



# **The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order**

EDITED BY A.G. MATTHEWS







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**Quinta Press**





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THE  
**SAVOY DECLARATION  
OF FAITH AND  
ORDER**  
**1658**

Edited by

A. G. MATTHEWS

With an Additional Notice by

DANIEL T. JENKINS

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A  
DECLARATION  
OF THE  
FAITH and ORDER  
Owned and practised in the  
Congregational Churches  
IN  
ENGLAND;  
Agreed upon and consented unto  
By their  
ELDERS and MESSENGERS  
IN  
Their Meeting at the SAVOY, October 12, 1658.



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LONDON:

Printed by *John Field*, and are to be sold by  
*John Allen* at the Sun Rising in *Pauls*  
Church-yard, 1658



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## FOREWORD

In 1893 Dr. Williston Walker, Professor in Hartford Theological Seminary, published his well-known *Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*. This contains an annotated reprint of the Declaration with an introductory chapter of historical exposition. Since then nothing of any moment has been written about the Declaration, either in this country or in America. In 1939 Dr. Albert Peel brought out an abridgement with an introduction, but that, as he himself says, “contains little that is new.”

That I can claim to have done somewhat better than this is chiefly due to Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall, who has called my attention to some very interesting information previously overlooked. How much I also owe to his so opportunely

published *Visible Saints* (1957) will be apparent from my repeated references to that invaluable volume. I have further enjoyed the benefit of talking and corresponding with Dr. Nuttall. Not that he has given my Introduction a pre-reading, or that I can hope he will approve all that I have written.

I have also to thank my former pastor, the Reverend Daniel T. Jenkins, for enriching the Introduction with an excursus on the theology of the Declaration, a field of study beyond my competence.

A. G. Matthews

Oxted, Surrey

19 July 1958.

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## INTRODUCTION

History is provokingly silent about the conference of Congregational elders and messengers who met at the Savoy Palace in the autumn of 1658. About the conference that met there in 1661 to revise the Prayer Book, the assembly that a reference to the Savoy Conference first brings to the mind of most people, when Episcopalians and Presbyterians failed to agree, history has plenty to tell, but about the earlier occasion it is very reticent. Yet at the time it was held the conference was an event of importance, for the Congregational or Independent (I have used these terms indifferently) churches of course, but not only for them; the interest and curiosity of the non-Congregational public of London must also have been aroused.

The national situation is unique in English history. The Established Church had been suppressed for a dozen years or so; those who continued to observe its forms and ceremonies worshipped in secret. The privileged position so long accorded to the Episcopalians had temporarily passed to the bodies who were soon to be called Dissenters—the Congregationalists, the Baptists and the Presbyterians. Of these the Independents had been of late most in the public eye. They were now holding a general assembly and issuing a confession of faith, neither of

which things they had done before, nor were to do again until the formation of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1832. In the 1650s church assemblies were not, as now, annual occurrences regarded with indifference by the public at large; they were exceptional events, in the news and the talk of the town. Ten years or so before the famous Assembly of Divines had virtually come to an end,

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and had in token of its 1,197 sessions (1643–48) bequeathed to its own and subsequent generations its famous Confession and equally famous Catechisms. But the Westminster Assembly was not strictly a church assembly, not a Presbyterian assembly, though its members were predominantly of that description. There was a Baptist assembly held in 1656; it issued a confession in that year, but did not meet in London. In any case the Baptists had not the prestige of the Independents, for as well as being churchmen of a particular colour the Independents were also politicians, or at any rate Independent was a political denomination as well as a religious.

It was from this dual standpoint that the outsiders probably viewed the conference. Londoners, such of them as plumed themselves on their ability to read the signs of the times, knew better than to believe that the business conducted at the Savoy was theology pure and undefiled, there must be something more behind it. In that conjecture they were perhaps encouraged by their belief, no doubt correct, that the leading spirit at the Savoy was Philip Nye, who is credited by Calamy (*Account*, p. 30) with being “a man of uncommon depth.” The chief interest of the London public in the man whose name is much more familiar to ourselves than Nye’s, to wit John Owen, was in his having suffered a rebuff the previous year. For five years Owen, as its Vice-Chancellor, had ruled the University of Oxford with vigour and success, but in 1657 Richard Cromwell, its then Chancellor, had not reappointed him, but had put John Conant, Rector of Exeter, into the vice-chancellorship, and Conant was a Presbyterian. This rebuff, which conceivably may have

influenced Owen's subsequent political movements (see below, p. 42) raised a more general question, was it a sign that the Independents were beginning to lose ground to the Presbyterians?—they certainly had by 1659. If that was so should the conference and its Declaration be regarded as an indication of confidence or of apprehension?

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Did this advertisement of their beliefs and practices imply that the Independents were trying to stave off a possible recession? or how was it? a nice question for wiseacres of all sorts to answer.

But it is not upon the likes of such that posterity depends for solid information, but upon those within the charmed circle, and they are disappointingly uninformative. Intelligibly so, for soon they were enveloped in the cloud which followed the death of Oliver, and in a few years were a persecuted sect, when the Savoy Meeting must have faded into the far away and long ago.

No minute-book of the conference has come to light. Owen's Preface is deplorably deficient in factual detail. How gladly would we exchange its prolix sermonizing for a list of the messengers and the churches they represented!—whereas in sorry fact we can name with certainty but a bare thirteen of the 200 elders and messengers who are said to have been present. Two ministers of their number, Thomas Jollie of Lancashire and James Forbes of Gloucester, have left some reminiscences of the gathering (see below, pp. 33,48). Our most valuable authorities are of another sort. The first is a small collection of letters relating to the preparations for the conference; one of the happy acquisitions of the Reverend Francis Peck (1692–1743), whose antiquarian appetite for old papers was too keen to allow of ecclesiastical prejudice preventing his publication of this and some other quite un-Anglican correspondence in his *Desiderata Curiosa* (not but what some of his notes are a trifle acid). The second authority is an abridgment of the address delivered by Thomas Goodwin when he headed the deputation which presented a copy of the Declaration to Richard Cromwell, 14

October, 1658. According to an entry in the Register of the Stationers' Company Goodwin's address with the Protector's reply was published in full, but I have not been able to find a copy of this. The abridgment appeared in *Mercurius Politicus* (No. 438), a Government journal

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of the day. As this has not been previously quoted I will transcribe the more interesting parts of it.<sup>1</sup>

After speaking of the men who had sought liberty in New England Goodwin went on, "We have served God in an abundance of all things in our own Land. All which mercies have been continued unto us, thorow the protection of that great Mordecai, that sought the weal of his people, and spake peace to all his seed. Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift.

"The rise of our meeting was at the last Oxford Act, where many of us Ministers being present (more than at any time before) we appointed September 29 for this our more general Meeting at the Savoy, which was made known to and approved of by your Royal Father.

"We [desired] in the first place to clear ourselves of that scandal, which not onely some persons at home, but of forein parts, have affixed upon us, viz. That Independtism (as they call it) is the sink of all Heresies and Schisms. We have therefore declared what hath been our constant Faith and Order, to be published to the World. And to shew our harmony with the most Orthodox at home and abroad, we have expressed our assent to that Confession of Faith which is the latest and best; the sum of the Confession of all Reformed Churches, to which also the Churches of Scotland and New England have given their assent; namely, the Articles of Religion approved and passed by both Houses of Parliament after advice had with the Assembly of Divines,<sup>2</sup> to which Confession for the substance of it, we have unanimously and through the Grace of Christ, without the least contradiction, assented and agreed.

