the Spirit's work in conversion to depend on the sinner's free will, and hold that there are no operations of the Spirit in conversion, which do not leave the sinner in such a state as that he may either comply with them or not,—WE DECLARE,

That the application of salvation is the effect of divine power, and is ascribed in Scripture to the special operation of the Holy Spirit accompanying the means of grace upon the minds of men; that, to represent the success of the Spirit's work in regeneration and conversion, as depending on the sinner's free will, is to make the divine will dependent on the human; and that the change of the sinner's will is the effect and not the cause of the success of the Spirit's work in conversion, for it is God who worketh in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

In proof of this we observe, That, in dealing with sinners by the external means of salvation, the Holy Spirit acts sovereignly in respect of the kind and degree of his influence with which these means are accompanied upon their minds; and that there are common operations of the Spirit which produce convictions of sin by means of the law in the conscience, and joyous emotions, by means of the gospel in the affections of men in their natural state, which do not always issue in conversion:¹ That although the corruptions of the heart are opposed to these operations, and often quench the effects produced by them, yet this does not arise from a want of power in the Spirit to overcome that opposition by following up his common by his special operations, so as to produce a saving change of heart, but that it must be referred wholly to his sovereignty

¹ Acts xxiv. 25; Matt. xiii. 20, 21; Heb. vi. 4, 5.

in quickening whom he will:¹ That in conversion, the sinner is the subject of the special operation of the Spirit, which differs in kind and degree from those common operations which are not in their own nature saving; and that it is by the saving operations of the Spirit that he is born again, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God:² That the special operation of the Spirit overcomes all opposition, and sweetly, yet powerfully, inclines and determines the sinner to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel:³ That the operation of the Spirit in conversion does not destroy man's natural liberty, nor pervert the natural order of the operations of the mind; for by saving illumination, Christ and divine things become the most powerful motives in the understanding, and the will, which always follows the most powerful motives, makes choice of them as the things that are most excellent;—the will is not forced but inclined,—the sinner is not compelled to follow Christ against his will, but made willing in the day of his power:⁴ That all this is the effect of no created power, but of the power of God's Spirit; and of no common operations of the Spirit, but of his special operation, corresponding to the working of that mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead:⁵ In fine, that the same saving operation of the Spirit which is necessary to conversion, is necessary to afford the believer new discoveries of the glory of Christ, to strengthen him with all might in the inner man, to direct him in the paths of righteousness, and to carry on the work of sanctification in his soul till he arrive at perfection:⁶

¹ Acts vii. 51.; John iii. 8.

² Tit. iii. 5; John iii. 3, 5; Eph. ii. 10; i. 17, 18.

³ John vi. 44, 45; Phil. ii. 13.

⁴ Ps. cx. 3.

⁵ Eph. i. 19.

⁶ John xvi. 13, 14; Eph. iii. 16; Rom. viii. 13, 14; 2 Thess. ii. 13.

CHAPTER XI.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. xi., and in opposition to the Papists, who maintain that justification is by the infusing of righteous dispositions, and not by the imputation of righteousness; to the Socinians and Pelagians, who maintain that we are justified solely by our own works; and to the Neonomians, who plead for justification on the ground of faith, repentance, and sincere obedience as a new law,—WE DECLARE,

That justification is a judicial act of God, and is not a change of heart, but of the sinner's state in relation to the law; and that, in justification, God, by an act of free and sovereign grace, grants him the remission of all his sins, and receives his person into a state of favour and friendship, only on the ground of the righteousness of his own Son, which is imputed to him by God, and received by faith alone.

In support of this we observe, That justification is opposed in Scripture to condemnation, and that it must therefore be a change of the sinner's state, and not of his heart:¹ That as the person justified is by nature ungodly, it must include not only the acceptance of his person as righteous in the eye of the law, but also the remission of all his sins, original as well as actual:² That since God is a righteous judge, in justifying he must proceed on the ground of a righteousness answering all the claims which his holy law has upon the sinner, both for obedience to its precept, and satisfaction to its penalty incurred by transgression:³ That as the law of God concludes all our fallen race under sin, so no man can be justified before God, in whole or in part, upon the ground of his own righteousness:⁴ That the justification of the sinner before God is wholly on the ground of the righteousness of

¹ Rom. viii. 33, 34.² Rom. iii. 25, 26; Acts xiii. 39.³ Exod. xxiii. 7; James ii. 10; Gal. iii. 10.⁴ Rom. iii. 19, 20; Gal. ii. 16.

Christ as our surety, including his perfect obedience to the precept, and his complete satisfaction to the penalty of the divine law ; and that this righteousness becomes ours for our justification, by God imputing it to us, and our receiving it by faith alone :¹ That we are justified by faith, not as our act of obedience to the moral law, nor as a new law, else righteousness would still be by the works of the law, contrary to the express declaration of Scripture, but purely as an instrument by which we receive the gift of righteousness exhibited to us in the gospel for our justification ; and that faith, so far from being of the nature of a meritorious condition in justification, is appointed by God as the instrumental cause of it, that it may be by grace ; and that faith, as it justifies, is opposed to all works of ours whatever :² That although justification is conferred on the ground of a mediatorial righteousness, it is purely of grace to the sinner, and that the rich grace of God is displayed, not only in justifying, but in providing the righteousness on the ground of which the sinner is justified, by the choice and mission of his own Son to satisfy the claims of the law in our stead :³ That justification is an act of God, complete at once, so that the person who is pardoned and accepted can never more forfeit the divine favour, or come into condemnation ; that although after he is justified he may commit many sins in their own nature deserving of death, yet God having imputed to him the righteousness of Christ, will not impute the guilt of these sins so as to deal with him as an offended judge on their account ; and that, whatever he suffers in the present life on account of sin, is corrective and not penal :⁴ In fine, that justification by imputed righteousness is equally calculated to display the glory of divine grace, and to illustrate the glory of divine justice, since, according to it, the sinner is rescued from destruction, while the law is not only fulfilled, but magnified and made honourable .⁵

¹ Rom. iii. 24 ; x. 4 ; iv. 6 ; v. 1. 17.

² Rom. iv. 16 ; Gal. ii. 15 ; Eph. ii. 8, 9.

³ Job xxxiii. 24 ; John iii. 17 ; Rom. viii. 3, 4.

⁴ Rom. viii. 1 ; Isa. liv. 9, 10 ; Rom. iv. 8 ; Ps. lxxxix. 31—33 ; Heb. xii. 6, 7.

⁵ Rom. iii. 25, 26 ; Ps. lxxxv. 10—13.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE FREEDOM OF BELIEVERS FROM THE LAW AS A COVENANT, AND THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF EVANGELICAL HOLINESS.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. xvi., and in opposition to the following Neonomian errors,—That believers are under some obligation to perform obedience, as necessary to obtain and secure the favour of God ; or that holiness is a federal or conditional means of obtaining glory, or has some casual influence for that end : That the doctrine of the believer's complete freedom from the law, as a covenant, tends to licentiousness, and weakens the obligation of the law ; that a fear of falling under wrath, and hope of life, according to the tenor of the law-covenant, are necessary and warrantable motives to holy obedience ; and also, in opposition to the Antinomians, who maintain that believers are not under obligation to the law as a rule of life,—WE DECLARE,

That although the moral law, having its foundation in God's supremacy and man's dependence, or the moral relations which necessarily subsist between God and his intelligent creature, must be of perpetual obligation as a rule of life ; yet believers, by their justification through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, are set completely free from the law as a covenant of works ; that they are not required to perform obedience to the law as the condition of life, or to obtain or secure the acceptance of their persons with God, being accepted in his beloved Son, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth ; that their freedom from the law in its covenant-form, instead of weakening, greatly strengthens their sense of obligation to it as a rule of righteousness, as it furnishes them with many additional motives to the study of holiness ; and that, although a filial fear of God is a powerful principle of holy obedience, yet a fear of falling under his wrath, and a hope of life,

according to the tenor of the law of works, cannot be warrantable motives to obedience, as they proceed from a disposition to seek righteousness by the works of the law, which is pointedly condemned in Scripture; and as they are incompatible with faith in God as our Father through Christ, and that perfect law which casts out slavish fear.

In support of this we observe, That man was originally created under the moral law in its natural form:¹ That all mankind were brought under that law, in a covenant form, in Adam, holding out life as a reward of obedience, and denouncing death as the punishment of transgression; for although Adam's covenant obedience was made to turn upon his not eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, yet his abstaining from it was to be the test of his obedience to the whole law; and that, in violating the positive precept, he brake the whole moral-natural law, virtually summed up in it, and thereby entailed the curse upon himself, and all his natural posterity:² That, although the law of the covenant of works ceased to be a law that could give life to Adam, or his posterity, the moment the covenant was broken, not only from their inability to act up to its requirements, but also from the promise annexed to the keeping of it being forfeited by Adam's first sin,—yet as that law, so far as in its own nature moral, is of perpetual obligation, fallen men must still be under its commanding power, exacting from them individually perpetual obedience, upon the pain of death for every act of disobedience; and also under its penalty as incurred, not only by the first sin of Adam, as their federal representative, but also by their own personal transgressions:³ That this is the law which Christ, as our surety, fulfilled in the room of his people; that it is from the law, in this form, that believers are set free by their justification through his imputed righteousness; and that to shew the complete nature of this freedom, we are told that Christ hath redeemed them from its curse,—that they are dead to the law through the body of Christ,—that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness

¹ Rom. ii. 15.

² Rom. v. 12, 17.

³ Rom. viii. 3, 8; Gal. iii. 10, 21.

to every one that believeth,—and that they are not under the law, but under grace.¹

We also observe, in opposition to the Antinomians, that although believers are completely delivered from the law in its covenant form, yet they are under it as a rule of righteousness, in the hand of the Mediator—“not without law to God, but under the law to Christ;” and that their obligation to the study of holiness, so far from being lessened, is greatly increased from the dispensation of grace which they are under:² That they are bound to study holiness, not only in common with other rational creatures, from their dependence on God for their existence and daily preservation, but also from their election of grace,—their redemption through the blood of grace,—and their effectual vocation:³ That, although the law does not require obedience from believers in order to obtain life or to avoid condemnation, these ends being effectually secured by the obedience and death of Christ, yet conformity to it is necessary in their case, from the authority of God requiring it, as an evidence of their interest in Christ—as a principal part of salvation—and as rendering them meet for the enjoyment of God, both here and hereafter:⁴ That true holiness is of an evangelical nature; that it does not spring from a slavish fear of God’s vindictive wrath, or a servile hope of life, on the ground of our own works, but from faith in God as our covenant God through Christ—a filial reverence of God as our Father in heaven—supreme love of God, and delight in him, as our present and everlasting portion—gratitude to him for Christ and salvation through him—and a supreme desire to promote the ends of his glory;⁵ and, that it is promoted by the powerful considerations of the love of the Father, in sending his Son to save us—the love of Christ, in giving his life to redeem us—the love of the Spirit, in coming to apply salvation unto us and the hope of a blessed immortality in Heaven.⁶ We observe further,

¹ Matt. v. 17; Gal. iii. 13; Rom. vii. 4; x. 4; vi. 14.

² 1 Cor. ix. 21; Rom. vi. 1, 2.

³ Eph. i. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Thess. iv. 7; 1 Pet. i. 14, 25.

⁴ 1 John ii. 4; Psal. cxix. 4; John xv. 5–14; Rom. viii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 17; Tit. ii. 14; iii. 5, 6; Matt. v. 8; Heb. xii. 14.

⁵ Luke i. 74; 1 John iv. 18; Rom. viii. 15; Deut. x. 20, 21; 1 Peter i. 17; Matt. xxii. 37; 1 John iv. 19; 1 Cor. x. 31.

⁶ John iv. 8, 9; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Eph. iv. 30; 1 John iii. 3, 4.

That freedom from the law in its old covenant form, and union to Christ, the head of the new covenant, are absolutely necessary to a life of holiness;¹ that the law leaves us under its curse, and lying under the power of spiritual death, and consequently destitute of power to do that which is spiritually good; that it produces, in the conscience of the natural man, a dread of God, as an avenging judge, and, instead of subduing, is the occasion of irritating his corruptions; and that the works performed under the influence of these principles are dead works, and cannot be acceptable to God;² Finally, That it is only by union to Christ, that our persons and services are accepted; that it is from him we derive strength for duty, grace to overcome temptation, and whatever is necessary to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of God.³

CHAPTER XIII.

ON SAVING FAITH AND EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. xiv. and in opposition to those who maintain, that saving faith is no more than a simple or general belief of the doctrine of the gospel, that assurance is not of the nature of faith, and that we must repent of our sins before we come to Christ,—WE DECLARE,

That saving faith is a supernatural principle wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, whereby the person who believes, assents to the testimony of God, concerning his Son Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, not only as infallibly true, but also as containing a free grant to him of Christ, and all salvation through him, and by which he receives and rests on Christ, as his own Saviour,

¹ Rom. vii. 4; Gal. ii. 19.

² Rom. vii. 7, 8; iv. 15; Heb. ix. 14.

³ Eph. i. 6; 1 Peter ii. 5; John xv. 4; Phil. iv. 13; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Col. ii. 19.

upon the footing of that grant; and that, although legal sorrow precedes saving faith, yet evangelical repentance, or godly sorrow for sin, and turning from it unto God, always flow from it.

In support of this we observe, That although saving faith gives full credit to the whole word of God, on the authority of God himself speaking to us in the Scriptures; and although it is exercised about its various parts, according to their nature and our necessities, yet its principal acts are "receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel:"¹ That, as the gospel does not consist merely of historical facts, or abstract doctrines respecting the Saviour, but also contains in it a free offer of salvation, through him, to sinners of mankind without exception, who hear it, for their acceptance; so the faith of the gospel, in order that it may correspond with the testimony believed, must include in its nature appropriation:² That the appropriation, which is of the nature of faith, is not a persuasion that Christ and salvation are ours in actual possession, but that he is ours in the offer or grant which God makes of him to us in the gospel; and that it is a claim to him, as our own Saviour, upon the foundation of that grant:³ That the appropriation which is in faith is evidently implied, when faith is described in Scripture as receiving Christ, putting on the Lord Jesus, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, fleeing to him for refuge, trusting in and staying ourselves on him.⁴

We further observe, That as the testimony on which saving faith rests is infallible, being the testimony of God, who cannot lie, so it must include in it assurance; and that if this were not the case, it would not be a receiving of the gospel, as it is in truth the word of God and not the word of man:⁵ That although the believer is often subject to doubting, being weak in faith, and although he may not be conscious in the meantime of his believing; yet in faith itself, when exercised, there is always assurance,

¹ Gal. ii. 20; Rom. x. 17.

² John i. 12; Is. xxvi. 3, 4.

³ 1 John v. 11; iv. 16; 1 Tim. i. 15.

⁴ John i. 12; Rom. xiii. 14; John vi. 53; Heb. vi. 18.

⁵ 1 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 4.

according to its measure or degree: And that there is a marked distinction between the assurance of faith and the assurance of sense;—the former having for its object the faithfulness of God in the gospel testimony, and being, in some degree, the attainment of every true Christian; whereas the latter has for its object the existence of a gracious work in the soul, and is not always enjoyed by the believer.¹

We observe further, That evangelical repentance is a true sense of sin, and sorrow for it, not merely as it exposes us to danger, but on account of its contrariety to the nature and will of God, and a turning from sin to God, with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience:² That although legal sorrow precedes faith, yet evangelical repentance flows from it, as it proceeds both from the knowledge of sin by the law, and from an apprehension of the mercy of God through Christ, as exhibited in the Gospel; that convictions of sin by the law excite a terror of God, as an avenging judge; that a slavish fear of God, instead of subduing the enmity of the heart against him, increases it:³ That the faith of pardoning mercy through the blood of Christ slays that enmity; that the believer, overcome by the kindness of God his Saviour, is filled with real compunction for the dishonour done to God by his sin; and that this accords with those passages of Scripture where repentance is represented as springing from faith in God as our covenant God, and looking upon Christ as wounded for our transgressions:⁴ Finally, that any change produced by legal sorrow for sin, extends only to the outward conduct, and is partial and temporary, whereas evangelical repentance is always productive of a thorough and lasting change of heart and conversation.⁵

¹ John vi. 69; iii. 33; 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

² Ps. li. 4; Hosea xiv. 8.

³ Rom. vii. 10, 11.

⁴ Ezek. xvi. 62, 63; 2 Cor. v. 19; Mark i. 15; Jer. xxxi. 18, 19; Zech. xii. 10.

⁵ 2 Pet. ii. 22; 1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. xvii. and in opposition to the Arminians and others, who maintain, that the saints may fall totally and finally from a state of grace, and that the doctrine of their perseverance is unfriendly to holiness,—WE DECLARE,

That those whom God has accepted in his Son, and effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, shall neither totally nor finally fall away from a state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

In proof of this we observe, That the truth of this doctrine appears from the irreversible nature of their pardon and acceptance in justification; from the perpetuity which the Scripture ascribes to that life implanted in them in their regeneration; from the connection stated between their effectual vocation, and their glorification; from the character of perfection which belongs to all the works of God; and from the numerous promises which secure their growth in grace and their perseverance:¹ and that their perseverance proceeds not from their own free will, but from the immutability of God's love in their election; the efficacy of the death of Christ for their eternal redemption; the perpetuity and prevalence of his intercession; the continual inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, and the unchangeable nature of God's covenant with them in Christ.² We further observe that the Scripture doctrine of perseverance connects the means and the end in the purpose of God, in which we were chosen to salvation as the end, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, as the means leading to that end; that these are

¹ Rom. viii. 1; Isaiah liv. 9, 10; John x. 28, 29; 1 Pet. i. 23, 24, 25; Rom. viii. 30; Phil. i. 6; Ps. xcii. 12, 13, 14; Job xvii. 9.

² Jer. x. 23; Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Jer. xvii. 7, 8; Heb. ix. 12; Heb. vii. 25; Luke xxii. 32; Eph. iv. 30; Jer. xxxii. 40.

connected by Him in carrying the purpose into effect, for we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; and that from this connexion, the Scripture doctrine of perseverance, instead of tending to licentiousness, is one of the most powerful motives to a holy life, as it holds out the certain prospect of final success in the Lord.¹

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE STATE OF MEN AFTER DEATH.

IN defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. xxxii. and in opposition to the purgatory of the Papists;—to the Deists and others, who deny the doctrine of the resurrection altogether, or that the same body which is buried will be raised from the grave;—to the Universalists, who maintain that the wicked, after suffering a limited period in hell, will be liberated and introduced into a state of happiness; and to the modern opinion, that the punishment of the wicked in a future state will be restricted to remorse, despair, and the workings of their own sinful passions, and that it will not proceed in any degree from positive infliction on the part of God,—WE DECLARE,

That there is no intermediate state, the souls of believers at death entering immediately into heaven, and the souls of the wicked into hell; that there will be a resurrection of the just, and of the unjust, and that the same body which was buried will be raised, though different in qualities; that the state of man is finally determined at death, so that after it he must be either eternally happy or eternally miserable; and, that the misery of the wicked in hell will arise, not merely from the operations of their own sinful passions, but from their being externally excluded from all gracious intercourse with God, as the chief good, and subjected to all the painful effects of his judicial displeasure.

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 58.

In proof of which, we observe, That it is evident from our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus, from his declaration to the penitent thief on the cross, and from various other passages of Scripture, that at death the souls of believers immediately pass into heaven, and that the souls of the wicked are immediately cast into hell :¹ That there will be a universal resurrection, both of the righteous and the wicked, at the second coming of Christ—of the former to the judgment of life, and of the latter to the judgment of condemnation : That the identical body which was buried will be raised, though different in qualities ; for, if this were not the case, it would not be a resurrection but a creation : and that this is plainly stated in Scripture when we are told that the same body, which was sown a natural body, in weakness, dishonour, and corruption, will be raised a spiritual body, in incorruption, in power, and in glory.²

We observe further, in opposition to the Universalists, that their doctrine supposes that the sufferings of the wicked are corrective and purifying, whereas the Scriptures represent them as penal and destructive—"the day of judgment" is the day of "THE PERDITION of ungodly men," a term which signifies irretrievable ruin—the wicked "shall be PUNISHED with everlasting DESTRUCTION from the presence of the Lord :"³ That their sufferings, if penal, must be eternal ; for sin is an evil of infinite desert, and no creature can endure *infinite* punishment in any limited period of duration ; their punishment, therefore, is to be for *ever* and *ever*, in that place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched :⁴ That their restoration to a state of felicity without holiness, is in the nature of things impossible, but that those *penal* sufferings, of which sinful creatures are the subjects, instead of mollifying and sanctifying, are invariably the occasion of hardening them in wickedness :⁵ That if creatures could have satisfied for their own sins, the substitution of Christ, and his sufferings, must have

¹ Luke xvi. 22, 23 ; xxiii. 43 ; Acts vii. 59 ; 2 Cor. v. 8.

² John v. 28, 29 ; Job xix. 25, 26 ; Phil. iii. 20, 21 ; 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

³ 2 Pet. iii. 7 ; 2 Thess. i. 9.

⁴ Mark ix. 43—48 ; Rev. xx. 10.

⁵ Rev. xvi. 9, 11, 21 ; Dan. v. 22 ; Amos iv. 6—12 ; Ps. xc. 8.

been in vain ; and that the Scriptures assure us, that for those who reject his sacrifice there remaineth no other method of satisfaction for sin :¹ That it has never been questioned that the happiness of the saints in heaven will be without end, and that this is signified by the term eternal, but that the same term is applied to the punishment of the wicked,—“ These shall go into (αιωνιον) everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life (αιωνιον) eternal :”² That, granting the term *everlasting* sometimes to signify the whole duration of a certain economy or constitution of things, it will make nothing in support of the doctrine of the Universalists, since it is applied to the punishment of the wicked after time, when there is no division of duration, but absolute eternity :³ In fine, that the doctrine of universal restoration is of immoral tendency, as it holds out to the sinner the prospect of ultimate deliverance from misery in the way of continuing in the practice of sin.

We further observe, that although remorse, despair, and the workings of their own sinful passions, will prove great sources of misery to the wicked in a future state, they will not constitute, in a strict sense, their punishment, for punishment implies the positive infliction of a judge :⁴ That the Scriptures uniformly teach us that the wicked in a future state will be subjected to the wrath of God, which evidently implies positive infliction on his part :⁵ That to limit their sufferings to remorse, despair, and what arises from their own sinful passions, is virtually to deny that Christ endured the curse of the law in the room of his people, for neither remorse, despair, nor any of the misery that springs from the workings of sinful passions entered into his sufferings ; and that, for this reason, the doctrine is of dangerous tendency, as it strikes at the foundation of one of the leading articles of the Christian faith.

¹ Heb. x. 26, 27.

² Matt. xxv. 46.

³ Matt. xxv. 41.

⁴ Heb. x. 30 ; James iv. 12.

⁵ Matt. x. 28 ; Ps. xi. 6.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF MORAL-NATURAL, AND INSTITUTED WORSHIP.

IN opposition to those who reject certain religious duties, such as vowing and swearing to God, because they have not a positive institution in Scripture,—WE DECLARE,

That although the will of God is the reason of our duty in every thing relating to his worship, yet his will, with regard to the manner in which he is to be worshipped, has been made known to mankind in different ways—as by the moral law, originally engraven on the heart of man, commonly called the law of nature—by the moral law as revealed in the Scripture—and by positive institution; and that in whatever way his will has been signified, it must be binding upon the conscience; that there are certain acts of religion which spring from those moral relations, which necessarily subsist between God and his intelligent creatures, or which have their foundation in moral-natural law, such as prayer, praise, fasting, an oath, and vowing to God: and that there are other acts of worship which do not spring from these relations, and have not their foundation in moral-natural law, such as circumcision and the passover, under the former, and Baptism and the Lord's Supper, under the present dispensation; and that duties of the former class, being in their nature moral, need no institution distinct from the moral law itself, natural or revealed, to give them authority as acts of religious worship, whereas those of the latter class derive their matter and form, as well as their authority, solely from positive institution.

In support of these statements we observe, That the law of nature engraven upon man's heart, in his original creation, was from God, as well as the moral law written on tables of stone; and that though greatly effaced by the entrance of sin, its dictates are binding on the conscience: That, unless this be admitted, those who never enjoyed the written law cannot be chargeable with actual sin, for where

there is no law there is no transgression :¹ That we find no account in the Scriptures of any supernatural revelation of the moral law, as it regards the worship of God, till the time of Moses ; but, prior to that period, the patriarchs observed the several acts of moral worship, and among others vowing to God, from which we may infer that, in doing so, they followed the dictates of nature :² That this act of worship has its foundation in natural law is also evident, from its being practised by the Gentiles, who never enjoyed the written law :³ That those who reject vowing and swearing to God, because they have no positive institution, like Baptism and the Lord's Supper, mistake the nature of these duties ; for being in their own nature moral, they need no such institution ; and that, upon the same ground, prayer and praise might be set aside as parts of worship, for these also have no institution different from the moral law, natural or revealed : That the acts of moral-natural worship, springing from those moral relations which necessarily subsist between God and his intelligent creatures, must be of perpetual obligation ; but that acts of instituted worship, springing purely from the will of God, may be set aside by him at pleasure, as was the case with regard to the whole ceremonial ritual upon the introduction of the New Dispensation :⁴ That Baptism and the Lord's Supper, though acts of instituted worship, are to continue in the Church till the end of time, by the express appointment of Christ :⁵ Finally, That although praise, prayer, vowing, and swearing to God, have their foundation in natural religion and law, and therefore must be binding on mankind in general, as subjects of the moral government of God ; yet they cannot be performed acceptably by fallen men, without the knowledge of the doctrines of supernatural revelation, or faith in the mediation of Christ.⁶

¹ Rom. iv. 15.

² Rom. v. 13 ; Gen. xxviii. 20.

³ Jonah i. 16.

⁴ Eph. ii. 15.

⁵ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 ; 1 Cor. xi. 23, 26.

⁶ Eph. i. 6 ; 1 Pet. ii. 5.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE ACTS OF MORAL-NATURAL WORSHIP.

SECT. I.—*Of Prayer.*

IN opposition to the Papists, Episcopalians, and others, who plead for the use of a Liturgy, or prescribed and restricted forms of prayer; and also to the superstitious and idolatrous practices of the Papists, in addressing prayers to angels and departed saints, and offering up prayers for the dead,—WE DECLARE,

That, although all scripture is of use to direct us in prayer, especially that pattern of it commonly called the Lord's Prayer, yet prescribed and restricted forms of prayer have no warrant, either from Scripture precept, or example; that prayer for the dead is grossly superstitious; and that addressing prayer to angels or departed saints, is gross impiety.

In support of this, we observe, That what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, was evidently not intended by Christ as a set form, but only as a directory with regard to the matter and manner of prayer, as appears from the variation of the phraseology in the account given of it by the different inspired evangelists, and also from the introductory sentence, "After this MANNER pray ye:"¹ That prescribed and restricted forms of prayer set limits to the Spirit, as the Spirit of grace and supplication, who helps our infirmities, by directing us what to pray for, and how to present our petitions to God's throne:² That set forms of prayer, from the frequent repetition of them, tend to cool the ardour of devotion, and lead to formality, not only in words, but also in the frame of the mind in the worship of God: That acceptable prayer is the offering up of the desires of the heart to God; but no form prescribed by others can in all cases be adequate for expressing these in

¹ Matt. vi. 9—13; Luke xi. 2, 3, 4.

² Rom. viii. 26, 27.

prayer:¹ That no restricted form of prayer can possibly answer all the changes of circumstances, not only in the case of individuals, but also of families, nations, and churches; and yet in reference to all these, we are commanded by prayer and supplications to let our requests be made known to God:² That although the pastor is to act as the mouth of the congregation in addressing God's throne in public worship, yet this is neither equivalent to prescribed forms of prayer, nor does it furnish an argument for them,—for, in the exercise of his ministerial function, he has the promise of the gift of prayer, as well as other ministerial gifts, for the public edification of the church:³ And that set forms of prayer furnish a strong temptation to persons, both in public and private stations, altogether to neglect the gift of it. Further, we observe, That the state of man being finally determined at death, prayer for the dead is utterly unwarrantable, and countenances the unscriptural doctrine of purgatory: And finally, that addressing prayer to angels or departed saints is a direct violation of the first precept of the moral law.⁴

SECT. II.—*Of Praise, and the Psalmody.*

In opposition to those who maintain that many of the Psalms of David are inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, and who substitute hymns of human composition in their room in the public worship of God,—WE DECLARE,

That although there are other Scripture songs besides those contained in the book of Psalms, yet the latter seem to have been especially intended by God to be used in the exercise of public praise, from their being delivered to the church by the Holy Spirit for that purpose; that to assert there is any thing in these psalms inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, is to suppose that the Holy Spirit may act at variance with himself, for both were given by his inspiration; and

¹ Prov. xiv. 10; 1 Kings viii. 38; Matt. xii. 34.

² Phil. iv. 6.

³ 1 Cor. xii.; Acts vi. 4.

⁴ Exod. xx. 3; Col. ii. 18; Rev. xxii. 9.

that to introduce hymns of human composition, or even paraphrases, in which undue liberties are taken with the original text, tends to endanger the purity both of the worship and doctrines of the church.

For illustration, we observe, That although all are supposed to join in the public prayers of the church, yet only one acts immediately as the mouth of the congregation, in addressing the object of prayer; whereas, in celebrating His praises in public, every individual is to be directly and immediately engaged, which cannot be done with unity and harmony without a set form, with which the whole assembly are acquainted:¹ That the Psalms of David are adapted to the use of the church, under the present as well as the former dispensation, appears from their moral nature,—from the few references they have to a ceremonial ritual, and the many references they have to the person, offices, and work of Christ, and to the rise, progress, and glory of his kingdom,—from their sublimity, spirituality, and fitness to express the most ardent and exalted devotional exercises of the heart,—from the fervent piety which breathes through the whole,—and from the extensive range of subjects, adapted to the variety of circumstances in which the church and her particular members may be placed: That none of the psalms give countenance to private quarrels or personal revenge; that such of them as have been supposed to do so, are prophetic, or contain denunciations of God's righteous judgments on his implacable enemies; and that similar denunciations occur not unfrequently in the New Testament:² That the use of these psalms in New Testament times is sanctioned by the precept and example of our Lord and his apostles; and that, when songs and hymns are spoken of in the New Testament along with psalms, there is no evidence that different compositions from the Psalms of David are intended, for some of these are styled songs, and others hymns, from the subjects of which they treat, or the occasion on which they were to be sung:³ Finally,⁴ That as praise is a part of moral worship, and peculiarly adapted

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

² 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Rev. vi. 10.

³ Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16; James v. 13; Matt. xxvi. 30.

to New Testament times, if it had been intended by the Spirit of God, that the use of the Psalms of David was to be set aside, there is reason to think that some intimation would have been given to that effect in the New Testament, and another psalmody provided in their room.

SECT. III.—*Of Oaths, Vows, and Religious Covenants.*

1. In defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. xxii. and in opposition to the Quakers, and others, who deny the warrantableness of an oath; and also to the practice of those who enter into oaths on trivial occasions, and without being previously acquainted with the matter and object of them,—WE DECLARE,

That an oath is a solemn act of moral worship, in which the person swearing calls God to witness his sincerity in what he asserts or promises, and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he swears; that an oath is only to be taken in the name of God, on weighty occasions, in judgment, with regard to the matter and object of it, and, in truth, without equivocation or mental reservation; and that, being in its nature moral, it must, when required and imposed by lawful authority, be warrantable under every dispensation.

In support of this we observe, That an oath for confirmation is warranted by the third precept of the moral law, and sanctioned by approved examples under the former dispensation: That, when our Lord and his apostles prohibit swearing, it is either false or profane swearing, or swearing by creatures:¹ That the circumstances of society, both civil and religious, render such an appeal to God necessary under the present, as well as under the former dispensation, and that the warrantableness of it is expressly recognised in the New Testament:² That an appeal to God by oath in trivial matters is a taking of the name of God in vain; and that swearing to things unknown or of a doubtful nature, is a direct violation of God's law, and

¹ Matt. v. 33—36.

² Heb. vi. 16.

calculated to involve the swearer in the heinous sin of perjury:¹ Finally, That, as lifting up the hand is the usual mode of swearing mentioned in Scripture, so it ought to be preferred; and that all superstitious, and especially idolatrous forms, are sinful.²

2. In support of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. xxii. sect. 5, 6, 7, and in opposition to the sentiments of those who deny the warrantableness of explicit vowing to God, and particularly of public religious covenanting; and who maintain that public covenanting under the former dispensation was a ceremonial observance or Jewish peculiarity, or that its use is superseded, under the New Testament, by the observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper,—**WE DECLARE,**

That an explicit vow is a solemn promise to God: that it may be entered into either personally or socially, or with or without an oath; that it may have, for the matter of it, either necessary duties, or other things not expressly required, so far, and so long, as they may be conducive to the better performance of these duties; and that, in both cases, the person vowing brings himself under obligation by his vow: That public religious covenanting, along with a social vow to God, includes confederation among the covenanters themselves, to aid and support one another to carry into effect the object of their vow; and that, since both have their foundation in natural principles and law, they cannot be Jewish peculiarities, but must be equally adapted to the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and Christian dispensations.

In proof of this we observe, That implicit vowing enters into every part of religious worship; it cannot, therefore, be unwarrantable to engage in it explicitly when circumstances require it: That vowing and swearing unto God, whether personal or social, have their foundation in natural law; that they are evidently authorised by the three first precepts of the Decalogue, and expressly enjoined by other moral precepts in Scripture; and, that they

¹ Ps. xxiv. 4.

² Rev. x. 5, 6.

are sanctioned by the approved example of the people of God in every age.¹

We observe further, That public religious covenanting is not a ceremonial observance, for it was practised at Horeb, before the ceremonial law was given to Israel; and that it cannot be a Jewish peculiarity, since it was predicted in ancient prophecy, that it should be practised by the Gentiles in New Testament times:² That those who maintain that the use of social vowing and swearing unto God is now superseded by the observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, obviously mistake the nature and primary ends both of social vows and of the sacraments: that vowing and swearing unto God are in their own nature moral, but that the Gospel, and its institutions, do not make void the law, which would be the case, if the positive institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper set aside these duties:³ that the same implicit vowing which enters into the observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, entered into the observance of Circumcision and the Passover; and that, if it rendered explicit vowing unnecessary in the one case, it must have done so also in the other: That, although the duties and ordinances of religion have all some things in common, yet they are specifically different, so that no one of them can answer the primary intention of another; that confirmation is that in which social vowing and the sacraments principally coincide, yet, in this particular, they differ with respect to their immediate object or primary end; for the primary end of the sacraments is, the confirmation on the part of God of his grant to us of all the blessings of his covenant;⁴ whereas the primary end of social vowing, is the confirmation on our part of our allegiance to him, and our joint adherence to his cause.⁵

4. In opposition to those who deny the warrantableness of national religious covenanting,—WE DECLARE,

That, although public religious covenanting is a duty peculiarly suited to the Church, and which can be per-

¹ Ps. lxxvi. 11; Gen. xxviii. 20; Ps. cxxxii. 2; Num. xxi. 2.