We have also with the same unanimity declared in matter of Order (that is, in Church-constitution and

Government) and have set forth the main of our Principles and Practice; in which what we differ from

<sup>1</sup> I owe this reference to Dr. Nuttall.

<sup>2</sup> This is the official title of the Westminster Confession, see W. A. Shaw's *History of the English Church* (1900), i. 365.

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our Brethren, will appear. We have also laid some foundations of Agreement with them, which we have from our hearts desired and endeavoured." In his references to Richard Cromwell Goodwin expressed the desire that he: "May have all saving graces, and the increase of those especially which rested on your holy Father; A praying spirit, a spirit of Communion with God, love to all the Saints, and living by faith in all his affairs" (see further, pp. 44, 45).

The Act (abolished in 1856), when the ministers met at Oxford, was the high-light of the University year, when candidates for degrees put forward theses and publicly defended them against academic gainsayers. The ceremony was always held in July; Anthony Wood states that in 1658 it ended on 12 July, which approximately dates the first ventilation of the meeting at the Savoy. All further arrangements were delegated to the elders of the churches in and around London. They in their turn deputed it to George Griffiths, preacher at the Charterhouse, to write in their name to leading Congregational ministers throughout the country and secure their good offices in approaching the churches of their particular counties. We know that Griffiths wrote one, probably the first, of his letters on 20 August; he had likely finished his task by the end of the month. I shall say something later (p. 21) on how these key-men went about their business. Peck prints replies from fourteen of them: Bankes Anderson of Lincolnshire, Samuel Basnet of Warwickshire, William Bridge of Norfolk, Samuel Crossman of Suffolk, Thomas Gilbert of Shropshire, William Hughes of Wiltshire, Isaac Loeffs of Hertfordshire, Thomas Palmer responsible for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, John Player of Kent, Vavasor Powell of Wales, William Sheldrake of Cam-

bridgeshire, Comfort Starr of Cumberland, and Anthony Palmer and Carnsew Helme who jointly replied from Gloucestershire. All these men (except Reyner, who died earlier) were among the ministers silenced or ejected in 1660 or 1662. How many of them attended the conference

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it is impossible to say; Bridge certainly did, Reyner certainly did not; Sheldrake may have done, he wrote, “if the church here [Wisbech, Cambs.] shall think fit to send mee, I purpose to serve them”; as for the rest of them there is nothing to show one way or the other. We are safe in assuming that Griffiths wrote to ministers in the other counties. None of his letters are extant so we do not know what he wrote. But he always asked the addressee to acknowledge the receipt of the letter, and that not to himself but to Henry Scobell, Clerk to the Council of State. It is some of these acknowledgments that Peck has preserved. Possibly Griffiths sent his key-ministers, or some of them, copies of a letter to forward to the churches. Evidently he at times varied his letters, put something into one that he did not put into another. Thus Hughes of Marlborough replies to Scobell that Griffiths has given him “an account of those things which were concluded and agreed upon by the congregational elders at the late meeting at Oxford” (none of the other replies mention that); and Griffiths’s letter to Gilbert of Shropshire (see p. 17), as we shall see hereafter, contained more additional matter. Among the ministerial acknowledgments there is one, and only one, from the minister of a church to whom Griffiths had written direct, though there was a key-minister responsible for the county. The minister, John Wright of Woodborough, Notts, informs Scobell, “wee have nominated a messenger to goe.” Evidently the nominee is a layman; but his name is not given, which prompts the surmise that no one in London knew the names of the provincial messengers until they presented themselves at the Savoy, presumably armed with credentials from their churches.

To comment on these preliminaries, the elders were, I suspect, a standing body (see p. 33). Perhaps they met periodically; at any rate Scobell summoned them 15 June, 1658: "Sir, the meeting of the elders of the congregational churches in and about London, is appointed at Mr. Griffith's on Monday next, at two of the clocke in the

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afternoone, where you are desired to be present. I am, Sir, yours to love and serve you in the Lord, Hen. Scobell." The summons, which reads like a routine notice, raises at least two points of interest. This meeting at the Charterhouse is supposed by Williston Walker and Peel to have inaugurated the Savoy project, but they were not aware of what Goodwin has to say about the meeting at Oxford in July (see above, p. 12). In view of this the elders cannot have had the conference on their agenda when they met a fortnight or so earlier. The second point of interest concerns Scobell's position both at the Charterhouse meeting and in the subsequent preparations for the conference. And our concern with Scobell is wholly secondary to the question how far he represented Cromwell, on whom our interest here and always is principally centred.

Possibly Scobell was one of the elders, their officer (the way he subscribes his notice of meeting may hint as much); certainly he was Congregational, a member of the church which met in Westminster Abbey (one of his correspondents sends greetings "to your pastour Mr. Roe," i.e. John Rowe in charge of the Abbey church 1655-1660). He joined with the ministers of the Congregational churches about London in signing a letter addressed from the Savoy, 31 October, 1659, to General Monck (his name is not prominent, he is the seventh to sign, see *Clarke Papers*, iv. p. 81). If the Clerk of the Council was an elder there is no reason to assume (as Peel does) that he acted throughout the conference business by leave of the Protector. Scobell was given to interesting himself in ecclesiastical affairs. In 1655 he addressed inquiries to some leading ministers about the churches in their

counties (see p. 31), and it is evident from their replies that he led his correspondents to suppose that he wrote on his own initiative, not by the Protector's instruction; this despite the fact that he gave his correspondents leave to frank their letters "for the especial service of the state." The replies of 1658 were not franked, not classed

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as state business, they were Scobell's private correspondence. Not but what so high ranking a civil servant's having a hand in the undertaking was an asset to the promoters of the conference. An acknowledgment was likely to be the more promptly written, and the more expeditiously delivered by the post, for being addressed to the Clerk of the Council. Perhaps there was not more in it than that.

So we may take it that the Protector observed a dubiously benevolent neutrality. He sanctioned the holding of the conference but according to Neal, *History of the Puritans* (ed. 1837, ii. 690), he did so unwillingly, deprecating it as an inopportune manifestation of sectarianism. He was, at the time, hoping for a union between the Independents and the Presbyterians. Parliament in its Humble Petition and Advice, 1657, adumbrated a scheme of that sort and the Protector was much taken with it (C. H. Firth's *Last Years of the Protectorate* (1909), i. 145). But he dissolved the Parliament early in 1658 and nothing more was heard of the scheme, though Oliver may have intended to revive it later. The Savoyans, judging by Owen's Preface, can hardly be supposed favourable towards the proposed union (see pp. 70 ff.).

One of the letters is a good deal longer than the others and has an interest of its own. It was written 26 August, by Vavasor Powell, the famous Welsh evangelist, and addressed to Griffiths, with the explanation that Powell was not free to reply to Mr. Scobell, "not knowing to what hands my letter might come, or what construction might be put thereon, soe near the court" (nevertheless Griffiths passed it on to Scobell, or it would not have been preserved among his papers). Powell had good reasons

for thinking himself *persona non grata* at Whitehall. He was a Fifth Monarchist and had more than once been in trouble for denouncing the Protector and his regime. But this did not deter Griffiths from seeking Powell's aid, nor did the fact that Powell had recently joined the Baptist section of the Independents and had been re-

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baptized. For the purposes of the conference he had a unique knowledge of and influence with the Welsh churches. Moreover Griffiths knew his man, they were related, Powell signs himself "your kinsman."

As to the conference Powell writes with a detachment which suggests that he did not intend to be present himself. Perhaps with the consent of the churches "whose servants we are," he writes, "some I suppose wilbe very free and desirous to come, tho' it be but to see the faces of so many of the precious servants of the Lord." The letter concludes with half a dozen oracular sentences which were evidently those open to misconception at the Court. Their gist is to warn against the messengers involving themselves in "political and worldly accounts." Powell fears "least there be such a mix'd work carried on now, as was in Constantine's time." This might be directed against Cromwell's established church, with which the Savoyans were closely identified (see below, pp. 28, 29). Somewhere in the penumbra of Powell's cloudy utterances one suspects there looms the plan to make Cromwell king, a proposal highly obnoxious to the man who in 1653 had urged the army to overthrow the newly established Protector, bidding them "go home and pray and say 'Lord wilt thou have Oliver Cromwell or Jesus Christ to reign over us'." Cromwell turned down the proposal in 1657, and early in 1658 dissolved the Parliament that made it; but there was general expectation that later in the year he would call another Parliament, and that the proposal would then be revived.

The question of the kingship was certainly much in the mind of Thomas Gilbert, another of Scobell's correspondents and key-minister for Shropshire. Gilbert also

tantalizes us with a letter which defies elucidation. On 28 August he wrote to Scobell promising to pursue the matters indicated to him by Griffiths, “more especially the third particular touching subscription. Which that I may the better doe, I must request a word of advice from you.” Two gentlemen had consulted him about drawing

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up a petition from Shropshire, “to lift over against those from other counties, for an advance to Kingshim [sic].” Gilbert had delayed his answer, will Scobell let him know in two words by return of post, “whether you conceive the promoting of such a petition would any way thwart the aime and interest of the churches.” Here we are at a complete nonplus. Does Gilbert think the conference may petition the Protector to accept the crown, or maybe to refuse it? No matter what he thinks; within a week of his writing the problem of the kingship is solved by Oliver’s death; the conference is not to be exposed to the temptation of meddling with this high matter of state.

To look again at the ministers’ letters as a whole, one cannot but be struck by the efficiency and smoothness with which to all appearances, the preliminary arrangements were carried out. Griffiths and the London elders show themselves to have a good working knowledge of the likely men to act as their agents in the provinces. And they as soon as notified of the conference take up the business with alacrity. Their replies are admirably short, a few of them almost to the point of curtness. Two or three of the writers throw in some pious reflexions, but even these are brief. Though such a meeting had never been held before none of them express any surprise at what on the face of it might seem a bold experiment. Perhaps some rumours had spread from Oxford; anyhow, the ministers seem to take the prospective meeting as the most natural thing in the world. No one anticipates there will be any difficulty in getting the churches to co-operate, or suggests that they would like to have had longer notice. The earliest replies to Scobell are dated 24 August, some were written early in September, one as late as 20 September, nine days only

before the conference opened. In little more than a month the arrangements have been put through without any fuss or trouble and without any more organization than was improvised for the occasion.

That is how things look at a more or less casual glance, but when we probe more deeply into the situation we find

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that the rapidity with which the machinery worked indicates something of more significant import. The preparations for the conference were not in reality confined to a few meetings held, and a batch of letters written, in the summer of 1658. Before ever the meeting was mooted the conditions that made the gathering the success it was were in process of incubation. The people of the Congregational way were in the mood for a general assembly, and that they were so was due to their having learnt the value of inter-church fellowship within the limits of their different localities.

This is best seen in the records of the Norfolk churches, which have been more fully preserved than any others of that date. To take one instance of many from the Yarmouth church book. In 1648 a neighbour church consulted their Yarmouth brethren whether they might lawfully “give the right hand of fellowship” to another church which was antipaedobaptist. The Yarmouth brethren replied: “This is a business which concerns all the churches; therefore we are first to advise with all the churches therein before we can give in an answer unto it” (J. Browne’s *Congregationalism in Norfolk and Suffolk* (1877), p. 285). This substantially forestalls Article XXVI on the holding of synods. Incidentally the objection to infant baptism, which was fairly widespread, may account for there not being so full a treatment of the subject in the Articles as we might expect; opinion was divided about it (see p. 16). Or again there is evidence of a desire for fellowship in a letter written to a friend in London by Samuel Petto of Suffolk about the churches of that county (he too reports differences, not contentious ones, about infant baptism). Petto claims to be “acquainted with the

pastors of most congregational churches in Suffolke, and with many members in diverse of those churches.” He gives a list of churches (unfortunately cut off the letter) of which he says (he was writing just before the notices of the conference were sent out): “I am confident that many, if not all, of these churches would be glad to hold

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correspondency with the churches in London, or elsewhere, for mutual edification.” In contrast, Petto names a church of which he says, “it walketh very obscurely; neither seeking communion with others, nor they with it”; manifestly a society that did not come within the network of the Savoy meeting. (Peck, *op. cit.* p. 505.)

To take another example of the association of churches, this time from Lancashire, as recorded by Thomas Jollie in his *Note Book* (Chetham Society (1895), pp. 124 f.). In 1652 Jollie having gathered a church at Altham, where he was perpetual curate, he and his people “thought fit to seek the right hand of fellowship with sister churches,” and therefore approached the church at Walmsley, who wrote back “premissing a few things.” First, “that they could not judge it according to rule for a Pastor to accept a call to be pastor from any other than the church whom he is to be over; every voluntary relation being founded in the mutual consent of parties related.” The irregularity consisted in Jollie’s having been admitted, 1649, to the curacy of Altham by the Presbyterian Classis of the area, and presumably ordained by them (this matter is dealt with in Article XV). Second, that it was not according to the rule for “persons to join themselves together and enter into church relation without calling in the assistance and desiring the presence of neighbouring churches.” Third, they wanted a confession of their faith from the Altham church, “judging that every particular Society should be founded in such a confession as is Scriptural, because heresies abound.” On receipt of this they would give the right hand of fellowship. A month later Altham forwarded to Walmsley a confession of twelve articles.

Here we must pause to underline the ritual act of “giving the right hand of fellowship.” This was much more than a friendly gesture. The outstretched hand was not to be offered lightly or unadvisedly but only after grave inquiry and negotiation and it might be protracted deliberation, it being the outward and visible sign that the

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church appealed to endorsed the Congregational orthodoxy of the applicants in the same way perhaps as their own orthodoxy had previously been endorsed by some other church. Probably this was the basis on which churches were solicited to send messengers to the Savoy. In Norfolk, for instance, Bridge, Griffiths’s key-man for the county, would, we suppose, notify the churches in fellowship with his own church at Yarmouth, or conceivably at a second remove a church in fellowship with some of them. Similarly with the key-men in the other counties. That they notified any churches not approved by fellowship is improbable.

There is no question then about the existence of a very real fellowship among a number of the churches. For further examples of this I must refer readers to the illuminating section on the communion of churches in Chapter II of *Visible Saints*, pp. 94 ff. And now, with all this evidence to the contrary we may wonder what Owen was thinking of when in his often-quoted simile he compared the churches to ships “sailing apart and alone in the vast Ocean of these tumultuating times” (Preface, p. 60). If the churches had really been as cut off from one another as that the Savoy meeting would have been a sheer impossibility. The great man is actually thinking of something different. His stormy seascape is a rhetorical gambit designed to heighten the effect of what he principally wishes to stress, and that is that when the messengers met they reported their churches to be faithful to the gospel faith and order. There Owen was on factual ground, and we can well understand his marvelling at this unity of belief and procedure. The conference brought in to clear light what some of those present must have been already

partially aware of, that there was in operation, explain its origin as they might, a body of principles regulating Congregational church life. In the case of churches as closely associated with one another as were those in Norfolk and Suffolk this is intelligible. The extraordinary thing is that as far away as Lancashire, as we have seen,

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churches were following the same procedure as those in East Anglia, though there is nothing to show that they knew anything of one another's doings. As Dr. Nuttall observes, "the way in which many small groups [of churches] came to act similarly at one and the same time remains a mystery" (*Visible Saints*, p. 164). Owen felt that mystery, and concludes, "with a holy admiration that this is no other than the Lord's doing."