² Exod. xix. 8; xxiv. 3, 7; Isa. xix. 18—21; xlv. 23, 24; Jer. l. 4, 5.

³ Rom. iii. 31.

⁴ Luke xxii. 19, 20; Acts ii. 38.

⁵ Exod. xxiv. 7; Psal. cxix. 106.

formed acceptably only in the faith of the supernatural doctrines of the Gospel committed to her; and although, in all cases wherein it is practicable, her functionaries should take the lead in the service, by framing the bonds and administering the oaths; yet, as religious covenanting has its foundation in moral-natural law, which is common to mankind in general, it is not exclusively an ecclesiastical ordinance: That as nations, as such, are the subjects of God's moral government, so they must have a religious character; that when favoured with the knowledge of supernatural religion, they are bound to recognise and embrace it; and that this being admitted, it must follow, that, as Christian nations, they may warrantably enter into national engagements to employ every means competent to them, and suited to its nature, for its defence and propagation.

In support of this we observe, That as men, in their social state, as well as individuals, are the subjects of God's moral government, and as such bound to devote their several stations and relations in life to the honour of God, by employing them in subserviency to the interests of pure and undefiled religion; so it must be competent to the several classes of which a nation is composed, to enter into a solemn vow to God, and to confederate with one another, to employ the combined influence of their several stations for the better effecting of that end: That the covenants of God's ancient people were national deeds, and that this did not arise from any peculiarity of the economy they were under, but from all ranks and classes of the nation being comprehended in them: That national covenanting is neither inconsistent with the spirit nor the letter of those predictions in the Old Testament, which refer to the practice of the duty in New Testament times; that nations are cities on a larger scale; but we are told, that "five cities in the land of Egypt shall speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of Hosts," and that "they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it;" that we are told, that "the KINGDOMS of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," which must refer to their public and joint profession; that we are also told, that

“the NATIONS shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory;” but the connexion leads us to conclude, that they shall do so in the way of national covenanting.¹

4. In opposition to those who deny that National Covenants can be renewed unless it be done nationally,—WE DECLARE,

That as in national vows for promoting religious reformation in countries where the Church is in an organised state, she is supposed to take the lead in the service, the civil authorities of the nation, and the body of the people concurring with her, and entering into the oaths; and as these vows must be binding in all moral respects, not only upon the nation as a whole, but also upon the several parts of which it is composed; so it must be competent to the Church, or any part of her adhering to the covenanted cause, though a minority of the nation, when the majority, including their rulers, refuse to concur in the service, to renew these vows ecclesiastically, by recognising their continued obligation, and entering into a bond suited to her circumstances, to prosecute the ends of them.*

In support of the above statement we observe, That the renewal of national covenants, even by a minority of the nation which originally entered into them, is sanctioned by the approved example of God’s ancient people: That all their covenanting with God, after they entered the land of Canaan, reduplicated upon the federal transaction of the twelve tribes at Horeb: That, after the apostacy of the ten tribes, the tribe of Judah, though a minority of the original nation of Israel which covenanted at Horeb, renewed that covenant in the days of Asa, Jehoiada, Hezekiah, and Josiah; and that this was done by them, not only when they had a king of their own nation to take a lead in the service, but also when under a foreign yoke, as appears

¹ Isa. xix. 18—21; Rev. xi. 15; Jer. iv. 1, 2.

* For a more particular account of National Covenanting, and that which is purely Ecclesiastical, and the distinction between them, see above, pp. 79, 80.

from the covenanting of the captives after their return from Babylon.¹

In opposition to those who deny the present seasonableness of public religious covenanting, or who leave it undecided whether it is seasonable at present or not,—WE DECLARE,

That, although public religious covenanting is not an ordinary duty, yet it is a service eminently called for at present from the circumstances of the church and the nation to which we belong.

In support of this assertion we observe, That nature itself teaches, that if we have violated a lawful covenant, it is dutiful to renew it with an acknowledgment of our sin in having broken it: That all ranks in these lands having departed in principle and practice from a reformation formerly attained, and violated the vows by which it was consolidated, the renovation of these is highly seasonable as a means of awakening the present generation to a sense of their sin and danger, and of exciting them to remember whence they have fallen, and to do the first works: That as one end of social covenanting is the confirmation of Christians in the present truth, so it must be a seasonable service at present, when the great body of Christians are like children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, and when error is coming in upon the Church like a flood: That the great alienation of affection, and mutual jealousies, which prevail among professed Christians, call loudly for this service, as a means eminently calculated to restore public confidence, to heal divisions, and to cement religious society: That as all ranks in these lands are bound by the vows of their ancestors to adhere to the Westminster formularies as standards of uniformity, and as there is a strong tendency at present to union, to the prejudice of these standards,—so to counteract that tendency, and to give the disposition for union a proper direction, the friends of the reformation have a special call to renew the pledge of adherence to them given by their reforming ancestors: That, as public religious covenanting was a means remarkably blessed by God

¹ 2 Chron. xv. 12, 13, 14, 15; xxiii. 16; xxix. 10; xxxiv. 29—34; Neh. ix. 38; x.

in the days of our fathers, for delivering these lands from anti-christian tyranny and superstition, and for carrying on a work of reformation,—so the danger to which the Reformation interest in these lands is exposed, from the rapid increase of Popery, and the countenance it is receiving from persons of all ranks, is a special call in Providence to all the friends of the Reformation to come forward and renew the federal deeds of our ancestors, which have so often proved the bulwarks of our civil and religious liberties, as a special means of preventing us from being again brought under the yoke of Rome: Finally, that it is the business of the Church to point out the seasons when this duty is especially called for, and doctrinally and judicially to inculcate the practice of it; and that, to admit its morality, and yet to leave the seasonableness of it undetermined, or to make the performance or non-performance of it matter of judicial forbearance, is to act in direct opposition to the commandment of Christ, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Matt. xxviii. 20.

6. In opposition to those who deny that social vows having a permanent object, are of perpetual obligation, and who restrict their obligation to example, or found it upon their success as a means of transmitting privilege,—WE DECLARE,

That the obligation arising from example is not covenant-obligation, but an obligation to covenant when placed in similar circumstances; that the obligation pleaded for is the obligation of a social vow or promissory oath; that the obligation of a vow arises from the vow itself; and does not depend upon its consequences; that as social vowing proceeds upon the principle, that society, whether civil or ecclesiastical, when regularly constituted, is the subject of God’s moral government as well as individual persons, and, as such, capable of social engagements and public faith,—so the perpetual obligation of social vows having a permanent object, proceeds upon the principle, that society thus constituted is recognised both by God and men, as a permanent body, whose identity is unaffected by the change of individuals; and that it is upon these prin-

ciples that we maintain the continued obligation of the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations, upon all ranks in these lands, to the latest posterity.

The Scriptures clearly teach, that organised society is recognised by God as a permanent body, and possessed of continued moral identity;¹ that society accumulates guilt from age to age;² that God punishes posterity in the social state, even at a distant period, for crimes committed by their ancestors;³ and that he recognises posterity as under the obligation of the vows of ancestors, and punishes them for the violation of these vows:⁴ That the doctrine pleaded for, as applied to civil leagues or contracts, has never been disputed; nor could society of any kind exist without acting on this principle: That although the success of social vows and covenants, as a means of transmitting religious and civil privileges to posterity, greatly aggravates the sin of those who slight them, and deny their obligation; yet it is not the proper ground of that obligation: That, if the deeds themselves are lawful and their object permanent, they must be of perpetual obligation upon the society which enters into them, though not followed with success: That, to make the obligation of a vow or promissory oath to depend upon its consequences, is to cut asunder the sinews both of civil and religious society, by destroying public confidence:⁵ Finally, that it is not sufficient to say, in opposition to the continued obligation of the federal deeds of ancestors, that since the covenanting at Horeb, God has not invested society with representing power; for every society, from its nature and constitution, has this power, and therefore the right of the society which covenanted at Horeb to represent posterity, did not proceed from positive institution, but had its foundation in natural principles and law.

¹ Jer. ii. 2.; Amos i. 11, 12.

² Gen xv. 16; Matt. xxxii. 31, 32.

³ Exod. xvii. 8—16; Matt. xxiii. 34, 35, 36; Rev. xix. 1, 2.

⁴ Exod. xiii. 19; Joshua ix. 18, compared with 2 Samuel xxi. 1; Jer. ii. 20; xi. 10, 11; Amos i. 9.

⁵ Ps. xv. 4; Judges xi. 35.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE ORDINANCES OF INSTITUTED WORSHIP.

SECT. I.—*Of the Ordinance of Preaching, and the Pastoral Office.*

1. In defence of the common doctrine of Protestants, and in opposition to lay preaching,—WE DECLARE,

That to preach the Gospel is authoritatively to publish the good news and glad tidings of salvation in the name of Christ, and that none are warranted to preach the Gospel but those who have the call of Christ for that purpose: That the Apostles received their call immediately from Christ, the alone king of the church, with power to commit that sacred trust to inferior teachers; that these, again, were commanded to commit it to faithful men, who should be able to teach others; that none have a right to preach the gospel in ordinary cases, but those who are thus authorised by Christ through the medium of persons already vested with official power in the church; and that they are to discharge this work in the exercise of those gifts which the Head of the Church has promised to bestow on them for this purpose.

In support of this statement we observe, That the regular call to preach the gospel is sanctioned not only by the precept, but also by the example of Christ, who did not enter upon his work as a preacher, without his Father's call:¹ That such a call is necessary, from the relation the ordinance of preaching has to Christ; that to preach the gospel is not merely to publish its supernatural doctrines and laws, but to do it authoritatively in his name; but no person can have a right to address men in Christ's name who has not his call; and that all the success of a minister's labours depends on the blessing of Christ, which is promised to those only who act under his commission:² That such a call is no less necessary, on account of the people;

¹ Isa. lxi. 1, 2; John xx. 21.

² 2 Cor. v. 20; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

for, as the work of the ministry has a respect to the conscience, and as intruders upon this work cannot, without the greatest presumption, deal with the consciences of their hearers in the name of the Lord, so it is absurd to suppose that their instructions and admonitions can have any weight, or be binding upon their consciences, while they are acting not under, but in direct opposition to, the authority of the Lord of the conscience:¹ That this call is further necessary to the comfort, support, and safety of the minister himself; for as the work of the ministry is a work of peculiar difficulty and danger, not only from the opposition that may be expected in the faithful discharge of it from men, but also from the powers of darkness,—so none are warranted to expect divine support and protection in the discharge of that work, but those who act under the authority of a divine commission.² We further observe, that the practice of reading sermons from the pulpit, which has become so common in the present day, affords an opportunity of introducing persons into the ministry, and of continuing them in it, who are destitute of ministerial gifts, argues distrust of the support which Christ has promised to his servants in this work, mars the edification of the hearers, and has been, in former times, the means of producing a dry and unprofitable strain of preaching, and of substituting philosophical and elaborate essays in the room of the plain and affectionate preaching of the gospel.

2. In opposition to those who confine their ministerial labours to preaching and public acts of government, and neglect the more private duties of their office,—WE DECLARE,

That it is the duty of ministers to visit the different families under their charge, to pray with them, to inquire into the state of personal and family religion among them; to instruct, reprove, and exhort them according to their respective circumstances, and to instruct their people in the principles of religion, by means of public examination or catechising; and it is not less the duty of a people diligently to attend upon such ministrations, and endeavour to profit by them in the knowledge and love of the truth.

¹ Jer. xxxiii. 21, 22.

² Rom. x. 14, 15; Acts xix. 13, 14, 15.

In support of these statements, we observe, That the Apostle, whose practice in this respect is undoubtedly recorded for imitation, taught not only publicly, but also in private families:¹ That this duty must necessarily be included in the charge given to ministers by the Apostle, to take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers:² And that the duty of public examination is peculiarly useful for increasing religious knowledge, and acquainting ministers with the state and progress of it among their flocks; and that it is evidently included in the work of teaching so frequently inculcated by the Apostles, and was practised in the Christian Church from the earliest ages.³

3. In support of the principles of the Church of Scotland respecting the rights of the Christian people, and in opposition to patronage,—WE DECLARE,

That in addition to the appointment of the Presbytery, the call of the people, although it does not convey official powers, is necessary to constitute the pastoral relation between a minister and his flock.

In support of this declaration, we observe, That Christ has conferred a right upon the members of the church to choose their own office-bearers: That when an apostle was to be chosen in the room of Judas, the whole hundred and twenty disciples were invited by the apostles to nominate two; though it was necessary, from the nature of the office, that it should be determined by an appeal to the Head of the Church which of the two should fill it, which was done by the lot;⁴ and that, when the office of the deacon was appointed, persons were chosen to fill that office by the vote of the whole multitude of the Christian people:⁵ That Christians in general are required to “try the spirits;” and if they have a right to try the soundness of their principles, they must also have a right to judge of the suitableness of their gifts, and other ministerial qualifications for their edification, before submitting to their pastoral inspection; but the law of patronage deprives them of the benefit of this right: Finally, That the church

¹ Acts xx. 20.

² Acts xx. 23.

³ Gal. vi. 6.

⁴ Acts i. 23, 24, 25, 26.

⁵ Acts vi. 5.

is a society of all others the most free; but to deprive her of the right of choosing her own office-bearers, is to rob her of a privilege common to every free society.

SECT. II.—*Of Baptism.*

In defence of the doctrine of the Confession, chap. xxviii. and in opposition to the Papists, and others, who maintain, that baptism is regeneration, and confers the remission of sins; to the Baptists, who deny the warrantableness of infant baptism, and maintain that immersion is necessary to the right administration of it; and also to those who maintain that baptism with water is essential to salvation, and plead for private baptism,—WE DECLARE,

That while both the sacraments of the New Testament represent and seal Christ, and all the benefits of the covenant of grace, to believers, some of these benefits are more prominently brought into view in each of them; and that baptism is more especially the sign and seal of the remission of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, and of the regeneration of our hearts by his Spirit;—that, to assert that baptism with water is regeneration, or remission of sins, is to confound the sign with the things signified by it; that, though an external means of salvation, and on that account not to be unnecessarily omitted, yet it is not essential to salvation:—that, not only those who profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, but also the infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized:—that baptism is rightly administered by sprinkling; and that, from the nature of the ordinance, it should be dispensed in public, and in connexion with the administration of the word.

In support of these statements, we observe, That the scriptures make an obvious distinction between baptism with water, which is only a means of salvation, and baptism with the Holy Spirit, of which it is the sign, and which is essential to salvation;¹ and that, while they give us many examples of persons who were in a gracious state long before they were baptized, they also give us examples

¹ Matt. iii. 11.

of others, who, after baptism, continued in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.¹

We observe further, That God's covenant of promise, of which baptism is the initiating seal, is substantially the same under the present as under the former dispensation, as has been already proved (chap. vii.); that baptism under the New corresponds in its use or ends with circumcision, the initiating seal of the same covenant under the Old Testament, as appears from its being called "the circumcision of Christ," and from those who act up to their baptismal engagements being denominated "the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit:"² That children have the same place in the covenant under both dispensations; for the promise made to Abraham and to his seed is still indorsed to us and to our children,³ and that it must follow, either that the privileges of the church are now greatly abridged, or else that the children of the members of the church now, by virtue of their connexion with their parents in the promise, are to be admitted to baptism, its initiating seal, as they were to circumcision under the former dispensation, by virtue of their connexion with their parents in the same promise: That no such abridgement has taken place is obvious from the whole tenor of scripture; that if it had, notice would have been given of it somewhere in the New Testament; and that the circumstance would have been eagerly seized by the Judaizing teachers, as an argument in support of their favourite tenet, that unless the converts to Christianity were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved;—we must therefore conclude, that although the rite was changed, upon the introduction of the new dispensation, from circumcision to baptism with water, there was no change of its subjects; or that under the new as well as under the old dispensation, the infants of professing parents are to be admitted to the initiating seal of God's covenant: That this is the case appears from Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, in which the promise, as extended to *children*, is brought forward as a reason why his hearers should submit to Christian baptism, which could have had no meaning, had not children been, by virtue of that pro-

¹ Acts x. 2, 48; viii. 13, 22, 23.

² Col. ii. 11; Phil. iii. 3.

³ Acts ii. 39.

mise, to be connected with their parents in baptism itself under the new, as they had been in circumcision by virtue of the same promise under the Old Testament:¹ Finally, That the warrantableness of infant baptism may be inferred from the apostolic commission to baptize all nations, which must include infants; and from the practice of the apostles, who baptized whole families.²

We observe further, That the objections brought forward to disprove the warrantableness of infant baptism are either frivolous in themselves, or proceed from mistaken views of the ordinance: That it is no valid objection that infants cannot profess their faith in Christ; for when faith, or the profession of it, is spoken of as a prerequisite to baptism, it is always supposed that the subjects of it are capable of instruction; and that if this proved any thing, it would prove too much; for this objection, if valid against infant baptism, must also be valid against infant salvation, since the Scripture connects faith, and the profession of it, in the case of adults, with the one as well as with the other:³ That the objection that infants are incapable of understanding the nature of the ordinance is equally inconclusive; that it must have been of equal force against infant circumcision; and that it proceeds from a too limited view of the ends of that baptism of which infants are the subjects, both as a seal of privilege and a bond to duty: That in both those views, baptism has a respect not only to the child baptized, but also to the church; that the infant seed of believers are also the seed of the church, on which her prospects, under the blessing of God, depend for perpetuating her existence in the world; that the promise as extended to children, must on that account be a great privilege to both; but that if the promise, as extended to children, be a privilege both to their parents and to the church, the baptism of which infants are the subjects must be a seal of that privilege to both, and if a seal of privilege to both, it must lay both under additional obligations to train up these children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that this being admitted, it must follow that baptism is a great privilege to infants, though they are in-

¹ Acts ii. 38, 39.

² Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts xvi. 15; 1 Cor. i. 16.

³ John iii. 36.

capable of understanding its nature and import, for this, among other reasons, that it brings not only their parents, but also the church, under a sacred bond to attend to their religious tuition and instruction.

We further observe, That, as washing with water is the only sensible sign of divine appointment in this ordinance, ceremonies of human invention, such as the sign of the cross attached to it, must be grossly superstitious; and that as it is an ordinance purely ecclesiastical, and as it is a seal of privilege to the church, as well as to the person baptized, so in all ordinary cases it should be administered in her public assemblies.

We observe further, That baptism by immersion derives no authority from the word *baptize*, which signifies to wash in any way, nor from any express precept or example in scripture:¹ That it is evident from our Lord's words to Peter, when washing the disciples' feet, that, to point out the conveyance of a privilege by symbol, it is not necessary that it be applied to the whole of the subject for which the privilege is intended:² That the circumstances of time and place are greatly against baptism by immersion, particularly in the case of the three thousand who were baptized on the day of Pentecost, in the heart of a large and populous city: That all the other ordinances of the New Testament are of a simple form; that none of them tend either to distract the mind, or to endanger the health of the body, whereas baptism by immersion, especially in certain countries, and at certain seasons, tends to both; and that it is extremely improbable that the benevolent Head of the Church, who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them, would appoint a form of dispensing an ordinance intended for every nation under heaven, which is accompanied in many instances with so much difficulty and danger: That analogy greatly favours the mode of baptism by sprinkling; that the different washings in the Jewish ceremonial, which were typical of the moral change of which baptism is a symbol, are called by the writer to the Hebrews in the original (*βαπτισμοί*) *baptisms*,³ but that these were generally performed in the case of animate subjects by sprinkling: That baptism is the sign of the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the

¹ Mark vii. 2, 4; Luke xi. 38. - ² John xiii. 10. - ³ Heb. ix. 10.

Holy Ghost; but these were promised to the church in the figurative language of *pouring* water or *sprinkling* with it:¹ That the application of the blood of the legal sacrifices, for the purposes for which it was shed, was a type of the application of the blood of Christ for the remission of sin, signified by Christian baptism; but it was performed by sprinkling:² That our Lord's blood, not only in allusion to the type, but probably with an express reference to the mode of Christian baptism, is called the "blood of sprinkling;" and that, in the language of prophecy, the application of the virtue of his sacrifice is signified by his sprinkling the nations.³

SECT. III.—*Of the Lord's Supper.*

In defence of the Confession, chap. xxix. and in opposition to the sacramental test of the Church of England; the transubstantiation of the Papists, and the consubstantiation of the Lutherans; and the unscriptural modes of dispensing the ordinance, —WE DECLARE,

That the Lord's Supper is a sacrament instituted by Christ solely for spiritual purposes,—to be a memorial of his death, a seal of his testament, a sign of union to his person and communion with him in his benefits, and a badge of fraternity among his followers; and that to employ it for secular purposes is a profanation of it:—that the bread and wine in this sacrament are not converted into the real body and blood of Christ, but are only symbols of his broken body and shed blood:—that kneeling in receiving the ordinance of the supper originated in, and tends to, superstition and idolatry; and that as this is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance, so promiscuous admission to the Lord's Supper must be a gross perversion of its design.

For illustration we observe, That to maintain, with the Papists, that the bread and the wine in the Sacrament of the Supper are converted into the real body and blood of

¹ Isaiah xlv. 3; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.

² Heb. ix. 13.

³ Heb. xii. 24; Isaiah lii. 14, 15.

Christ by consecration, or, with the Lutherans, that the real body and blood of Christ are under these elements, is contrary both to reason and scripture, and in direct opposition to the testimony of the senses ; that it destroys their sacramental nature and use : and that it involves in it the absurd notion of the ubiquity of our Lord's human nature, or that it is not only present in heaven, but also on earth, wherever the ordinance of the Supper is dispensed :¹ That neither transubstantiation nor consubstantiation derives any support from the bread being called, in the words of institution, " Christ's body," and the cup, the " New Testament in his blood," for nothing is more common in scripture than to affix to a type or symbol, the name of the thing signified by it : thus circumcision is called God's Covenant : the pascal lamb, the Passover ; the seven candlesticks, the Seven Churches ; and the smitten rock, Christ :² That to employ this ordinance for secular ends, or as a test of loyalty to a civil state, or a qualification for office, civil or military, is not only a subversion of the design of the ordinance, by making it an engine of worldly policy, but holds out a powerful temptation to dissimulation and hypocrisy in the matters of God : That this being a confirming and not a converting ordinance, none have a right to it in the eye of God, but gracious persons ; that none should be admitted to it by the church, but those who make a credible profession of their faith in Christ and obedience to him ; and that the admission of the ignorant and scandalous to the Lord's Table, is a gross profanation of the ordinance :³ That, as it belongs to the judicatories of the church to judge of the character of those who seek fellowship in this holy ordinance, and to admit and reject accordingly, so the practice of free communion must be unscriptural, since it proceeds upon the supposition that the members of one church may join in this ordinance in another church, to the government of which they do not own subjection, and while the rulers of that church have no control over them : Finally, That kneeling in receiving the sacrament of the Supper was introduced, and is still practised, by the Papists, in adoration of the host or wafer ;

¹ Acts i. 9 ; iii. 20, 21.

² Gen. xvii. 9, 10 ; Exod. xii. 11 ; Rev. i. 20 ; 1 Cor. x. 4.

³ 1 Cor. v. 6—8 ; x. 10, 20, 21.

that, as practised in some Protestant churches, it is a relic of popery ; and that, on these grounds, it was justly condemned by our reformers as superstitious and tending to idolatry.

SECT. IV.—*Of the Sabbath.*

In defence of the doctrine of Confession, chap. xxi. sect. 7, 8 ; and in opposition to those who deny the morality of the Christian Sabbath, and to others, who restrict the sanctification of it to the time of public worship,—WE DECLARE,

That, although the proportion of time to be observed as a Sabbath unto the Lord, the particular day of the week, and the special ends of the Sabbath as a commemorative ordinance, are determined by positive institution, yet it has its primary foundation in moral-natural law, it being a dictate of that law, that a due proportion of our time be wholly employed in the worship of God ; that the precept respecting the sanctification of the Sabbath is accordingly embodied with the other moral precepts of the Decalogue, which are of perpetual obligation ; and that, although the day of rest is changed, yet the sanctification of it inculcated in that precept, is of the same obligation under the Christian as under the Mosaic dispensation.

In support of this we observe, That, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh part of our time, and the seventh day of the week, to be wholly employed in his worship, and for the special purpose of commemorating his rest from the work of creation :¹ That, from the resurrection of Christ, and to commemorate that event, the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week : That this change was predicted in ancient prophecies, and was particularly intimated in the promise of a future rest, made to Israel in the wilderness, and renewed in the time of David—which promise is referred, by the inspired writer to the Hebrews, to the resurrection of Christ, and to the Sabbath set apart

¹ Gen. ii. 3.

for its commemoration, on which Christ ceased from his own work, as God did from his:¹ That the change is sufficiently sanctioned by our Lord's appearing repeatedly to his disciples on the first day of the week after he rose from the dead—by that being the day on which the Spirit was given—by the practice of the inspired Apostles and primitive Christians, who stately met on that day for the celebration of divine ordinances—and by the designation of the *Lord's Day*, by which the Christian Sabbath was familiarly known, and by which it was distinguished in the Primitive Church from the Jewish Sabbath.²

We observe further, That the original end of the Sabbath, as a commemorative ordinance, was not set aside by the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, but another end was connected with it: That as the Sabbath was changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, to be a memorial of the resurrection of Christ, so the seventh part of our time is still to be kept as a memorial of God's rest from the work of creation; and both these ends are to be combined by Christians in the religious observance of the Christian Sabbath: That as the Sabbath hath its foundation in natural law, as its sanctification is enjoined by God among other moral precepts which are of perpetual obligation, and as its original end, as a commemorative ordinance, is not set aside, but another end gained by the change from the seventh to the first day of the week, so the law respecting its sanctification must be the same in its extent and obligation, under the present as under the former dispensation; and that this is further evident from the importance attached to the Sabbath in ancient predictions which obviously refer to New Testament times.³

¹ Exod. xxxiii. 14; Ps. xc. 11; Heb. iv. 2—11.

² John xx. 19, 26; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Rev. i. 10.

³ Is. lvi. 3, 7.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF THE CHURCH, CHURCH COMMUNION, AND CHURCH
GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE.

SECT. I.—*Of the Church and Church Communion.*

1st, In defence of the Confession, chap. xxv. sec. 1, 2 ; and in opposition to the Independents, who confine the idea of a visible church to a single congregation met in one place for public worship,—WE DECLARE,

That there is a Catholic or Universal Visible Church, consisting of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children, to which Christ has given the ministry and ordinances of the Gospel: That, as it is impossible that the whole of this universal church can meet in one place for the observance of the ordinances of religion, it is necessary that particular churches or congregations should be formed for this purpose ; but that these particular churches constitute similar integral parts of the Catholic church, and are entitled to enjoy, and bound, as they have opportunity, to hold communion in all religious ordinances with one another.

In proof of this we observe, That, as Christians in general have one spiritual Head, Lord, or Lawgiver, even Christ ; as this one Lawgiver has given them but one ministry, and one system of ordinances and laws ; and as the aggregate body, of which he is the head, and to which he has given that ministry and these ordinances, is called *The Church*,¹ so the Visible Church of Christ, under the New Testament, must have a universal character, including all who profess that faith in Christ, and their children : That the Apostle infers the unity of this Catholic Church from the one bread in the ordinance of the Supper, and enforces the maintenance of it from the consideration that Christians have but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism :² That the Church is the kingdom of Christ ; but a kingdom is one, though made up of many provinces and subordinate govern-

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 27, 28.

² 1 Cor. x. 16, 17 ; Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5.

ments; and that she is the "house of God," which implies, that, though made up of many parts, she is but one spiritual family.¹

2. In opposition also to the Independents, who make positive marks of regeneration the term of admission, in the case of adults, to the communion of the Church and sealing ordinances,—WE DECLARE,

That, though none are to be admitted who bear evident marks of their being unregenerated, yet exacting from persons positive marks of their being in a state of grace, as indispensable to their admission to church fellowship, has no warrant from Scripture.

In proof of this we observe, That to make real saintship the criterion of visible church fellowship, does not agree either with the general description of the church, as a net in which good and bad fishes are caught,—a floor in which the chaff is mixed with good grain,—and a house in which there are vessels, some to honour, and some to dishonour; or with the manner in which our Lord and his Apostles proceeded in admitting persons to membership in the Church; or with the account given of the Primitive Churches in the New Testament.²

3. In opposition to the Erastians, and others, who plead for the admission of all who call themselves Christians,—WE DECLARE,

That none are to be admitted into fellowship with the church but those who make a serious profession of the true religion, rendered credible by a competent measure of knowledge, and a corresponding walk and conversation.

In support of this we observe, that no well-regulated society can be inattentive to the character of those who apply for membership; and that it would be glaringly inconsistent with the character of the Church as a holy nation, and calculated to endanger her purity, to admit into her fellow-

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 15.

² Matt. xiii. 24, 30, 47, 48; Luke iii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 20.

ship persons, who, though they assume the Christian name, have not a conversation becoming the Gospel:¹ That the scriptures expressly require a credible profession of faith in Christ, and submission to his laws, as the terms of admission to the sealing ordinances of the Church :² That they represent the dispensing of these to immoral persons as a profanation of them ;³ and that, if the members of the Church are to be excluded from her fellowship, when their conduct belies their profession, much more must such conduct, in the case of those who are not members, form a sufficient bar in the way of their admission.⁴

4. In opposition to those who maintain the latitudinarian principle, that the terms of ecclesiastical fellowship should be limited to what they call essential or fundamental points in religion, and that mutual forbearance should be exercised respecting all other points,—WE DECLARE,

That although some of the doctrines and duties of religion are of greater importance than others, in themselves, and in respect of the place they hold in the general system ; yet as the authority of God is the ground on which our obligation to believe and profess what he has been pleased to reveal in his word, properly rests ; so none ought to be admitted who state themselves in opposition to any part of his revealed will ; and that the forbearance enjoined in Scripture is not a doctrinal or judicial forbearance, to be employed in bringing down the standard of truth and duty to the errors and imperfections of men, but a practical forbearance towards those who are weak in knowledge, and other attainments, and which has for its object, in the due use of means, the bringing of them up to that standard.

For illustration, we observe, that it is impossible for us to draw the line of distinction between what have been called essential and circumstantial points, or to settle their respective importance ; that, while we are bound to receive the

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 9 ; 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16 ; 1 Cor. v. 6 7.

² Acts viii. 37 ; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20

³ Matt. vii. 6 ; 1 Cor. xi. 29.

⁴ 1 Cor. v. 9, 11, 13 ; 2 Thess. iii. 6-14.

whole system of divine truth, and while the whole of it is profitable, the call which the Church has to make a more explicit profession of any part of it, depends upon the attacks that are made upon it by its adversaries, and the dangers to which it is thereby exposed of being lost or obscured; that there is no article of divine truth which may not become a proper and necessary part of the testimony of the Church; and that a due regard to the least of the commandments is required by Christ, and may become a special test of fidelity to him.¹

We observe further, that, as all Christians are imperfect in the present state, and are of different degrees of knowledge, and other attainments, and some of them are even babes in Christ, great practical forbearance must be exercised among them, both in relation to their knowledge and conduct; yet this is not to be done by bringing down the standard of truth and duty to their imperfections; nor is forbearance to be pleaded for in such a way as to hinder ministers from declaring the whole counsel of God, or to prevent the courts of Christ from judicially asserting any truth on the one hand, or condemning any error on the other, or from administering private admonitions and reproofs, or the regular exercise of discipline, according to the rules prescribed by Christ.²

5. In opposition to many who wantonly, and without necessary causes, withdraw from the communion of the Church, and form themselves into separate associations for the purposes of religious fellowship,—WE DECLARE,

That, as the holding of communion with the Church, is not only a high privilege, but also a great duty, tending to advance the glory of God, to preserve the visible unity of the body of Christ, and to promote the edification of its members,—so it must be sinful to break off this communion from a particular church on slight grounds, or such as do not affect the great ends of ecclesiastical fellowship.

For illustration we observe, that it must be sinful to break off this communion, on account of personal offences

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16; Matt. v. 19.

² Acts xx. 27; Matt. xxviii. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Acts xv. 28, 29.

given by the misconduct of individual church members,—wrong decisions of church courts in personal causes, or particular acts of maladministration, when the public interests of religion are not immediately concerned, and permanently affected,—differences of opinion about matters not clearly determined in the word of God, or which have not been publicly received in the church,—diversity of practice in some points of mere external order in prudential regulations as to the form of divine worship,—irregularities or abuses of different kinds in a church which is aspiring after reformation,—or the mere desire and expectation of doing more extensive good in a separate state: And still more culpable is the conduct of those who withdraw from a church from mere humour, pride, personal grudges, and envy; from aversion to any of the doctrines or institutions of Christ; or from impatience of faithful admonitions, and the due exercise of church censure.¹

6. In opposition to those who deny the warrantableness of separation from a corrupt church, even when she is obstinately persisting in a course of defection; and to those who maintain that it is unwarrantable to separate from a church, so long as she may be considered to be a church of Christ, and so long as the means which they think sufficient for the salvation of the soul are to be found in her communion,—WE DECLARE,

That it is lawful and necessary to separate from a church which obstinately maintains gross and pernicious errors: which is idolatrous and superstitious in her worship and tyrannical in her government; which has imposed sinful terms of communion, or whose fellowship involves us in sin, or in the neglect of some necessary duty: That separation does not necessarily imply that the body left has ceased to be a church of Christ, though it supposes her to be unfaithful and corrupt; and that separation may become necessary, not only, or principally, for the spiritual safety of the party separating, but also from a regard to the general interests of religion, and as a means of reclaiming the church from which the separation is made.

¹ Phil. iii. 15, 16; 1 Tim. i. 6, 7; John vi. 60—66; 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4; Eph. iv. 2, 3; 1 John ii. 18, 19.