The messengers assembled on Wednesday, 29 September, and continued in session until Tuesday, 12 October. The churches represented numbered "above a hundred," according to the report of Thomas Goodwin's address (see above, p. 11). Increase Mather, then pastor of a Congregational church in Devon, writing in 1700 when he was a prominent figure in New England, gives the total as 120. According to Forbes (q.v., p. 11) there were 200 elders and messengers present of whom Neal (*op. cit.*) says the majority were laymen. The preponderance of the laity was probably in accordance with the wishes of the promoters of the conference. They did not want their meeting to be as much of a clerical gathering as the Westminster Assembly had been. That would have been contrary to the Congregational way; we might add contrary to the English way (as opposed to the Scottish), for, however it had been with the Assembly of Divines, when Parliament in 1645 divided the counties into classical presbyteries they were careful in manning these bodies to secure the laity a decisive majority over the clergy. Let us remind ourselves what was expected of the messengers at the Savoy. They were not there to discuss innovations or reforms, they were there to bear witness what were the beliefs and practices of their respective churches.

We can safely assume they were pretty well versed in Christian doctrine. It was a theological age, interest in theology was more general than it is today, preaching was more doctrinal. Baxter says that at Kidderminster, “some of the Poor men did competently understand the Body of Divinity and were able to judge in difficult Controversies”

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(*Reliquiae*, 1. 85). And if that was true of these men, how much more was it likely to be true of the messengers. They had been over the ground in their own churches, had drawn up confessions of faith (that of the church at Wattisfield in Suffolk ran to twenty articles), or they had studied the confessions of other churches preparatory to giving them the “right hand of fellowship” (see above, p. 20). So the layman was well equipped for his responsibility. All the same it is as well to remember that the drafting of the Declaration was carried out by the committee, and they were exclusively clerical, no layman was appointed to that inner circle.

The choice of lay messengers was likely to commend itself to some of the churches for another reason. They might be unwilling to give their minister indefinite leave of absence; no one could foresee that the meeting would be over in a fortnight. Even so a minister from one of the remoter parts of England would probably be out of his pulpit for four Lord’s days, at the then rate of travel (e.g. even by coach Exeter was seven days’ journey from London). Furthermore, his expenses had to be paid by someone. The Government had not called the conference, and it is unlikely that they found any money for its members. The Westminster Assembly Parliament had summoned, and therefore undertook to pay each divine four shillings a day (the amount paid to the knight of the shire), but in fact under the stringency of wartime finance the four shillings was very irregularly forthcoming (see the chapter on the payment of members in S. W. Carruthers’s *The Every Day Work of the Westminster Assembly* (1943)). So a minister had to find his own expenses unless his church made a purse for him, as did that at Beccles,

Suffolk, for their pastor, Robert Otty (the only instance known to us); an entry in the church book records the decision that he should represent them, and “yt ye charge of the jorneye should be mutually borne by the bretheren of the socyetye” (quot. *Peel*, p. 18).

When we try to picture to ourselves the assembled

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company we credit them with the look of being a pretty well-set-up and prosperous group of people. For the majority of their fellow-countrymen—the Royalist gentry beggared by confiscations and fines, the sequestered episcopalian clergy, and the many who under the “insufferable tyranny of a sword government” acquired the Englishman’s long-lived hatred of standing armies—for suchlike these were the worst of times. The Independents, on the other hand, had never known days as good as these. They were for the time being on the right side, had advanced to become the leading English denomination; their churches, which were increasing in number, enjoyed all needful liberties, and of their members some of them enjoyed a good deal of material prosperity. Neal speaks of the Congregational churches in the 1650s being “increased both in city and country, by the addition of great numbers of rich and substantial persons.” These must have been some of the *nouveaux riches* of the day; we wonder how they had made their money; some of them probably in trade. Norfolk and Suffolk, two of the clothing counties, were as prosperous as any shires in the land; and in East Anglia Congregationalism was particularly strong (some thirty new churches were formed there between 1650 and 1658 (see *Visible Saints*, p. 20, n.)). But there was another way of making money which was peculiar to the times. Land in plenty was going cheap on the market; some sold by the Royalist gentry to pay the fines exacted from them, some confiscated from the Crown, some from the bishops. There was under the circumstances nothing necessarily discreditable in purchasing such property. Those who did so could allege they were helping the Government in its financial difficulties;

and the Government on its part welcomed every purchaser, not only for his money but also as yet another individual who had acquired a vested interest in maintaining the *status quo*. Philip Nye is the only one of the Savoyans I can name as being involved in these transactions; he put some hundreds into buying bishops' lands

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in 1651. Owen was rewarded for his services with a gift of land in Ireland, but that is a different matter. The purchase of Crown and Church Lands turned out a bad investment; in 1660 the buyers were dispossessed without compensation. "The Independent aristocracy was ruined," Trevelyan says (he names in particular the officers of the army (*England under the Stuarts* (1922), p. 335)). Probably some of Neal's "rich and substantial persons" were among them.

In politics the Savoyans might be either Republicans or Cromwellians (see below, p. 42), certainly anti-Royalist. It hardly needs saying that no Royalist could be, or could wish to be, a member of a gathered church. That is a cleavage which runs on into the eighteenth century, when all the meeting-house people were Whigs, and most of the church people, except the bishops, Tories: into the nineteenth century when all the chapel people were Liberals and the church people, with the outstanding exception of Gladstone, were for the most part, Conservatives. All of which goes towards substantiating the truth of Mr. T. S. Eliot's contention that during the Civil War "English society was so convulsed and divided that the effects are still felt" (*On Poetry and Poets* (1956), p. 148).

Anyone seeking a concrete example of the type of Congregationalism the conference stands for cannot do better than consult the records of the church at Yarmouth, which during the pastorate of that notable Savoyan, William Bridge, may well have been the strongest and most influential Congregational church in England. The extracts from its church book quoted by Browne (*op. cit.*) show it to have been a devoted company of people, who

added to their responsibility for their own spiritual life a fostering care of neighbour churches, and also an alert and prayerful interest in what was happening in the nation at large. Such a church had nothing to learn from the Declaration; all these things they had believed and practised from their youth up. Rather it is likely that they

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contributed to its articles. Bridge must have had a wider experience of Congregationalism in action than the other members of the committee; Owen and Goodwin were Oxford academics and the other three men (see p. 34) were stationed in or about London, where Congregationalism was not so strong as it was in Norfolk. It is a safe assumption that Bridge's experience has left a mark on the Articles of Church Order, some of which are exemplified in the Yarmouth book.

To raise another question about the Savoyans, is there any distinguishing mark that differentiates them from other Congregationalists of the time? Certainly the hundred and more churches who sent messengers to the Savoy did not comprise all those of the Congregational persuasion. There existed other churches which for some reason or another were not represented. But no one came into the open to speak for them, to say why they withheld themselves from, or were debarred from, representation at the conference. And if we look ahead we find a few objectors to this and that in the Declaration, but no non-Savoyan Independent denounces the document *in toto*, or challenges the claim implied on its title page, that the men at the Savoy speak for all the Congregational churches in England. The Savoyans are in possession of the ground, it is only they who have the look of being a coherent group. To account for the absentees we have therefore to fall back on conjecture. Perhaps some of them adhered to the earlier separatist traditions, in which case they would refuse to be parties to a conference called for the drawing up of a confession of faith, seeing that they held that to be valid a confession must be the work of a particular church and endorsed by its members

individually. Or perhaps the dissentients were voluntaryists, believing that churches should themselves support their ministers and not accept state assistance. Any churches strongly of that opinion would inevitably clash with the Savoyans, for if one thing more than another about them thrusts itself upon our notice it is their close

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identification with Cromwell's established church, to call it what it was not: this may be the distinctive mark we are looking for.