For illustration we observe, That, as the exclusion of obstinate offenders from the fellowship of the church does not necessarily imply that they are reprobates, but is to be employed, after other means have failed, for the purpose of recovering them from the error of their ways,—so the separation of a minority from a church does not necessarily imply that she has lost every thing belonging to a church of Christ, but is an appointed means to be used after every other means has failed to recover her from her apostacy;¹ That the plea brought forward by some against separation from corrupt churches, viz. that the means of salvation are still to be found in their communion, is invalid;—that men are not competent judges of what portion of divine truth is necessary to salvation, while we know, from the highest authority, that all Scripture is profitable for the perfecting of the saints:² That we are to seek not only our own profit, but the profit of many that they may be saved; and in a national or extensive church, which is engaged in a course of defection, individuals may have access to the means of salvation, in some degree of purity, while multitudes of their brethren are deprived of them; and that separation from corrupt churches is necessary not only in relation to the salvation of men, but to the glory of God, in preserving his truths and cause pure and entire,—the grand end for which ecclesiastical communion is to be maintained: That, when a church which had arrived at high attainments in reformation persists in a course of defection from these, notwithstanding every means employed by a minority in her communion, who wish to adhere faithfully to them, to reclaim her, the only method left for that minority to secure these attainments, at least judicially, is to state a secession from her:³ In fine, That such a secession becomes especially necessary, for these and other reasons, when the minority, who wish to be faithful, are prevented from bearing a public and explicit testimony against her defections within her pale.⁴

7. In opposition to those who maintain the warrantableness of free communion, or that different denominations may retain their separate ecclesiastical state, and all their

¹ 2 Thes. iii. 14 ; 2 Cor. vi. 17.

³ 1 Tim. vi. 3—5 ; Acts xix. 8, 9.

² 2 Tim. iii. 16.

⁴ Rev. xviii. 4.

peculiarities, and yet hold communion with one another occasionally in church ordinances,—WE DECLARE,

That church communion consists in the joint profession of the truths and observance of all the ordinances which Christ hath appointed in his word; that the visible unity of the church lies in the unity of her visible fellowship, and that free communion is an obvious violation of that unity; that, in the observance of all ecclesiastical ordinances, and in participating of the sacraments in particular, there is a solemn recognition of the whole profession made by the church in which they are dispensed; and that those who belong to a separate denomination cannot, in this manner, recognise her profession by occasional communion with her, but in the way of practically denying their own, and condemning themselves as schismatics.

In support of this we observe, That the keeping of the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace so often and so warmly inculcated in Scripture, with all who name the name of Jesus, is an object greatly to be desired; but as this unity is a unity in the truth, and as, from the present state of religious society, it cannot be extended to all professed Christians, without sacrificing truth and duty,—so we must be bound to keep it in that ecclesiastical association which, in its constitution and administration, is conformable to the rule of God's word:¹ That the ordinances dispensed in any church must take their character from the character of her profession and general administration; if the latter be pure the former must be pure,—if the latter be corrupt, the former must be corrupt; and, consequently, a person cannot hold communion occasionally in a corrupt church without partaking of her corruptions, and without materially retracting his act of separation, if he has separated from her, and condemning his conduct as schismatical:² That this practice encourages persons to continue in corrupt communions, by leading them to conclude that there is no conscientious ground of difference between them and the person who makes no scruple of occasionally joining with them in the intimacies of church fellowship:

¹ Eph. iv. 3, 4; Acts ii. 42

² Jer. xv. 19.

And, in fine, that it throws a great and effectual bar in the way of all attempts to attain a scriptural union, by representing that all the communion which is desirable among Christians may be had in the way of their still continuing their separate state.

SECT. II.—*Of the Government and Discipline of the Church.*

1. In agreeableness to the Confession, chap. xxx. sect. 1, 2, and the form of Presbyterian church government, and in opposition to the Erastians, who maintain that the external government and discipline of the church belongs to the civil magistrate,—WE DECLARE,

That Christ, as the King and Head of the Church, has instituted in her a form of government, distinct from civil government, and not subordinate to it, which is to be exercised by office-bearers whom he has appointed in his word, and who, in the scriptural management of their proper business, are dependent upon, and accountable to, no civil ruler whatever.

The Scriptures teach, That Christ's kingdom is not of this world—it must therefore have distinct office-bearers, and a distinct and separate government from the kingdoms of men:¹ That ecclesiastical rulers are distinguished, in Scripture, from other rulers, not only by their names, but also by the nature and objects of their government:² And that the obligation of their decisions is represented as dependent on the will of no earthly power whatever.³

2. In agreeableness to the Presbyterian form of church government, and in opposition to the Episcopalians, who vest the power of ordination, and the government of the church, in bishops, archbishops, &c.—WE DECLARE,

That since extraordinary offices ceased in the church, there is no superiority of office in her above a pastor or teaching elder; that among these pastors or teach-

¹ John xviii. 36.

² 1 Tim. v. 17; 1 Thess. v. 12; Acts xx. 17; Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24; 1 Cor. xii. 28.

³ Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 17, 18.

ing elders there is a parity of office-power; that they are invested with the sole power of ordaining others to the office of the ministry of the word; and that Presbyterian church-government, without any superiority of office above a teaching presbyter, in the due subordination of judicatories, is the only form of government laid down by the Lord Jesus in his word, to continue in his church to the end of the world.

In support of the above statements we observe, That the word bishop signifies an overseer, and that, as used in the New Testament, it is of the same import with the word pastor or elder;¹ that as there was a parity among all the apostles, and as our Lord severely rebuked the appearance of a disposition among them to seek pre-eminence or superiority to one another, so there is a parity among all the ministers of the word;² that all the orders in the English church above a teaching presbyter, have no divine warrant, are remnants of the papacy, and their introduction into the Christian church gave rise to the antichristian supremacy of the bishop of Rome; that ordination by the eldership, or presbytery, is sanctioned by scripture example;³ and that the different acts of ecclesiastical rule or government are ascribed in scripture to the elders of the church associated in smaller or larger assemblies for that purpose.⁴

3. In opposition to the Independents, who maintain that the government of the church is lodged in the body of the christian people, and that every congregation has a complete and independent power of government within itself,—WE DECLARE,

That to assign the government of the church to the body of the people, is inconsistent with the plain distinction which the Scripture makes between the rulers and other members of the church, sets aside an institution of Christ, and leads to disorder and confusion: That these rulers or elders, as has been

¹ Acts xx. 17, compared with verse 28; 1 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 4, 5, compared with chap. v. 17; Tit. i. 5, compared with verse 7.

² Mark x. 42, 43. ³ 1 Tim. iv. 14. ⁴ 1 Tim. v. 17; Acts xv. 22.

already proved, were given by Christ to the Church Catholic or universal, and that they must therefore have an official relation, not only to the particular congregations over which respectively they more immediately preside, but also to the church as a whole: That this official relation which they have to the whole church demands their co-operation in her general government, and that they may meet judicially for that purpose, in smaller or larger assemblies, as her exigencies require, and as local circumstances permit; and as the several parts must be subordinate to the whole, so the decisions of the elders or rulers of a particular congregation must be subject to the review and judgment of the elders and rulers of many congregations assembled and acting together; and the decrees of the latter, if lawful in themselves, are binding on the former.

For illustration we observe, That the congregational plan of church government is inconsistent with the oneness of the church, as founded upon the oneness of her Head, faith, baptism, and the whole system of her laws and ordinances;¹ and with the beautiful description that is given of her in Scripture,—in allusion to the human body, and the mutual sympathy and dependence of its members,—to a kingdom which, though composed of many provinces, is under one government,—and to an army under one commander, made up of different detachments, which, though removed at a distance from one another, and led by their own officers, do all fight under the same banner, and are bound to unite and co-operate in the same cause:² That besides those matters which relate to the internal concerns of a particular congregation, and which its office-bearers may sometimes be unable to decide satisfactorily, there are other causes which do not exclusively relate to any one congregation, but are of common concern; and which therefore require the judgment and decision of the office-bearers of many congregations associated for such purposes: That the primitive converts to Christianity in Jerusalem, Ephesus, and other cities, were so numerous, that it was impossible they could assemble in one place for worship; yet they are called one church, and their elders

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Col. i. 18; Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.

² 1 Cor. xii. 12, 26, 27; John xviii. 36; Rev. xix. 14; xx. 9.

met as a presbytery for transacting their common affairs:¹ In fine, That although the gradation of church judicatories, such as Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies or Councils, is not expressly laid down in Scripture, and although all these are not necessary, or attainable, by the church at all times and in all places,—yet they are warranted by the principles above stated, and by the meeting of the Apostles and Elders held at Jerusalem, in consequence of the reference from the church at Antioch, concerning the disputed question about circumcision, taken in connection with the authority and effect which the decrees ordained by them on that occasion had on the churches at large.²

4. In opposition both to the Episcopalians and Independents, who deny the divine authority of the office of Ruling Elder,—WE DECLARE,

That, besides the minister or teaching elder, who labours in word and doctrine, it is requisite, according to Scripture, that there be other elders to join with him in the government of the Church.

In proof of this we observe, That, when the Apostle inculcates the giving of double honour to elders in general, who rule well, and adds, “especially to them who labour in word and doctrine,” it is evidently supposed, that, besides those elders who teach as well as rule, there are other elders, the exercise of whose office is limited to rule, and who are helps in government.³

5. In defence of the Confession, chap. xxx., and in opposition to the Erastians, who assign the power of inflicting the censures of the church to the civil magistrate; and to the neglect and abuses of church discipline,—WE DECLARE,

That Christ hath appointed a certain discipline to be exercised in his church, for vindicating his laws, maintaining the purity of his worship, reclaiming offenders, deterring others from crime, and satisfying the church as to the repentance and submission of her fallen members; that the exercise of this discipline belongs

¹ Acts xv. 4, 22; xx. 17.

² Acts xv. 22, 29—31.

³ 1 Tim. v. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 28.

exclusively to ecclesiastical rulers; that public scandals can be removed according to the rule of Scripture, by public censure only, and that the censures which Christ hath appointed differ in degree according to the nature of the offence.

For illustration, we observe, That although scandals against religious society may also partake of the nature of crimes against the state; yet it is only in the latter view that they come under the cognizance of civil rulers, and are to be punished with civil pains; and that, viewed as scandals against religious society, they come under the cognizance of the rulers of the church, and can only be removed by ecclesiastical censures:¹ That the ends of discipline in the case of public scandals cannot be gained by the private administration of censure, and that the prevailing practice of removing them in this way, is a subversion of the ends of ecclesiastical discipline:² That the offences which subject to church censures, comprehend error in doctrine as well as immorality in practice:³ That the censures of the church in their different gradations, from simple admonition to the higher excommunication, are appointed by Christ for the benefit of offenders: That the higher excommunication is intended, as well as other censures, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of Jesus;⁴ that it does not, according to the Popish notion consist in literally delivering up the offender to the devil, but in casting him out of the church into the world, which is described in Scripture as Satan's kingdom; and that this view is confirmed by the rule laid down concerning it by Christ himself, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican:"⁵ That although the church hath authority to absolve from the highest censures, yet she may not exercise it without satisfactory proofs of the repentance of the offender:⁶ And, finally, that, as the due exercise of discipline is a powerful antidote against error and corruption, so the neglect of it has uniformly proved ruinous to religious society.⁷ *

¹ Matt. xviii. 17, 18; John xx. 20-23. ² 1 Tim. v. 20; 1 Thes. iii. 14, 15.

³ 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18; compare 1 Tim. i. 20. ⁴ 1 Cor. v. 5. ⁵ Matt. xviii. 17.

⁶ 2 Cor. 6-8. ⁷ 1 Cor. v. 6, 7; Heb. xii. 15, 16; Rev. ii. 14-16.

* For the doctrine concerning Magistracy, and the Connection between Church and State, see above, pp. 60-64, and pp. 70-74.

PART III.

PRACTICAL EVILS.

THE gospel is a doctrine according to godliness, and every departure from it tends to ungodliness. In all ages it has been seen that in proportion as individuals or nations have swerved from the truth, and from the purity of God's ordinances, they have become irreligious and corrupt in their manners. This description is justly applicable to the present times, and to the state of matters among us. Besides the many practical evils which we have already condemned in this Testimony, a fuller enumeration of these, which are grounds of God's controversy with us, will be given in our public Acknowledgment of Sins; at present we confine ourselves to some of the most commonly prevailing.

How many proclaim their impiety, not only by knowingly and fearlessly indulging in vice, but by an avowed contempt for all that is sacred! and what multitudes betray their practical atheism by casting off the form of religion, and disregarding God in all their actions and undertakings! What a large proportion of the inhabitants of our land live in the habitual neglect of the public ordinances of religion! How ready are Protestants, for the sake of gratifying an idle curiosity, to countenance the Popish worship, though defiled with gross idolatry, against which God has in his word denounced the severest judgments! How few are those who are grieved at the dishonour done to God by the corruption of his ordinances, or anxious to prevent or correct this evil! Is there not reason to fear that multitudes, even on the Lord's day, resort to our churches as to places of entertainment? And is not the ordinance of praise so conducted in some instances, even among presbyterians, as to foster this disposition? Have not the word

of God and the most dread mysteries of our holy religion, been openly profaned, in our principal cities, by their being employed for the purpose of public amusement, in what are called Musical Festivals? And are not the Holy Scriptures and the ordinances of prayer often profaned in masonic ceremonies and processions? Is not family worship greatly neglected? and is there a vestige of it in the houses of multitudes who demand and receive the most sacred privileges of the church?

The name of God is grievously profaned among us, by cursing and swearing in ordinary conversation,—a vice for which Britons, and especially our soldiers and sailors, have long been proverbial among the nations. The guilt of this sin is also contracted in numerous instances, by the light use, or the frequent repetition of lawful oaths in matters of trade, and by the swearing of sinful oaths, such as the mason oath and others, which we have condemned in a preceding part of this Testimony.¹ The Lord's Day is openly profaned by the transacting of business, by travelling for the purpose both of trade and amusement, by strolling in the fields, by visiting, and even by rioting and dissipation. Multitudes of children and young persons are allowed by their parents to grow up in ignorance, and without control, and even trained to habits of vice and dishonesty. Grounds are not wanting for fearing that not a few heads of families professing religion, have become careless in instructing their children and servants, and have devolved on the teachers of Sabbath schools that task, which both nature and revelation require them to perform in person. Robberies, murders, and the unchristian practice of duelling, prevail. Drunkenness, which is an inlet to every vice, has of late alarmingly increased; adultery, fornication, and the incentives to these sins, abound. Multitudes run greedily after the fashionable amusements of the theatre, card-playing, night-assemblies, and meetings for promiscuous dancing,—practices which have a tendency to dissipate the mind, waste the time, pervert the feelings, and vitiate the morals of men, especially of the young, and to divert them from all serious concern about religion. Need we say how much dishonesty, lying, and the love of this world prevail?

¹ See above, pp. 68, 69.

Of the sinfulness and the prevalence of most of these things, the sober and religious part of the community are sensible. Great exertions have been made, and are making, in our day, to check the progress of ignorance and vice; funds have been created, societies have been erected, and numbers have lent their personal services; yet the good that is done bears so little proportion to the exertions made, that the most intelligent and candid acknowledge that the evil appears to increase according to their labours. But while they are sensible of this, and in danger of wearying themselves with the invention of new plans, few seem aware, that while the means which God has appointed and promised to bless are neglected, other means, however plausible, and however zealously used, will not produce the effect. While so many of our pulpits are filled with men who preach another doctrine than that which purifieth the heart;—while our ministers of the gospel and other office-bearers are careless about the discharge of their duties; while the discipline which the Lord Jesus Christ hath ordained is so greatly neglected, and the attempts of any church or congregation to maintain it are counteracted and defeated by the unfaithfulness or lukewarmness of those who are around it; while those in civil authority, contenting themselves with punishing the crimes which come directly under their cognisance, or are forced on their notice, overlook the prolific nurseries of vice; and neglect to apply the proper preventives; while many of the teachers of our youth imbue their minds with every thing but the knowledge and fear of God; and while so little control is exercised by parents and masters over those who are committed to their immediate inspection,—what general or permanent success can be expected to attend the exertions of individuals, or voluntary associations, who take upon them the united task of all these classes of persons, without any other call but their own benevolence, and without any authority but that which arises from the respectability of their characters, and the soundness of their advice? If we would have a general reformation, the root of the evil must be struck at; and, in order to this, it is necessary that it should be laid open, and laid to heart.

In conclusion, we hereby renew the pledge which we gave in the Articles preliminary to our Union, and declare,—That, deeply sensible of the low state of religion among

ourselves, and the people under our charge, and that union in church fellowship, unless improved for promoting vital religion, by mutual excitement to love and good works, will only tend to more ungodliness; we cordially agree, that we will endeavour to exert our combined influence for advancing practical religion, and raising the tone of morals among our people: And, as a principal means for accomplishing these ends, through the divine blessing on the regular exercise of the discipline of the church, we shall endeavour, in our several places and stations, to promote purity of communion through the Associate Body, by guarding against lax admission to sealing ordinances, and by employing every scriptural method for reclaiming the careless and immoral, and for excluding from our fellowship such as refuse to be reclaimed.

We have thus attempted to discharge a duty which we considered as called for at our hands, by bearing an explicit testimony to the distinguishing truths of God, so variously and violently assailed in our day, and to the covenanted reformation of Britain and Ireland, in opposition to the departures from it in former and present times. From the greater part of the present generation, who care for none of these things, who have either cast off all regard to religion, or rest satisfied with its external form, and who are as incapable of judging of what concerns the glory of God and the best interests of men, as they are indifferent about every scheme for promoting them, we are afraid that little attention will be paid to this testimony. Nor can we look for a favourable reception of it from that part of the religious public who are intoxicated with the fashionable doctrine of the present day, to such a degree as to feel an indifference to all established or prevailing errors and abuses in churches; and, consequently, are inclined to turn away, with aversion and disgust, from every attempt to lay open the sources and trace the progress of these evils, with a view to their correction. But we would earnestly entreat those who are concerned for the public interests of religion in our land, and sensible in any degree of their decline, to lay the matter seriously to heart, and weigh our

statements impartially in the balance of the sanctuary. To some we may appear to have been unnecessarily particular in tracing the progress of defection; and by others we may be accused of presumption, for bringing charges against public bodies, civil and ecclesiastical, including individuals eminent for gifts and usefulness. To this we can only reply, that, in the course we have adopted, we have endeavoured to follow the example of those who obtained a good report in the Scripture, or whose names have been transmitted with honour in the uninspired but faithful annals of the church; nor have we condemned any thing which was not matter of complaint and grief to the sounder part of the church in former times, or which has not visibly contributed, in our judgment, to injure the interests of religion, and add to our national guilt. At the same time we do not mean to say that all the measures which have been censured are equally criminal; or that the immediate redress of every grievance complained of is absolutely necessary to the restoration of that harmony and fellowship which have been unhappily interrupted and broken up. The correction of some of these is not in the power of the judicatories of the church—though they could do much for restraining their injurious influence; nor could the civil powers, though they were disposed to concur with the ecclesiastical, effect such a change as is desirable and necessary, so long as the body of the nation continues to be corrupt and disaffected to religious reformation.

Never was a union of the friends of true religion and reformation more loudly called for than at present. Laying aside the formality of a judicial declaration, we would address them as brethren, and beseech and obtest them in the bowels of Christian affection, in the name of our common Lord, and as they regard the preservation of that cause which they profess, and to which we believe them to be cordially attached, to consider the following things: In the *first* place, we would entreat them to consider the tendency of division among Christians, and especially among those who make the same confession of faith,—to harden infidels and enemies to the Gospel of Christ,—to cherish improper feelings among themselves,—to counteract the exercise of discipline,—and to retard the grand and avowed design of Christianity, which is to unite men of all countries and classes to God and to one another, in sentiment, heart, and

confession. In the *second* place, we would call their attention to the extensive and liberal, and at the same time, scriptural platform of union laid down in the Westminster formularies, compiled for Great Britain and Ireland, and adapted for the purpose of maintaining fellowship among the friends of the Reformation in any part of the world, with the high authority which these possess, in preference to any basis of union which might be framed by any parties in the present time, in consequence of the veneration in which they have long been held, especially among all denominations of Presbyterians. In the *third* place, we would submit to their consideration the superadded obligation under which we live, to cultivate union by the sacred bond of our National Covenants, and especially of the Solemn League, one main design of which was to produce and perpetuate a religious union and conjunction. It is surely incumbent on all who profess to own the continued obligation of these sacred bonds, seriously to consider whether such a profession is consistent with their standing apart, and declining actively to co-operate with those who are endeavouring to prosecute the ends of them in a suitableness to present circumstances. In the *fourth* place, all the intelligent friends of this cause must perceive that there is no time to lose,—while infidelity, irreligion, and hostility to all the distinguishing principles of Christianity and Protestantism are so prevalent, on the one hand—and a lax and undefined scheme of fellowship, calculated to bear down every thing like a faithful testimony for the truth, and to carry away the few remaining friends of it, is setting in with so strong a current, on the other hand. Those who have “understanding of the times,” and especially such as are appointed watchmen on Zion’s walls, will consider whether the present is not one of those favourable conjunctures for effectuating this desirable object, which, if allowed to pass by, may not speedily recur. In the *fifth* place, partial interests, party feeling, and personal considerations, ought not surely to be allowed to stand in the way of any measure which is calculated to promote the interests of religion more extensively, and with greater effect. In a great and common cause, the friends of Christ are not allowed to have separate interests; and where union in the truth can be attained, it must be sinful to set up, or to maintain “altar against altar.” In *fine*, what we have

done in the publication of this Testimony will not, we trust, mar this good work, but rather facilitate it. One thing, we think, may be evident from what we have been able to accomplish,—that, if a proper spirit exist, it is not impossible to heal divisions in the church, without burying entirely the causes of difference. By endeavouring fairly to meet them, so far as the interests of truth appeared to require, and by candidly giving and receiving explanations, two bodies which were divided have been reunited. What has been done in one case may be done in others. We have endeavoured to give such statements with respect to the points of difference between us and some other denominations, as we think calculated to pave the way for this; and we are willing to listen to and receive such additional explications as may be found needful. We are fully sensible of our insufficiency for the task of drawing up a testimony which would be suitable for all the friends of the covenanted cause in the present time, and would have been happy to have availed ourselves of the benefit of the co-operative counsel of our brethren, if circumstances would have admitted it. We have done what we could: He who is infinite in counsel can direct to such means as will supply what is wanting.

May the Lord arise and plead his own cause: Return to the Churches of the Reformation, and recover them from their mournful declensions: Pour out his Spirit on all ranks in our native land, and bring them back to himself: Make the watchmen on our walls to see eye to eye: And turn to the people everywhere a pure language, that they may serve him with one consent!

Extracted from the Minutes of Synod, by

PETER M'DERMENT, *Synod Clerk, pro tem.*

APPENDIX.

No. I. *Page 28.*—THE following things may be added, in illustration and proof of what has been generally stated in the text.

1. The reformation engaged to in the Solemn League, and which it was the object of the labours of the Westminster Assembly to introduce, was urgently required by the state of the churches of England and Ireland, and was at that time loudly demanded by the better part of these two kingdoms. The old English puritans were presbyterians, and the proceedings of the bishops, for a long time back, had greatly multiplied those who were of that persuasion, as appears from their repeated petitions to the English Parliament, and addresses to the General Assembly in Scotland. The Parliament in England, after correcting a number of abuses introduced by the Bishops, had declared that many things yet remained in the liturgy, discipline and government of the church, which do necessarily require a further and more perfect reformation. They had abolished the present government as “evil, and justly offensive and burdensome to the kingdom, a great impediment to the reformation and growth of religion, and very prejudicial to the state and government of the kingdom;” they had resolved, that such a government should be settled in its room, “as may be most agreeable to God’s holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland, and other reformed churches abroad;” and they had called together an assembly of divines to give their advice in these matters. All this had been done in England, before the League with Scotland was entered into: and with respect to Ireland, it had been matter of com-

plaint on the part of the Bishops, that the Protestants in that kingdom were infected with puritanism, and favourable to the Presbyterian forms.

2. The platform of reformation delineated by the Westminster Assembly, was not of a narrow or exclusive kind. It was indeed more immediately intended to rectify existing abuses in the Churches of England and Ireland, and to unite them with the Church of Scotland. But those who drew it up had before their eyes "the true religion and professors thereof in all places," and shaped their work accordingly. The hierarchy and ceremonies had been a wall of partition between the Church of England, and other reformed churches. These were now thrown down, and the formularies of doctrine, worship, and government, which were substituted in their room, provided for conjunction and communion with all the reformed churches abroad, on the common principles of Christianity and the Reformation.

3. As the work was of the greatest importance, and the call of Providence to engage in it clear and urgent, so the Westminster Assembly was composed of men eminently fitted by God, both in respect of gifts and spirit, for the task entrusted to them, which they performed with a caution and moderation, joined to wisdom and integrity, calculated to preserve harmony among the friends of religion, and to put an end to the differences which had already arisen at home or abroad: as might easily be made appear from a comparison of the Westminster formularies with the controversies of those times, as to doctrine, worship, and church government.

4. The part which the church and kingdom of Scotland acted in this work was of the most disinterested kind. Nothing can be more unfounded or injurious than the charge that Scotland sought to obtrude her discipline on England. Long and painful experience had convinced her that her Presbyterian constitution could not be secure or unmolested, so long as the bishops retained their power in England; but any representations or proposals which she made on this head, testified the utmost respect for the independence of a neighbouring church and kingdom. So reasonable did these appear, that the treaty of peace between the two kingdoms, which was concluded two years before the Solemn League was formed, contained the fol-

lowing clause : "That his majesty, with the advice of both Houses of Parliament, doth approve of the affection of his subjects of Scotland, in the desire of having conformity of church government between the two nations ; and as Parliament hath already taken into consideration the reformation of church government, so they will proceed therein in due time, as shall best conduce to the glory of God, and peace of the churches of both kingdoms."¹ After having plighted her faith, Scotland put all that was dear to her in jeopardy, to save her sister kingdom from impending ruin, and persevered, amidst manifold discouragements and indignities, in seeking the attainment of the great objects which both had covenanted to pursue. Nor did the Church of Scotland, or the Estates of the Nation (so far as they acted according to her advice,) ever employ any other means but exhortation and remonstrance, in urging their brethren of England to fulfil the sacred promise which they had spontaneously made. Of this the conduct of the ecclesiastical judicatories respecting the Duke's engagement, is a striking illustration.

5. Though the foundation of this work was laid "in troublous times," and its friends were involved in a civil war for the maintenance of their liberties, in which they had to oppose the king, surrounded and misled by evil counsellors, yet the public proceedings of the Parliaments were not justly obnoxious to the charge of disloyalty and rebellion. "An arbitrary government and unlimited power," (to use the words of the General Assembly, in their Solemn Warning of 1649,) was "the fountain of most of all the corruptions both in kirk and state ;" and "for restraint of this, and for their own just defence against tyranny and unjust violence, which ordinarily is the fruit and effect of such a power, the kingdoms joined in covenant, and have been at the expense of so much blood, pains, and treasure." But the Covenant was intended to "preserve and defend his Majesty's person and authority," and his "just power and greatness," as well as "the rights and privileges of the parliaments, and the liberties of the kingdoms." It is not difficult to distinguish between the regular resistance which the parliaments made to the arbitrary

¹ Articles of the Large Treaty, 1641, p. 25 ; Act Parl. Scot. vol. v. p. 376.

and illegal exercise of the royal authority, and the measures afterwards adopted by a new party, actuated by very different principles, which sprung up during the progress of the civil war, and overturned the whole frame of the government. This was done in manifest violation of the covenant, and was publicly testified against by the whole body of presbyterians in Britain and Ireland, and especially by the church and nation of Scotland.¹

No. II. *Page 32.*—The ministers of Ireland had shewn their zealous attachment to the reformation, before the time mentioned in the text. In February, 1660, a Convention was called at Dublin for settling the affairs of Ireland, previous to the Restoration of Charles II. They chose Mr Cocks, a presbyterian minister, to be their chaplain; issued a proclamation for a public fast, in which breach of covenant was assigned as one of the reasons; and sent for two ministers for each of the four provinces to give their advice as to the settling of the church. Mr Patrick Adair was the individual called from the province of Ulster; and, before setting out, he received instructions from his brethren to use his best exertions for promoting the work of reformation, and guarding against the two extremes of episcopacy and sectarianism. He prevailed on the ministers assembled at Dublin to agree in advising the Convention to own the Solemn League, with the view of afterwards proceeding to its renovation; but the scheme was defeated by means of one of their number, Mr Vessey of Coleraine, who was afterwards made Archbishop of Tuam. In May, 1660, when the King was restored, the Presbyterian ministers in the North of Ireland sent two deputies, Messrs Keys and Richardson, to London, with an address, congratulating his Majesty on his restoration; but, at the same time, petitioning for the settlement of religion according to the Covenant. Some of the Presbyterian ministers in London having represented to them, that the expressions, in their address, against prelacy, and in favour of the Covenant, would render it unacceptable to the court, the de-

¹ This appears from the Remonstrances and Declarations, published in the beginning of the year 1649, by the Ministers of the Provinces of London, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Lancashire, &c. in England; of the Presbytery of Belfast in Ireland; and of the Commissioners both of the Kingdom and Church of Scotland.

puties agreed reluctantly to expunge them. On their return, they made a report of what they had done, and of the gracious reception which they had met with from his Majesty, to a meeting of ministers held at Ballimena, when "the brethren did signify their dislike of that alteration of the address, that being more displeasing to them, than all they (the deputies) had done was pleasing." It is added, in the narrative from which this is taken, "Other addresses sent from the ministers of that persuasion in other parts of Ireland, by a very learned and bold man, could have no access: but he was obliged to return without doing any thing."—(Adair's History of the Presbyterians of Ireland.)

No. III. *Page 34.*—The first query by the Parliament to the Commission of the General Assembly, which related to the admission of malignants into the army, was proposed on December 4, 1650; and answered by the Commission on the 14th of that month. This was the first Resolution.—(Balfour's Annals, vol. iv. p. 197: and Act Parl. Scot. vol. vi. p. 542). The second query, which related to admission to offices of the state and judicatories, and to the abolition of the Act of Classes, was proposed on March 19, 1651; and answered on March 22, and May 24. This was the second Resolution.—(Act Parl. Scot. vi. 589, 609; and True Representation, p. 11). The Commission itself found it necessary to remonstrate against the admission of improper persons, as early as Mar. 18, and June 13, 1651.—(Baillie's Letters; and Observations on the Late Differences, p. 13). It is also worthy of remark, that the Commission, on the 29th of November, 1650, had warned the Parliament against that very measure, to which within a month after they advised them to agree,—as appears from a remonstrance, in which they say, "We humbly desire your Lordships to guard, for the future, against all inclinations of making any use of any scandalous, malignant, or disaffected persons for public trust, or of admitting any to employment in your councils or army, except in the way agreed upon by the public resolutions of Church and State."—(Act Parl. vol. vi. p. 544.)

No. IV. *Page 37.*—By the First Indulgence, granted in the year 1669, the ministers indulged were enjoined to

attend the episcopal presbyteries and synods, and if they refused to do this, they were ordered not to go beyond the bounds of the parishes in which they preached. An Act of Privy Council, January 13, 1670, discharged them from lecturing or expounding a portion of Scripture, on pain of being deprived of the exercise of their ministry within the kingdom. The Second Indulgence, granted in 1672, confined those who took the benefit of it, by twos and threes to one parish, and obliged all the ministers in a diocese to celebrate the communion on the same day. And, by a subsequent act, in 1676, they were prohibited from admitting any of their non-indulged brethren to their communions or pulpits.—(Wodrow, vol. i. p. 304, 318, 352; and Appen. No. 139). In the act asserting the Supremacy, passed soon after the granting of the First Indulgence, it is declared, “That his majesty, and his successors, may settle, enact and emit such constitutions, acts, and orders, concerning the administration of the external government of the church, and the persons employed in the same, and concerning all ecclesiastical meetings and matters to be proposed and determined therein, as they, in their royal wisdom, shall think fit; which acts, orders, and constitutions, being recorded in the books of council, and duly published, are to be observed and obeyed by all his majesty’s subjects; any law, act, or custom, to the contrary, notwithstanding.”—(Act Parl. Scot. vol. vii. p. 554.)

No. V. *Page* 46.—The objectionable clause in the Oath of Abjuration, as originally imposed, ran in the following terms:—“I do faithfully promise to support the limitation and succession to the crown, *as the same is*, and stands limited by an Act entitled,” &c. viz., an Act of an English Parliament, which provides that the Sovereign shall always be of the communion of the Church of England. In the year 1715, that clause was altered, and made to run as follows:—“I do faithfully promise to support the succession to the crown, *which succession*, by an Act entitled, &c., is, and stands limited,” &c. To this the following explanation was added: “That, by no words in the said oath, or oaths formerly imposed or contained, it is, or was, meant to oblige his Majesty’s said subjects, to any act, or acts, in any way inconsistent with the establishment of the Church of Scotland, according to law.—(1st Geo. I. stat. ii. c. 13.) As

some persons of unquestionable attachment to the Protestant accession thought that the oath still implied an approval of the act obliging the Sovereign to be of the Episcopal communion, a statute was passed in the year 1719, by which all reference to that act was excluded in the form of the oath, "to be taken by ministers and preachers in churches and meeting-houses in Scotland," who were merely required to "defend the succession of the crown in the heirs of the body of the late Princess Sophia—being Protestants."—(5th Geo. I. c. 20.) But, in the year 1766, this last statute was set aside, and the oath was appointed to be taken by all, according to the form enjoined in the year 1715, the words of which are repeated, without any reference to the explanation added to them.—(6th Geo. III. c. 53.)

No. VI. *Page 57.*—It may be proper to insert here a copy of the "Act against intrusions," from which it will appear, that, while it acknowledges that intrusions are contrary to the principles of the Church of Scotland, the Act is expressed in such terms as to favour those who were supporting the law of patronage as much as their opponents. "The General Assembly, considering from Act of Assembly, August 6th, 1575, Second Book of Discipline, chap. iii. par. 4, 6, and 8, registrate in the Assembly Books, and appointed to be subscribed by all ministers, and ratified by Acts of Parliament, and likewise the Act of Assembly 1638, December 17th and 18th, and Assembly 1715, Act 9th. That it is, and has been since the Reformation, the principle of this Church, that no minister shall be intruded into any parish, contrary to the will of the congregation, do therefore seriously recommend to all judicatories of this Church, to have a due regard to the said principle, in planting vacant congregations; and that all Presbyteries be at pains to bring about harmony and unanimity in congregations, and to avoid every thing that may excite or encourage unreasonable exceptions in people, against a worthy person that may be proposed to be their minister in the present situation and circumstances of the church, so as none be intruded into such parishes, as they regard the glory of God, and edification of the body of Christ."—(Acts of Assembly, 1736, p. 33.)

ACT

FOR RENEWING THE COVENANTS.

At Edinburgh, the 15th of May, 1828.

THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD having read and corrected an Overture of an Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties, suitable to the present circumstances of this church and land, unanimously agree in adopting it; and they appoint that, agreeably to the order which has hitherto been observed in this work, our Covenants,—the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations, shall be renewed, by all such as shall willingly offer themselves, in the different Congregations under their inspection, in the said Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties: the tenor whereof follows, viz. :—

THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SINS.