Let us then recall what in fact Cromwell's religious settlement was. In 1654 he issued several ordinances for the promotion of parochial reform. Of these the one which most concerns us now was for the admission to livings of desirable ministers; a second was for ejection of the undesirable. The first instituted what was generally known as the Board of Triers, or, to give them their official and more instructive title, Commissioners for the Approbation of Publique Preachers (they held office, as Cromwell said in a speech, "not *jure divino* but as a civil good"; he therefore gave them a civilian, not an ecclesiastical title).

The constitution of the Board has a further significance. There were forty-three members (thirty-eight in the first and five more in a second ordinance). Of the thirty-one clerical members sixteen were Congregational, thirteen Presbyterian, two Baptist (most of the Baptist churches kept aloof from the state scheme, hence their small representation). There were also twelve lay members, whose churchmanship is more difficult to determine. As between the Presbyterians and the Independents Cromwell has held the balance pretty even. He was always for the peaceful co-existence and co-operation of "the several forms of godliness in this nation." The available evidence does not lead one to think that he favoured Independents, as such, in his appointments to office, or in his presentation of ministers to benefices, or that the general advance of Independency, which we have noted, was due to his influence. In his speeches he sometimes says a good word

for them. His highest compliment is contained in a single whimsical, cautious sentence (surely spoken with a smile), “Truly I think, if I be not partial, I think if there be a freedom of judgment, it is there,” with the Independents.

To return to the Triers. Their duty was to examine nominees for livings and lectureships and to satisfy

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themselves, not that the man before them believed any specified doctrines, but that he was a person “able and fit to preach the Gospel.” What the Gospel was the Triers could be relied on to know. The nominee was to be a preacher; he is never described as a minister or pastor, and in line with that the ordinance says in so many words that approbation by the Triers is not to be taken as equivalent to ordination. Nothing is said about denominational differences; it is tacitly understood those approved might be Presbyterian, Congregational or Baptist in their judgment. Nor is anything said about parochial organization, of the gathering of churches for instance. As to maintenance an approved preacher was on application eligible for a state grant and also entitled to take the tithes of the living on which he entered.

And now what was the connexion between the Triers and the men who met at the Savoy? The links are several. In the first place the reform which Cromwell executed by his ordinance substantially embodied a scheme drawn up a few years earlier by an eminent Savoyan. Gardiner goes so far as to call it his church, John Owen’s church. In the second place, of the six committee-men at the conference five were Triers, so, too, was Griffiths, the scribe. The sixth committee-man, Bridge, served under the other ordinance, that for ejections, he was a minister assistant to the ejecting commissioners in Norfolk. In the third place, there is the evidence of Article XIV which deals with the obligations of a minister who stands in the double relation of a “publique preacher” (the term used in the ordinance) and pastor of a gathered church. This article implies that the Triers on the Savoy committee were alive to the fact that of the men whom they had joined in

admitting as “preachers” some considerable number (otherwise why the article?) were also pastors of the gathered churches represented at the Savoy; it was therefore advisable to give them a directive as to procedure in the matters specified. We can form some notion of the number of these preacher-pastors from the ejections

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between 1660 and 1662. At least 130 Congregational ministers were then turned out of livings. Possibly some of these men had not formed gathered churches, possibly if they had their churches were not represented at the Savoy. Even with these allowances the margin of the “above 100 churches” left for those who held aloof from the state connexion is a pretty narrow one. That is how the position stood between the Congregational churches and the state regime. But we are at a loss to know what conclusions to draw from it. There is no evidence to show that the Savoyans thought or spoke of themselves as being anything like a state-church party, nor that outsiders called them so. One would expect that their leaders would have something to say on the revolutionary scheme set on foot by the ordinance; no doubt they had, but it is not on record. Whatever was said at the conference is concealed behind Article XIV which takes the state connexion as a matter of course.

So we see Owen and his confreres identifying themselves with a state religious system, which we may think a deviation from Congregational rectitude. But their times were like no other times in our history. The state, hostile before and soon to be hostile again, was for a few years friendly; its administrative machinery was in the hands of men who shared the aspirations of the churches and were ready to place the resources of the state at their disposal (see *Visible Saints*, pp. 140 f.). Also if Owen and his friends looked across the Atlantic, as assuredly they did, there in New England the churches and the state were wholly at one, citizenship was conditional on church membership. Furthermore, at home the situation in many parishes was pressing; they were without ministers, perhaps their

ministers were among the undesirables whom the ejecting commissioners had removed. There was a clear call for godly preachers to rally to the cause of the Gospel.

Article XIV directs preacher-pastors on two matters. The first is the most vexed of parochial problems, who are entitled to the sacrament? All baptized parishioners; that

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 answer was in the statute book (I Edward VI). A minister “shall not without a lawful cause deny the sacrament to any person that will devoutly and humbly desire it.” But it was an answer wholly abhorrent to good Puritan ministers; they ignored it. The article leaves the giving or withholding of the seals to the option of the minister, with the balance tilted on the side of refusal. That lays an invidious responsibility on the minister. If he refused to give the sacrament it was open to the aggrieved party to take legal proceedings against him (for instances of this and of the judge finding for the plaintiffs, see R. W. Dale *Hist. of English Congregationalism*, pp. 378 ff.). Here we might think that Savoyans would have done better to profit by the example of the Voluntary Associations initiated by Baxter, whose ministers agreed on what terms they would administer the sacraments, thus strengthening one another’s hands in dealing with their parishioners. The second part of Article XIV treats of the duties of the preacher-pastor to his parishioners at large. That was, or was said to be, the weakness of the gathered churches. Baxter makes a venomous thrust at it: “They lazily gather a few that seem so much better than the rest, as will put them to no great labour in Teaching and Discipline. But if all the rest of the Parishes lye in Ignorance, how little are we beholden to these Separatists for the Cure” (*Reliquiae*, App. iv. 76). How much better things were managed at Kidderminster! Perhaps, but Baxter has slandered our churches as Article XIV testifies. The minister is to do what personal evangelism he can; he is to preach to parishioners; assuming they are in church to be preached to. Some Lancashire ministers in 1655 report to the Major-General

for the area that in many of their “towns” no more than one in twenty persons go to a place of worship on the Lord’s day; they desire the Major-General to search out these persons (T. Jollie, *op. cit.*, p. 128).