WE all, and every one of us, seriously considering the great goodness of God toward these lands, in bringing our fathers, at an early period, out of pagan darkness, and afterwards scattering the thick clouds of antichristian idolatry and superstition by the light of the glorious gospel of Christ:—in disposing all ranks of persons in Scotland, by a National Confession, Oath, and Covenant, expressly to abjure the errors and corruptions of Popery, and by the same covenant, frequently renewed, to bind themselves and their posterity to continue in the faith, profession, and obedience of the true Reformed Religion, as held forth from the word of God, in our first Confession of Faith and Books of Discipline:—and in bringing forward all ranks of persons in the three kingdoms, by the Solemn League and Covenant, to abjure not only Popery, but also Prelacy, and to engage, through the grace of God, sincerely to endeavour, in their several stations, the preservation of the said

reformed religion in Scotland, and the reformation of religion in England and Ireland, that so the Churches in the three kingdoms might be brought to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the Scriptures, while every one also bound himself to personal reformation;—and that, in pursuance of the above engagements, the Assembly which met at Westminster, with commissioners from the Church of Scotland, by the good hand of God upon them, agreed upon a Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, a form of Presbyterial Church Government, and a Directory for Public Worship; all of which were received and approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, as parts of the covenanted uniformity, while many important steps were taken at the same time in England and Ireland for the reformation of religion agreeably to these standards: And considering, farther, the course of defection by which all ranks in Britain and Ireland, both in former and present times, have treacherously departed from the Lord, by transgressing his laws, changing his ordinances, and violating their covenant engagements to be the Lord's people; and that we are at present suffering under the many spiritual plagues which are the ordinary forerunners of desolating strokes both upon churches and nations:—Therefore being warranted by the command of God, and the approved example of his church recorded in Scripture; and being encouraged by the example of our religious ancestors, and by the consideration that the public confession of sin, when practised according to the word of God, and in the faith of his promise of forgiveness, hath in former ages received the divine countenance, and proved a means of the remarkable revival of religion,—we desire, in a sole dependence upon promised grace, and in the faith of pardon through the blood of Christ, whom God hath exalted a Prince and Saviour to give repentance and the forgiveness of sins, to acknowledge, and **WE HEREBY DO ACKNOWLEDGE AND CONFESS**, as in the sight of the great Searcher of hearts, our own, and the transgressions of all ranks in these lands.

We, with our fathers, have sinned—we have done wickedly—our kings, our princes, our nobles, our judges, our magistrates, our ministers, and all classes of persons in these lands, have been in a great trespass. Though the

Lord hath spoken long and clearly to us in his word, yet we have not hearkened to his voice; though we have made a profession of the name of Christ, we have not been careful to receive him into our hearts, nor to walk worthy of him in our lives; and in this respect we have, in a heinous degree, transgressed the covenant of the Lord our God. Our consciences, and the many judgments, both spiritual and temporal, which we are under, may convince us of our manifold and wilful breaches of our solemn engagements to be the Lord's people.

We acknowledge with sorrow the public defections of these lands from a covenanted work of reformation. England soon discovered a disposition to draw back and violate the engagements she had come under. Her representatives in Parliament, after having sworn, along with their brethren, to "endeavour the preservation of the reformed religion in Scotland, in discipline and government," and to "bring the Churches in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity;" accompanied their approbation of the presbyterial form of church government, drawn up by the Westminster Assembly, with such exceptions and restrictions as rendered it in a great measure abortive in that country, and as opened the way to the introduction of new sects, errors, heresies, and blasphemous opinions, which till then had been unknown in Britain. In Scotland, so early as 1650, in consequence of the Public Resolutions, a deep wound was given to the covenanted interest, by the introduction of the avowed and active enemies of the Reformation into places of power and trust. These defections from the covenanted cause speedily led to the overthrow of all that had been done in the late reforming period.

On the restoration of Charles II. to the throne, the Presbyterial order and government of the house of God was overturned, and Prelacy, which had been abjured by our covenants, was set up in the three kingdoms. In Scotland particularly, the famous Assembly which met at Glasgow in 1638 was declared, by the Parliament, an unlawful and seditious meeting; all that was done for promoting reformation between that period and the year 1651 was pronounced treasonable and rebellious; the National Covenant, as sworn in the year 1638, together with the Solemn League and Covenant, were condemned as unlawful oaths, and declared not to be binding; and so great was the height of

wickedness that the Solemn League was ignominiously burnt in some considerable places of the nation. The overthrow of Presbytery, and the restoration of Prelacy in the three kingdoms, were accompanied with most sinful and wicked invasions of the royal prerogatives and sole headship of Christ over the Church, by several Parliamentary acts and deeds, which asserted the king's supremacy in all causes whatsoever, and declared, that the regulation and external government of the Church belonged properly to the king, as an inherent right of the crown. These enactments were followed by the imposition of many sinful oaths, declarations, and bonds, by which the king's usurped supremacy over the house of God was recognised and acknowledged, and a covenanted reformation renounced and abjured; so that persons of all ranks in these lands, who submitted to these sinful encroachments, were involved in the heinous crimes of perjury and apostacy.

It is to be lamented that, in this hour of trial, there was a general fainting among the friends of the Reformation, which led to a tame, and for some time almost universal, submission to the wicked and tyrannical measures of the Court, and prevented any judicial testimony being given against them. The indulgences granted by Charles II. to some ministers who had not conformed to Prelacy, to exercise their ministry under certain conditions, restrictions, and limitations, proved a snare to a number of them, who, by accepting these, virtually acquiesced in the usurped supremacy over the free and independent kingdom of Christ. And although the unlimited toleration granted by the Duke of York, when raised to the throne, was plainly designed for the introduction of popery and slavery, and was expressly derived from a power which he claimed of dispensing with the laws of the land, yet, instead of bearing testimony against this toleration, the great body of the Presbyterian ministers throughout the kingdom thankfully accepted of it.

The national apostacy was also accompanied with a grievous persecution. The witnesses for the cause of Christ became a prey, especially in Scotland, to the greatest tyranny and cruelty. They were not only subjected to the spoiling of their goods, to imprisonment, to banishment, and to the most cruel tortures, but their blood was shed in our principal cities under colour of law, and also in the high places of the field without any legal process. Thus, in our skirts

is to be found the blood of those who suffered for the testimony of Jesus, which is crying to Heaven for vengeance to this very day.

As the beautiful order, and scriptural government and discipline of God's house were overturned, so in this period of treading down in the valley of vision, the doctrines of religion were perverted by a great influx of Arminian and other errors. This was followed by a course of irreligion, profaneness, and oppression among all ranks, which has seldom been exemplified in any country. Judgment was turned away backward, justice stood afar off, truth failed, and he who departed from evil made himself a prey, till the Lord saw it, and his arm brought salvation.

While we desire to acknowledge with gratitude the great deliverance the Lord wrought for us in these lands, at the memorable Revolution in the year 1688, by freeing us from the yoke of tyranny and arbitrary government under which we then groaned, yet we have to confess with sorrow, that we have not, to this day, rendered to Him according to the benefits that we have received. We understood not his wonderful works nor remembered the multitude of his mercies; and instead of waiting for his counsel, we have followed the counsels of flesh and blood. We turned not to him with the whole heart, by a free confession of our numerous transgressions, and by the renovation of our solemn covenant engagements.

When we consider the evils themselves, and their baneful consequences as to religion to this day, we have deeply to deplore, that, in the year 1690, the Parliament of Scotland at their first meeting, settled Presbyterian church government, according to its establishment in the year 1592, overlooking all the steps of reformation attained to in the covenanting period between 1638 and 1650, and leaving untouched all that was done against a covenanted reformation in the first session of Parliament after the Restoration. Particularly the infamous act called Rescissory, which declared null and void all the acts and deeds of the covenanting period, remains unrepealed; and that impious and wicked act declaring null and void the proceedings of that faithful Assembly at Glasgow in the year 1638, stands in the body of our Scottish law to this day. Thus, that great work which the Lord wrought with an outstretched arm, in the days of our fathers, lies buried under several Parliamentary acts and

deeds; an iniquity which continues loudly to testify against us.

And as the Estates of the nation shewed no disposition to return to the Lord, so when the General Assembly of this church met the same year, they sat down under the above civil establishment, without remonstrating against what was defective in it. Though, in an act for a national fast, they enumerated the heights to which the supremacy had been advanced, the introduction of prelacy, the general compliance with it, and the persecutions which followed, among the grounds of humiliation; yet they did not, by any formal act, assert the divine right of Presbytery, nor the intrinsic power of the church to call her national assemblies, which are two special branches of the Redeemer's glorious headship over his people. They did not expressly approve our covenanted reformation, attained between the years 1638 and 1650; nor plainly justify the faithful contendings, testimonies, and sufferings of the Lord's witnesses in the late persecuting times. They did not, by any particular act of Assembly assert the obligation of our covenants, National and Solemn League, and their binding force upon posterity; nor did they particularly condemn the sinful oaths, declarations, and bonds, formerly mentioned; and they admitted some into ministerial communion, many into the office of elders, and multitudes into full communion with the church, who had taken these oaths and bonds, and who were deeply involved in the guilt of persecution and the defections of that period of apostacy, without requiring any evidence of their repentance.

Our public guilt was increased by the Treaty of Union with England, by which, in opposition to our covenant-union with it, the maintenance of the hierarchy and ceremonies of the Church of England, is made a fundamental and essential article of the Union of the two kingdoms; and thus that antichristian form of government and superstitious worship in the neighbouring country has all the security which human laws can give it, and that with the consent of Scotland, in direct violation of our solemn covenant engagements. At a later period the consent of Scotland was a second time given to the perpetual establishment of Episcopacy, by the incorporating union between Great Britain and Ireland; which sealed the public apostacy of these lands.

Immediately after the Union between England and Scotland, our land was brought under a load of guilt, by the imposition of unlawful oaths. The oath of Abjuration was appointed to be taken, first, by all in civil and military trust, and afterwards by the ministers of the Church of Scotland, which oath we acknowledge as one of our national sins, in so far as the united constitution, repugnant to our covenant-union, is thereby acknowledged and approved. In like manner, the Sacramental Test, or receiving the Lord's Supper according to the superstitious usage of the Church of England, was imposed on the inhabitants of Scotland, when serving the supreme magistrate in England, which has long continued to be a national sin and snare; and though this test has been recently superseded, yet the legislature, in their act repealing it, have renewed and increased the securities formerly given for the perpetual preservation of the episcopal church. A superstitious form of swearing was also introduced by laying the hands upon and kissing the gospels. Moreover, the sinful practice was at that time introduced, of repeatedly administering oaths to persons, even on the same day, to qualify them for different offices, by which the name of the Great God is profaned, and the impression which a solemn oath is calculated to make upon the consciences of men, is in danger of being worn off.

Our provocations were greatly increased by the deep injury done to many precious and important truths contained in the Scriptures, and stated in our Confession of Faith; and that not by individuals only, but also by the judicatories of the Established Church.

Particularly, in a process brought before these judicatories, it was clearly proved that the Professor of Divinity¹ in one of our universities, had taught a number of dangerous errors: Among others, that "nothing is to be admitted in religion but what is agreeable to reason, and determined by reason to be so;" and that "there was not a proper covenant made with Adam and his posterity." But this process the Assembly dismissed without any censure inflicted upon that teacher, and without any particular and express testimony against his dangerous errors. In the righteous judgment of God, the same teacher was permitted in a few years

¹ Mr Simson.

to impugn the Deity of the Great God our Saviour ; for, in another process against him, it was found proved at the bar of the Assembly that he had taught that “ our Lord Jesus Christ is not necessarily existent ;” and that “ the terms Necessary Existence, Supreme Deity, and the title of the Only True God, may be taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son :” yet the judicatories of the National Church neither inflicted any other censure upon the teacher of these errors, but a mere suspension, nor expressly condemned the errors themselves as contrary to the word of God, nor asserted the truth in opposition to the terms in which it had been impugned and denied.

In another university, one of the professors¹ was convicted at the bar of the judicatories of having vented errors, by which the supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit were indirectly traduced, and the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, as well as the fundamental principles of natural religion, were subverted ;—and particularly of having taught that “ self-love, interest, or pleasure, is the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions ;” yet the General Assembly dismissed this teacher without any censure.

At a period considerably later, another minister of the Established Church² published a book in which Christ is represented as a person of our own order, the necessity and reality of the atonement made by his death are denied, repentance is taught to be the proper atonement for past transgressions, and faith and sincere obedience made the foundation of the hope of future happiness ; and in another publication, he made a violent attack upon Confessions of Faith, as subordinate standards of orthodoxy. But though this cause was brought before the Presbytery to which the author of these books belonged, and also before the Synod and General Assembly, he was dismissed without any censure, merely upon his confessing that “ there are in his publications ideas which may appear improper, and modes of expression, with respect to some things, ambiguous and unguarded, which he disclaims, and for which he is heartily sorry.”

Our iniquities have also increased by the conduct of the established judicatories, in exercising a lordly power and

¹ Mr Campbell.

² Dr Macgill.

authority over the heritage of God, and in grossly perverting the ordinance of discipline. The right of presentation to vacant churches, claimed by patrons, and abolished at the Revolution, was in the year 1712, again restored by act of Parliament; and though patronage is contrary to the word of God, and the principles of the reformed Church of Scotland, yet the judicatories of the National Church began, not many years after, to countenance and support that antichristian usurpation, by intruding presentees upon reclaiming congregations. Not satisfied with enforcing the law of patronage, the Assembly violated the rights of the people, in cases where they were left at complete liberty, as appears from their act 1732, respecting the settlement of parishes in which patrons did not exercise the right of presentation; and although this act was afterwards repealed, on account of its informality, yet the church courts persevered in their violent measures, till at length, the opposition, at first made to them both by ministers and people, gradually died away. When a number of ministers, being driven by the tyrannical proceedings of the judicatories from the communion of the Established Church, had formed themselves into a Presbytery, and published a Testimony against these and other corruptions, the General Assembly, instead of being reclaimed, condemned that Testimony, and proceeded against the ministers to deposition, by which they declared their determination not only to persist in their course of defection, but also by perverted authority, to suppress all opposition to it.

Although we consider ourselves called upon gratefully to acknowledge the kindness of God to the ministers who were forced to make a Secession from the judicatories of the National Church, and who erected themselves first into a Presbytery, and afterwards into a Synod,—in giving countenance to their labours, and support to the Testimony which they published, and particularly in bringing them forward to the Renovation of our Covenants in a Bond suited to their circumstances; yet it is a matter of deep lamentation, that the seeds of contention were early sown in the Secession. They had no sooner formed themselves into a Synod than they found it necessary to take under consideration the religious clause of some burgess oaths, the swearing of which was judged inconsistent with a state of secession from the Established Church, as the swearer recognised the religion

presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof, as the true religion. A mournful dispute ensued, which issued in the rupture of the Synod. It is also to be deeply lamented, that, by the late union between the two great branches of the Secession, this hurt of the daughter of Zion has been healed slightly; that instead of candidly meeting the question, or making provision for preventing the taking of an oath, when still imposed, which, as sworn by Seceders, had all along been viewed by one of the parties as sinful, they consigned the whole controversy to oblivion; and that, along with this, they dropped a testimony for the proper and continued obligation of our covenants, and some other principles connected with the work of reformation in our native land, which had hitherto been considered by the Reformed Church of Scotland, and particularly in the Secession, as belonging to the word of Christ's patience.

It is to be lamented that the unfaithful and corrupt managements of the established judicatories have been followed by a flood of errors, by which the Lord's name is dreadfully dishonoured,—the doctrine of justification by grace is woefully corrupted,—the proper imputation of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for our justification before God is denied, thousands of precious souls are destroyed, and wide steps taken towards Popery and Paganism. More particularly, we have to lament a dreadful prevalence of DEISM, by which all revealed religion is rejected, and the light of corrupt nature is exalted in its room; of ARIANISM, by which the true and supreme Deity of the Son of God, and of the Holy Spirit, is denied; of SOCINIANISM, by which Christ is represented as a mere man, and his atonement for sin is denied; and of ARMINIANISM, by which it is maintained, that God's act of election and reprobation depends on his foresight of the good or evil works of men; that Jesus Christ, by his death, has merited grace for all mankind; that notwithstanding the fall, man retains a freedom of will to that which is spiritually good; that the grace of God is not irresistible and efficacious of itself; and that believers in Christ may fall totally and finally away from a state of grace.

It is further to be lamented, that some who formerly distinguished themselves by zeal for our reformation and covenanted principles, have turned aside to latitudinarian,

independent, and sectarian extremes, whereby the unity of the true Catholic Church is denied, and the presbyterial order and government, the only government which Christ has instituted in his house, is subverted;—the warrantableness of Confessions of Faith and Catechisms, as tests of soundness in the faith, is denied, and a wide door is opened for the admission of all sorts of error and heresy into the church, under the specious pretence of liberty of conscience;—and, under a pretence of catholic love, a scheme is laid for uniting parties of all denominations in church communion, in a way destructive of any faithful testimony for the declarative glory of Immanuel, as King and Head of Zion, and for the covenanted uniformity in religion according to our standards.

To these public evils we have to add a fearful increase of wickedness, which has spread over the whole kingdom. All classes of men have corrupted their ways. Our nobility and gentry have, for the most part, burst the Lord's bands asunder, and cast away his cords; our ministers, burgesses, and commons of all sorts, have turned away backward, and forsaken the Holy One of Israel. Many heinous sins and provocations, both against the first and second table of the moral law, are to be found among us; such as gross ignorance of God, atheism, infidelity, profane mockings at the mysteries of religion, and employing some of the sublimest passages of Scripture for the purpose of musical entertainment. The errors and abominations of Popery are spreading; Popish chapels are erected in the principal towns and cities of the country; the idolatrous mass is openly frequented; public countenance has been given in a number of instances by the government of the country to the Man of Sin, and the clamorous and pertinacious demand of his followers to be admitted to all places of power and trust under the Crown, so dangerous to the civil and religious liberties of these realms, is strenuously defended by many who call themselves Protestants, both in and out of Parliament. The name of God is profaned, by rash and ordinary swearing in common conversation; and by perjury and false swearing, especially in trade and commerce. The Lord's Day is profaned, even by those in public authority and high station, in many different ways, particularly by frequent and unnecessary travelling, and by public entertainments and amusements. Many are without natural affection, unruly,

disobedient. The land is also defiled with murders, drunkenness, prodigality, and vanity in dress, foolish jestings, rioting and wantonness, and even with undisguised adulteries and uncleanness of all kinds; and some profane and sinful customs, which were little known and practised in former times, are countenanced and encouraged, both at court and in many places of the country; as the profane diversions of the stage, masquerades, lascivious balls and dancings, and other seminaries of lewdness and dissipation. Fraud and injustice, in dealings between man and man, are to be found among us, together with oppression, lying, envy, malice, evil-speaking, backbiting, falsehood, dissimulation, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

We desire, through grace, to turn our eyes inward to our own hearts, to search and try our ways, to declare our iniquity, to be sorry for our sin, and to turn again to the Lord. For, "who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord? he against whom we have sinned," by our unbelief, selfishness, formality, earthliness, carnal security, and falling from first love,—by want of tenderness, watchfulness, and spirituality, in the frame and disposition of our heart, and in our walk and conversation.

We desire, in a particular manner, to be humbled before God, for our unbelief, which we acknowledge to be our greatest sin, and the chief ground of the Lord's controversy with the land in which we live. We have not suitably profited by the glorious gospel of the Son of God, either as the ministration of righteousness for our justification, or as the ministration of the Spirit for our sanctification. We have not obeyed the voice, nor received correction; we have not trusted in the Lord, nor drawn near to our God. We have been obstinate; our neck has been an iron sinew, and our brow brass. We have dealt very treacherously, and have been called transgressors from the womb. We confess our ignorance and great deficiency in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, his person, offices, and benefits,—of the covenant of grace, as made and ratified with him,—and of the way of deriving spiritual benefit from both.

We desire to be humbled for undervaluing Christ, his spiritual benefits, and communion with him. We have often preferred other things to him and his interests, and have not given him the pre-eminence in our hearts. We have been little exercised in meditation, searching the Scriptures, self-

examination, fervent and frequent prayer—the special means of secret communion and fellowship with him. We have not been duly concerned to receive him into our hearts, nor to look to him, as we ought, for those purposes for which he is exhibited in the gospel, nor to improve him by faith, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We have not suitably rested upon his righteousness, as the sole ground of our justification; nor have we, as we ought, depended upon him, as made of God unto us sanctification, in all our religious exercises, in the duties common to all Christians, or in those of our particular vocations, for direction, reviving, and strength to mortify our corruptions, and to carry us through our Christian course, against all discouragements and temptations; but have frequently attempted the performance of duty in a legal rather than in an evangelical manner. We have not drawn near to God as our Father, in prayer and supplication, and in thanksgiving, with that humble boldness, and full assurance of faith, which are warranted by the sacrifice and intercession of Christ.

We have not been duly careful to sanctify the Lord's Day particularly, by avoiding carnal conversation, in our own families, in coming to public worship, during the intervals of it, and in returning to our homes. In attending on the preaching of the gospel, we have not been duly concerned to find communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, to taste of his goodness, and to be built up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation. We have not duly prepared our hearts in secret, to draw near with holy fear and reverence, humility, and vehement desire for the kingdom of God and its righteousness, as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. We are little acquainted with receiving the word, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God. We have not, with due frequency and earnestness, applied to the Lord, that he might teach us inwardly, by accompanying the outward means with the effectual operation of his Holy Spirit. We have not mixed the word with faith, as we ought to have done, believing it with our hearts, and applying to ourselves the truths that were delivered; nor have we been duly careful to lay up the words of Christ in our hearts for our spiritual benefit, to supplicate his Spirit to bring them to remembrance, or to meditate upon them in secret.

We desire to be humbled before the Lord, that we have not duly made use of the Sacraments, as seals of the covenant of grace and of the promises therein made to us in Christ. In offering our children to the Lord in baptism, we have not been suitably affected with our own and our children's defilement by original guilt and corruption; we have not duly considered and esteemed the free love and grace of God, which has opened to us, and to our seed, a fountain for sin and uncleanness; nor been duly concerned that they might be regenerated and united to Christ. We have not suitably applied the covenant and the promises of it to ourselves and to our offspring, nor this sacrament as a seal of it. When present at the administration of this ordinance to others, we have not employed it as we ought, for the confirmation of our faith, and for strengthening the impression of our baptismal engagements, nor have we been duly concerned that God would bless his own ordinance to the baptised, and receive them into the number of his children in Christ. We have not been duly careful to instruct our children when they come to the years of capacity concerning the nature, use, and ends of their baptism, and the obligation which it imposes upon them, as devoted to Christ. Nor have we made a due use of this sacrament, through the course of our life, for encouraging us to take hold of God's covenant, for increasing our faith and comfort in God, as our God and Father in Christ, and for strengthening our resolutions and endeavours, through the grace of Christ, to mortify corruption, and to walk in newness of life. We desire to be humbled, that we have not been at more pains, in preparing for the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper, by self-examination, meditation, and prayer, and by renewed actings of faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and strength. We have not approached the table of the Lord with a proper degree of spiritual thirst and longing for Christ, and with due contrition of heart. We have not been sufficiently exercised in remembering the Lord's death till he come again; and in deriving virtue from it, for strengthening our graces, and mortifying our corruptions; nor have we walked worthily after communicating.

We have not valued the discipline appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ, as we ought to have done; and when others, by reason of their falls and offences, have become objects of censure, we have not, as we ought, mourned for the

dishonour done to God, pitied and prayed for the offenders, and been humbled under a suitable sense of our own sins.

We desire to be humbled for our great formality in prayer, both in secret and in our families; and that we have not been suitably concerned to join with our hearts in public prayers and praises, to offer up all our supplications in the name of Christ, to depend upon the help of his Spirit, to observe these ordinances as a means of communion with God, and of confirming our faith and every other grace, and, when we have addressed our prayers to God, to look up to him for a gracious answer.

We humbly confess that we have not walked as becometh the gospel of Christ, but have greatly failed in our duty both to God and man. In particular, we desire to be humbled for our vain thoughts, our idle words, and our lukewarmness in the matters of God. Our conversation has savoured too much of the earth, and too little of heaven and things above. The impressions of the love of Christ, and of the free grace of God, have not been so lively upon our hearts, as was necessary to keep them watchful and tender, and zealous for God and his glory. We have often resisted the Spirit of holiness, when he stirred us up to duty; and have put away his reproofs, which lead to repentance and humiliation. We have often grieved him by undervaluing his presence, refusing his consolations, and slighting his counsels. We have not watched with becoming tenderness against carnal company and conversation, nor have we been studious to recommend religion to others, by a holy, convincing, and edifying behaviour. We have not been duly faithful in watching over, and admonishing one another with meekness and love; but have been too ready to speak of the infirmities and failings of others behind their backs, instead of observing the scripture rule. Nor have we diligently sought and embraced opportunities of religious fellowship, and particularly of social prayer and conference.

All these sins, declensions, and apostacies, are highly aggravated, as having been committed against great gospel-light, and many remarkable appearances of God among us both in mercy and judgment, in former and in later times. against sacramental vows, and our indispensable engagements, by the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations; while the sins of those belonging to the Secession body are

further aggravated by their being committed against our distinguished profession, and the explicit engagements contracted by that solemn covenanting which has been so long practised among us. We desire therefore, to confess unto the Lord our iniquities, with all their aggravations; to be deeply humbled, and to lie down in shame before him, acknowledging that he would be righteous and holy, though he should plead his controversy with us, on account of our apostacy and breach of covenant, by casting us out of his sight for ever. But since the Lord is still waiting to be gracious, we desire to flee to the blood of Jesus for the remission of our sins, and to pray that he may return to us, and heal our spiritual diseases, that glory may yet dwell in our land.

And as it is the duty of a sinning people, not only to confess their iniquities, and be humbled for them, but also, by faith, to take hold of God's gracious covenant revealed to us in the glorious gospel, avouching the Lord to be our God, according to the tenor of this his covenant, devoting ourselves to him as his people, and returning to him from whom we have revolted; and in the faith of his free mercy, through Jesus Christ, and trusting in him for the grace and strength which are promised in his covenant, to engage unto and pursue after reformation and the advancement of his kingdom, which is in, but not of this world: And being convinced in our minds, and confessing with our mouths, that as well by the word of God, as by the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations, the present and succeeding generations in these lands are bound firmly and constantly to adhere to the doctrine, worship, presbyterial church government, and discipline of the house of God, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, summed up in our subordinate standards, and sworn to in these solemn covenants:—

THEREFORE, in obedience to the command of God conformably to the practice of the godly in former times, and according to the laudable example of our worthy and religious progenitors, in the said covenants,

[THE ENGAGEMENT TO DUTIES.]

WE, all and every one of us, though sensible of the deceitfulness and unbelief of our own hearts, and frequently

perplexed with doubts and fears about our actual believing; yet, desiring in the Lord's strength, and in obedience to his command, to glorify God, by believing his word of grace, contained in his covenant of promise, and in the faith of his promise, to devote ourselves to the Lord in a Covenant of Duty: WE DO, with our hands lifted up to the MOST HIGH GOD, hereby profess, and, before God, angels, and men, solemnly declare, That, through the grace of God, and according to the measure of his grace given unto us, we desire, with our whole hearts, to take hold of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the only propitiation for our sins; his Righteousness as the only foundation of our access to God, and acceptance with him; his Covenant of free and rich promises, as our only charter for the heavenly inheritance; his Word, for our perfect and only rule of faith and practice; his SPIRIT, for our sole guide, to lead us into all truth revealed in his Holy Word, to which nothing is at any time to be added, either by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. We avouch the LORD to be our GOD; and, in the strength of his promised grace, we *promise* and *swear*, by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD, That we shall walk in his way, keep his judgments and commandments, and hearken to his voice; and, particularly, that we shall, by the Lord's grace, continue and abide in the profession, faith, and obedience of the true reformed religion, in doctrine, worship, presbyterial church-government and discipline; and that we shall, according to our several stations, places, and callings, and according to the measure of our knowledge, contend and testify against all contrary evils, errors, and corruptions; particularly Popery, Deism, Socinianism, Arianism, Arminianism, and every error, subversive of the doctrine of grace, as also Prelacy, Independency, Latitudinarian tenets, and the other evils mentioned in the preceding Acknowledgment of Sins.

In like manner, we *promise* and *swear*, That, by all means which are lawful and warrantable for us, according to the word of God, the approved and received standards of the reformed Church of Scotland, and our known principles, we shall, in our several stations and callings, and according to our opportunities in Providence, endeavour the reformation of religion in Britain and Ireland, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, according to the word of God; and to promote and advance our covenanted

conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Form of Church-government, and Directory for Worship, as these were received by this Church. We likewise engage, by all lawful means, and according as a door may be opened to us in Providence, to promote the genuine interests of the kingdom of Christ in every part of the world.

And in regard we are taught by the word of God, and bound by our covenants, National and Solemn League, to live together in the fear of God, and in love to one another, and to encourage one another in the work and cause of the Lord; and that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: Therefore, in dependence upon the Lord's grace and strength, We, in the same manner, do *promise* and *swear*, That we shall, in our several places and callings, encourage and strengthen one another, in pursuing the end and design of this our solemn Oath and Covenant; and shall endeavour a life and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ: And, in our personal callings and particular families, we shall study to be good examples to one another of godliness and righteousness, and of every duty which we owe to God and man: And that we shall not give up ourselves to a detestable indifference and neutrality in the cause of God; but, denying ourselves and our own things, we shall seek first the honour of God, and the good of his cause and people: And that, through grace, forsaking the counsels of flesh and blood, and not leaning upon carnal confidence, we shall endeavour to depend upon the Lord, to walk by the rule of his word, and to hearken to his voice in the dispensation of the gospel. In all which, professing our own weakness, we earnestly pray to God, who is the Father of Mercies, through his Son JESUS CHRIST, to be merciful unto us, and enable us by the power of his HOLY SPIRIT, that we may do our duty, unto the praise of his grace in the Churches. Amen.

FORMULA OF QUESTIONS

TO BE PUT AT THE

ORDINATION OF MINISTERS AND ELDERS, AND AT THE
LICENSING OF YOUNG MEN TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

FOR MINISTERS, PROBATIONERS, AND ELDERS.

QUESTION I.

Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners?

QUESTION II.

Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of Divines who met at Westminster, with Commissioners from the Church of Scotland;—as the said Confession was received and approved by the Assembly of that Church in the year 1647; and likewise the whole doctrine contained in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, compiled by the said Westminster Assembly; to be founded upon the word of God: And do you acknowledge the said Confession as the confession of your faith; and will you, through grace, firmly and constantly adhere to,—and, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain and defend the doctrine of,—the said Confession and Catechisms, against all Deistical, Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Neonomian, Antinomian, and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said Confessions and Catechisms?

QUESTION III.

Are you persuaded that the Lord Jesus Christ, the alone King and Head of his Church, hath appointed a particular form of government to take place therein,—distinct from Civil Government, and not subordinate to the same; and that Presbyterian Church-government, without any superiority of office above a teaching Presbyter, in due subordination of Judicatories (such as of Kirk-sessions to Presbyteries, of Presbyteries to Provincial Synods, and of Provincial Synods to General Assemblies,) is the only form of government laid down and appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ in his Word, to continue in his Church to the end of the world unalterable;—which, accordingly, has been owned and received by the Church of Scotland, as the only government of divine institution and appointment; as is evident from the Second Book of Discipline, and from the Proposition concerning Church-government, as the said Propositions were received and approved by an act of Assembly 1645, session 16: and do you promise to submit to the said government and discipline,—and never to endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof; but that you will, to the utmost of your power in your station, during all the days of your life, maintain, support, and defend the same; together with the purity of worship received and practised in this Church, against all Erastian, Prelatic, Sectarian, or other tenets, opinions or forms of worship and government whatsoever,—contrary to, or inconsistent with, the said worship, government, and discipline,—sworn to in our Covenants, National and Solemn League?

QUESTION IV.

Do you own and acknowledge the morality of Public Covenanting: And do you own and acknowledge the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant frequently sworn by persons of all ranks in Scotland, and particularly as explained by the General Assembly 1638, to abjure the hierarchy and five articles of Perth; And also the perpetual obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant, for maintaining and carrying on a work of reformation in the three kingdoms, sworn and subscribed by all ranks in

Scotland and England in the year 1643, and particularly as renewed in Scotland in the year 1648: And do you promise, through grace, to adhere to these Covenants, and according to your station and opportunities, to prosecute the ends of them: And do you likewise acknowledge that the renewing of these Covenants, in a bond suited to our circumstances, is a duty seasonable at the present time?

QUESTION V.

Do you approve of the Testimony enacted and emitted by the Associate Synod of Original Seceders, as a suitable and seasonable testimony for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the Reformed Church of Scotland; and do you, in your judgment, disapprove of the several steps of defection, both in former and present times, condemned in the said Testimony; as contrary to the word of God, the Confession of Faith, and our Solemn Covenants?

QUESTION VI.

FOR MINISTERS AND PROBATIONERS.

Do you promise that you will submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness,—unto the admonitions of the brethren of this Presbytery, agreeable to the Word of God; and be subject to them in the Lord, and to the other Presbyteries of the Association, as the Lord in his Providence shall cast your lot, and to the Associate Synod: And do you promise that you will maintain the spiritual unity and peace of, and that you will follow no divisive course from, the reformed and covenanted Church of Scotland; either by falling in with the defections of the times, or by giving yourself up to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the foresaid covenanted cause;—and this you promise, through grace, notwithstanding whatever trouble or persecution you may meet with in essaying the faithful discharge of your duty herein?

FOR ELDERS.

Do you promise that you will submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness, unto the admonitions of the brethren of the Session in this Congregation; and do you promise that you will maintain the spiritual unity

and peace of, and that you will follow no devisive course from, the reformed and covenanted Church of Scotland; either by falling in with the defections of the times, or by giving yourself up to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the foresaid covenanted cause; and this you promise, through grace, notwithstanding whatever trouble or persecution you may meet with, in essaying the faithful discharge of your duty herein?

QUESTION VII.

FOR MINISTERS.

Are not zeal for the honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in edifying and saving souls,—your great motives and chief inducement to enter into the function of the Holy Ministry; and not any selfish views, or worldly designs or interests?

FOR PROBATIONERS.

Are not zeal for the honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in edifying and saving souls,—your great motives and chief inducements to accept of a License to Preach the Gospel as a Probationer for the Holy Ministry; and not any selfish views, or worldly designs or interests?

FOR ELDERS.

Are not zeal for the honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in the edification of his body, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the office of Eldership in this Congregation, and not any selfish views or worldly designs or interests?

QUESTION VIII.

FOR MINISTERS.

Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring this call to the Ministry?

ELDERS.

Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring your call to the office of Eldership in this congregation?