The parochial situation is paradoxical. The ordinance of 1654 nominally preserves the parish system but at the

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same time reduces it to a shadow of its former self. Its aforetime priest is now no more than a public preacher, perhaps unordained; its consecrated edifice is little better than an endowed assembly room. And now to the further disruption of the system parishioners may flout “co-habitation” (Article XXIII), the basis of the system, and pitch their spiritual tents where they will. Not that the gathered church was a novelty; it had a long history and was to be found in many a parish. Churches of that type were given political prominence in 1653, when Cromwell and the Army Council called on them to appoint representatives who were to nominate suitable persons to sit in the Barebones Parliament. The new factor in the situation lay in the possibility of a pastor of a gathered church being also a public preacher of a parish. “The want of meanes,” a minister wrote, “doth very much hinder the gatheringe of churches.” That obstacle was now removed; a pastor in his other capacity of preacher was entitled to tithes and eligible for a state augmentation. The ordinance had nothing to say about churches, gathered or any others. None the less the gathering of churches is taken for granted and viewed with favour by persons of importance. It is the theme of the letters already referred to (p. 15) which Scobell wrote in 1655. He inquires of different ministers what churches of this type there are to be found in their counties; he implies that he wishes to hear there are such churches, and that they can rely on his using his good offices to get their pastors maintenance. At least this is the impression the replies from his correspondents give us. None of his letters have been preserved and only five of the replies; of these four are from Presbyterians (Peck, *op. cit.*,

pp. 491 ff.). This, I think, is the first intimation that Presbyterian ministers are prepared, like Congregational and Baptist ministers, to stand in the double relation of preacher-pastors we have referred to. The difference between a Presbyterian and a Congregational church was more nominal than real, except where classical

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presbyteries were in effective operation, as was the case in London and Lancashire.

Scobell perhaps writes unofficially, but in the next year Cromwell himself tells Parliament with whole-hearted satisfaction that he has received petitions from the Presbyterians of many counties asking liberty of worship and “for the purging of their congregations.” A purged congregation and a gathered church are synonymous. The dividing line has been drawn, “the precious are separated from the vile,” a favourite text of the day used among others by Edward Reyner (q.v., p. 45: *Visible Saints*, p. 18). Here in the gathered churches, these *ecclesiolae* (to apply to them terms neither of which, I think, the great man used, certainly not the latter), set in the soulless framework to which the parish system had in many instances been reduced, Cromwell saw the core of “the godly interest,” upon whom depended the maintenance of vital Christianity, and therefore the maintenance of national righteousness.

One public event must have been much in the thoughts and the talk of the messengers; a month or so before they met Cromwell had died. Could they have known it, Puritanism as a political power had received its death-blow; without its mighty mainstay “the good old cause” was doomed. Soon their fellow-countrymen in the violence of their reaction were to mete out to the men of the Interregnum the most ironical of retaliations: they were to replace the Puritans and Puritanism with Charles II and Restorationism. Though unconscious of what the future had in store for them, the Savoyans had their own misgivings; “in the midst of our fears,” Owen writes (p. 73); he adds that they buoyed themselves up with a promise from Richard Cromwell that he would safeguard

their liberties. They therefore proceeded with their programme on the assumption that things would remain as they were; that their churches would be free to meet for worship and deliberation; that those of their ministers

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who held benefices would retain them; and they agreed that in future “there might be a constant correspondence held among the Churches for counsel and mutual edification” (p. 60), which may imply they intended to summon other general assemblies like their own. Such was the future the Savoyans anticipated; the actual future had in store for them some thirty years of persecution. Their assumptions, therefore, were largely falsified. There were to be no more Congregational incumbents, no more general assemblies, but there were some local ones, e.g. in 1675 Thomas Jollie (*op. cit.*, p. 25) attended “a meeting of the elders and messengers of the churches in and about London.” This may be identical, allowing for changes of personnel, with the meeting called by Scobell in 1658 (see p. 14). But these are comparatively minor matters. The all-vital assumption that the churches would be free to meet was verified only for a year or so by virtue of the King’s Indulgence of 1672, but free or not free, they did meet, “as dying and behold they lived, as chastened but not killed.”

The accounts of how the proceedings of the conference were conducted are scrappy and somewhat conflicting. Owen in the Preface says that on the first day they “debated what to pitch upon,” which probably means that they then decided in the main to follow the Westminster Confession. He adds that of the other eleven working days (setting aside the two Lord’s days); part was spent by some of them in prayer and part in consulting. Thomas Jollie records that he presented to the assembly papers drawn up by an association of ministers from Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire on the subject of religious decline and revival in their churches. He continues, “preacht before them with acceptance, and found much of God’s presence in the meeting, and of His

grace in the management of matters from first to last” (*op. cit.*, p. 129). James Forbes of Gloucester, writing some forty years later, declares more ecstatically: “It was a kind of heaven on earth I think to all who were present.”

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Such rare elaborate speeches my ears never heard before, nor since. We had some days of prayer and fasting, kept from morning till night” (quot. Memoir, *Sermons of J. Owen* (1721), pp. xxi ff.). Neal, without giving any authorities, states that they opened their synod with a day of fasting and prayer, and after some debate on procedure decided on more or less following the Westminster Confession. A committee was appointed consisting of Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, William Greenhill, Joseph Caryl (all of whom had been members of the Westminster Assembly and had therefore had a part in drawing up its Confession) and John Owen. Neal goes on: “While these were employed in preparing and putting together the articles of their confession, the synod heard complaints, and gave advice in several cases which were brought before them, relating to disputes or differences in their churches [cf. Article XXVI]. The particular heads of doctrine agreed to by the committee, were presented to the synod every morning, and read by the Reverend Mr. George Griffith, their scribe. There were some speeches and debates upon words and phrases, but at length all acquiesced” (Neal, *op. cit.*, ii. 690).

That the assembly got through their work as quickly as they did was obviously due in large part to their substantial adoption of the Westminster Confession. As to their unanimity, the word is always apt to be equivocal; perhaps Calamy’s *nemine contradicente* is nearer the truth. We may be sure that the steersman of the meeting, whoever he was, exercised at times some diplomacy. Thus on the matter of the imposition of hands at ordinations there was evidently a division of opinion. The meeting got round this difficulty by including both views of the matter; Article XI stipulates that imposition of hands is a necessary part of the ceremony; Article XII states that ordina-

tions are valid without it. One would like to know what lies behind the absence of the word “covenant” (i.e. church-covenant) from the Articles. The term was then so prevalent in this country and in New England, and is

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so familiar to us nowadays, that it is a little surprising to find that it does not occur in the classical formulation of Congregational church order. All the inwardness of covenanting—“giving up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God in professed subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel”—is contained in Article VIII, but the traditional term is avoided; presumably it was unacceptable to some of the messengers. Further, in this context, Baxter has a story, which one may take for what is worth; his prejudice against the Savoy meeting is at boiling point on the particular article in question. He narrates that he asked “some honest Men that joynd with them, Whether they subscribed this Confession [i.e. Chap. XI. 1]; and they said No”; nor did they contradict it (*Reliquiae*, 1. 104). The unanimity of the conference must have depended a good deal on the chairman. According to Calamy (*Account*, p. 29) Philip Nye was “the Principal Man in the managing the Meeting ... by the Protector’s Order.” No one else has this to say about Cromwell. When Calamy later adds that Nye was “a Man of uncommon Depth: and seldom, if ever, outreached,” one has no doubt he was the man to keep a meeting well in hand. The outside public evidently took Nye to be the leading spirit at the Savoy (see p. 10).<sup>1</sup> Baxter, who charges the conference with wrecking the prospects of church reunion by their Articles of Church Order, joins Owen with Nye and makes them the two villains of the piece; “So much could two Men do with many honest tractable young Men” (*ib*).

How far was the Declaration derivative? The confession of faith certainly was. As to the Articles of Church Order there is no question that the type of Congregationalism they embody derives from John Cotton (1584–1652),

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Gordon states in his article on Nye in the *D.N.B.* that Nye “signed the remarkable preface written by John Owen.” I find it difficult to believe that Gordon had seen a copy of the Declaration with the Preface signed by Nye or for that matter by Owen. The Preface, though always attributed to Owen, is anonymous. Perhaps Gordon was thinking of Thomason’s note (see p. 41).

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once of Boston, Lincolnshire, afterwards of Boston, Massachusetts, more than from any other one man. Personal contact with Cotton before he left England in 1633 won Philip Nye and Thomas Goodwin to Congregationalism, and a study of Cotton’s tractate (4to. 59 pp.), *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, had a similar effect on John Owen. Two issues of the *Keyes* were “published” “ by Nye and Goodwin in 1644. In their preface they acknowledge that from the *Keyes* they had adopted a “middle-way (which in our Apologie [i.e. *The Apologeticall Narration* presented to Parliament by the Dissenting Brethren of the Westminster Assembly] we did in generall intimate and intend) between that which is called Brownisme and the Presbyteriall-government” (see *Visible Saints*, pp. 14 ff., and for the “Apologie” Dale, *op. cit.*, pp. 279 ff.). That is a highly important pronouncement. It marks a significant breakaway in the evolution of Congregationalism. Its leaders have left the narrow paths of the earlier separatists (not but what some others will continue to walk in them) and have struck out a broader road, which we may call the main road along which they themselves and the majority of future Congregationalists will hereafter travel. Therein lies Cotton’s contribution to the Articles, an overall contribution rather than any definite matters of detail on which we can put our finger.

Of dependence on any set of church articles the Savoyans show no signs. The most notable contemporary church platform was that drawn up at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1648. Williston Walker calls it “the most important monument of early New England Congregationalism” (p. 185). He evidently thinks it *the platform par excellence*; while he concedes some merits to the Savoy platform he is

more impressed by its demerits; he considers it is hazy, deficient in detail, not a working manual, drawn up by men who had no experience of Congregationalism as an exclusive polity (p. 351), all of which amounts to saying that our platform was made in England for English

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conditions. Congregationalists in the colony were a privileged body; their twenty-nine churches had an exclusive religious monopoly. That is something our English forefathers never knew, happily for them. There is no escaping the temptations of power; it can corrupt even Congregationalists. There are stories of intolerance in Massachusetts that make ugly reading.

A glance at the Cambridge platform gives us a viewpoint from which to take stock of its English counterpart. What most immediately strikes us is their comparative dimensions; the Cambridge runs to twenty-nine quarto pages, the Savoy (i.e. the Articles of Church Order) to eight. The Cambridge, with its seventeen chapters buttressed with proof-texts, is elaborate, at times expository and reasoned; none of which terms are applicable to the Savoy. Whereas the Savoy for the most part advises and recommends (Article XVI which vetoes lay administration of the sacrament is perhaps the most noticeably imperative), the Cambridge, *per contra*, speaks in a more magisterial tone; fittingly so, it is the work of a synod, and of a synod the Platform says that its directions “are to be received with reverence and submission”; the words are taken from the chapter “Of Synods” in the Westminster Confession (see p. 119), a chapter whose publication Parliament did not sanction; it savoured more of Scottish Presbyterianism than they could stomach; but the men at Cambridge have not these qualms; they have a decided leaning towards Presbyterianism. It is significant that the elders and messengers at the Savoy (those present at Cambridge are similarly denoted) do not call themselves a synod; the title page of the Declaration speaks of “their meeting at the Savoy”; and if “meeting” was a somewhat more impressive word to them than to us it was not

so pretentious as “synod.” They have something to say about local synods, their uses and the limits of their power, in Articles XXVI and XXVII, but for their own gathering they prefer to avoid it.

That the Cambridge Platform was well known at the

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Savoy we may take for granted; some of those present were in close touch with New England, had at one time sojourned there, though that was probably before the Platform was drawn up. The conference cannot have had much difficulty in deciding that the Platform was no model for them to follow; they had an aim in view which was not contemplated by the New Englanders, an aim which Walker has failed to grasp. No doubt they designed to provide the churches with a standard exposition of their beliefs. Not that such an exposition ever was or could be built into the fabric of Congregationalism as the Westminster Confession was built into the fabric of the Church of Scotland. Our church system is not closely knit enough to allow of that; and further our people have never been so confessionally-minded as the Presbyterians, or as that other branch of the Independents, the Baptists (see p. 47). When we try to see the Declaration through the eyes of those who formulated it we get the impression that they were primarily interested in reaching the non-Congregational public, to whom they said in so many words, “this is our distinctive witness,” to use a present-day phrase. Thomas Goodwin puts the matter that way in his Address to Richard Cromwell; the Declaration is a Congregational apologia to refute malicious misrepresentations. Owen in his preface does not address the churches; he has nothing to say that is definitely meant for them and for no one else; rather he seeks to impress outsiders with the fruits of the meeting and the near-miracles which accompanied its sessions. None of the parties concerned, therefore, want Walker’s “working manual”; the churches do not want it (they have their own practices), still less does the general public want it. From this standpoint we can understand why the Declara-

tion makes no mention of some practices which we know were in existence among the churches, e.g. the giving of the right hand of fellowship (see p. 20); this is presumably implied in the phrase of Article XXVI: “many churches holding communion together.”

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We must envisage the Declaration as a relic of the greatest period of Congregational history; a high-tide mark on the sands of time. It stands in isolation. As no general assembly had met it had no precursor; and we should be reluctant to say it had a successor (“we do it wrong being so majestic” to give that name to the would-be substitute of 1833). The Declaration was never reaffirmed for the simple reason that for wellnigh two centuries no general assembly competent to reaffirm it was held. When such an assembly did meet, in 1832, they pronounced the Declaration “almost obsolete.” If they meant that it had fallen out of use, they were no doubt right; if they meant that it was antiquated, it is no more than the Thirty-nine Articles or the Westminster Confession, which are still authoritative for their churches, with some concession made for clerical subscribers. What was really obsolete was the tabulation of beliefs in confessional form. The age of such pronouncements, which began in Germany about 1550, was over; it ended at the Savoy; the Declaration was the last of its race. Thereafter all branches of the church felt this particular piece of work had been done as well as it was likely to be done. Certainly, in England, at any rate, since the seventeenth century no church has put forth a confession of faith that carries general conviction. The old formularies at the least appeal to the sense of antiquity, to the sense of continuity, to the sense of language; no modern has at his command the grandeurs of Elizabethan or Caroline English. These considerations, however, are not likely to have been voiced at the meetings of the Congregational Union of 1833. The Assembly, thinking to do the denomination lasting service, blundered into producing *Declaration of the Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congrega-*

*tional, or Independent Dissenters*; it has the grand name without being the grand thing, as Matthew Arnold said about something else.

To return to 1658. The messengers go home and report to their churches. No doubt they have taken notes of the

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decisions at the Savoy (they were practised hands at that, many people then took notes of sermons), so that their statements will have been pretty full, but for a complete statement the churches must wait till they receive printed copies of the Declaration. What they then did with the document, whether they formally accepted it, or whether they simply studied and discussed it, we do not know.

But the Declaration was designed as much for the general public as for the churches; steps must be taken to bring the publication to the notice of the non-Congregational outsiders; and steps were taken. No sooner was it published than the Declaration was on sale up and down the streets of London; we have George Fox's word for it (*Journal*, 1658). That remarkable man has added another to his many remarkable feats; has managed (he does not say how) to get hold of a copy of the Declaration before it is published; has written an answer to it; has had this printed and put on sale in the streets; so there the two pieces are, the Declaration and Fox's *Something in answer to that Book called the Church-faith* (4to., 24 pp., 1660; copy in Friends' Library, London); they are both being cried up by the professional hawkers of street literature (if it was to such that the job was entrusted) and while competing with one another are stimulating interest in one another and adding to one another's sales.<sup>1</sup>

Editions of the Declaration are as follows; the first was published in November 1658. In the following year, according to Williston Walker (p. 340), four editions were issued. There was no rule then, any more than there is now, fixing the number of volumes that made up an edition, that was a matter for the printer to decide. At a

rough guess we may suppose that at least 5,000 copies had been sold, or were on sale, by the end of 1659. The

<sup>1</sup> To some "parliament-men" who remonstrated with him Fox said: "Had all people been without a faith these sixteen hundred years that now the priests must make them one? Did not the apostle say, that Jesus was the author and finisher of their faith? ..." I owe these references to Dr. Nuttall.

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price given in the Register of the Stationers' Company is sixpence, but that seems to be a conventional value given to all books entered in the Register, so it is nothing to go by. The Declaration reached Holland; a Dutch theologian, Johannes Hoornbeeck of Leiden, appended a Latin translation of it to a controversial work he brought out in 1660 (*Visible Saints*, p. 38, n.). In London there is a long interval, the persecution period, then just at the close of those dark days, another edition appears, 1688; followed forty-one years later by the last of the London editions. The series concludes with two provincial editions: Ipswich, 1745 (see p. 46); Oswestry, 1812. Walker, following Orme (Memoir of Owen in *Works of John Owen* (1826), i. 183), gives a London edition 1677, but I have not found a copy of this; perhaps Orme means the Baptist Confession (see p. 47). In the course of the 150 years indicated Congregationalists are said to have taken to the Westminster Confession alleging that it was more easily obtainable than the Declaration; the supply declines because the demand declines and *vice versa*.

And now that the Declaration has got into the streets and the bookshops and is circulating among the outside public, it is caught in the gusts of the then very windy weather, and there is no telling what constructions, religious and political, will be put upon it. Pepys buys a copy (ed. 1659, the year before the *Diary* begins; copy in Pepysian Library, Magdalene, Cambridge; no copy of Fox's *Something*); an evidence of the popularity of the volume. Thomason, the famous tractophile, inevitably adds a copy to his collection, now in the British Museum, and relieves his prejudices with a snarling attribution of

authorship, “By Philp Nie and his Confederat Crew of Independants.” Thomason, who has Royalist sympathies, perhaps looks on the Declaration as having some sinister political implication. Certainly that year, 1659, Independents were very prominent on the political scene, Owen more so than Nye. The volume is by no means innocent of political implications. Thomason, or anyone

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else, reading Owen’s preface might interpret its concluding pages as a thinly veiled plea for the restoration of the remnant of the Long Parliament, the Rump, expelled by Cromwell in 1653; and after six years of what someone has called “notional” existence, restored to actual existence in the May of 1659.

Let us then examine Owen’s preface from this standpoint and see how the charge could be brought against him. Not but what the preface contains a few rewarding passages of a quite different sort (the best of them is on p. 53) but these I will leave readers to find for themselves, and confine myself to its politics, not noticed hitherto. That these, if Owen was to introduce politics at all, would be Republican, is only what we should expect; it was the party alinement he had arrived at by 1658. For some years Cromwell and he were in close and fruitful co-operation (witness the church reform of 1654), but in 1657 they fell foul of one another over the question of the kingship. After that Owen joined the party known as Commonwealthmen, who affirmed that the Long Parliament was the only legitimate government; Charles I had agreed in 1641 that this Parliament should not be dissolved without its own consent, and that agreement still held good. From this it followed that the Protectorate was null and void, that the Protector was a usurper, lawfully Captain and Commander-in-chief of the forces within the Commonwealth, for he was that by Act of Parliament of 1650, but he was no more.

In Owen’s adoption of this political attitude lies the explanation of what at a first reading may puzzle us; the explanation of why in 1658 he harks back to the 1640s;

of why he ignores the Cromwellian church regime, and is careful to speak of the Presbyterian settlement made by Parliament in 1645 as “the Rule established by Authority” (as indeed it still was, legally speaking, though largely inoperative, and never enforced by law); and why, to crown his retrogressions, he makes out that an order passed by the Commons in 1644, known as the Accom-

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modation Order, is “the foundation of that Freedom and Liberty” enjoyed by the Congregational and Presbyterian churches. This order he prints in full, in black-letter, saying of it that it is “an Indulgence we hope will never be forgotten.”

The history of the order is much like that of other futile measures of those days. No one concerned in it emerges with any credit, except the original mover, and he, ironically enough, was the member for Huntingdon, recently returned from Marston Moor; it was his first public advocacy of religious toleration (it does not of course suit Owen’s book to mention Cromwell). The House passed the order without a division and referred it to a committee, whose proceedings were soon brought to a standstill by those resourceful enemies of toleration, the Scottish Commissioners. A year or more passed; Cromwell scored another victory, this time at Naseby; as a consequence the stock of the Independent party rose; and under cover of this the Dissenting Brethren, who had some time before been called on to present a statement of their beliefs concerning church government, now refused to do anything of the kind, alleging that the Assembly of Divines would not give their statement a fair hearing. In face of this awkward situation Parliament revived the committee; which sat a few times and then simply faded out. Let Gardiner pronounce judgment: “What had been in September 1644, when Cromwell proposed it, a healing measure, was in November 1645 a mere retrograde expedient for shelving an inconvenient subject” (*History of the Civil War* (ed. 1894), hi. 10).

Such being the actual history of the order we may think Owen's glorification of it disingenuous, to say no more. Probably, if this be any extenuation, he was not putting into print an invention of his own, but repeating a fiction from the doctrinaire stock-in-trade of his party, which he had swallowed with the credulity of a recent convert. The churches enjoyed liberty, that liberty must have legal authority, and this could only be conferred on it by the

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 one legitimate government, to wit the Long Parliament; the Republicans, therefore, pitched on the ill-starred order, and acclaimed it to be the charter of the churches. Their choice was certainly restricted, for the deliberations of the Long Parliament on the subject of toleration were singularly unfruitful (see Shaw, *op. cit.*, II chap iii). Owen concludes his preface with some expressions of loyalty to the new Protector. We should feel happier about these if we did not know that within a few months their author was hand in glove with the Republican officers who engineered Richard Cromwell's abdication. This is not the place to enlarge on Owen's excursion into politics. We could wish he had never embarked on it; but that would be to ask the impossible of a man such as he was in years so desperate as were 1659 and 1660. All that he valued most in public life was at stake. Let us say that he lost his head, as indeed did most of them, with the saving exception of General George Monck.

A writer who composes an introduction to a collective pronouncement like the Declaration necessarily expresses more than his personal opinions. We must therefore suppose that Owen was voicing the political sentiments of some proportion of the Savoyans (probably Nye's for one). But not of all, certainly not of Thomas Goodwin, who when he delivered his address to Richard Cromwell was evidently speaking in a representative capacity. From Goodwin we hear what we have been waiting for, not a wiredrawn attribution of "our liberties" to the Long Parliament, but honour paid to whom honour is due, to "that great Mordecai," as he calls the Protector. Goodwin

is not delivering a studied panegyric; he is speaking from his heart about one whom he greatly loved and admired, briefly (if the abridgment is at this point full) but none the less convincingly. For his devotion to Oliver we have the testimony of Secretary Thurloe, who wrote to Henry Cromwell in September 1657 of Goodwin's being "entirely affectionate to his highnes, which he hath always given testimony of, and most fully and particularly in our late

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questions and disputes," probably a reference to the kingship. We may surmise that when Goodwin spoke to Richard of "your Royal father" (p. 12) he was giving the dead man thus much of the title he wished him to assume in his lifetime; with perhaps a thrust at those present who were of the other opinion (one would like to know what was passing in Owen's mind). But as the curtain rings down on the messengers let us rather see them as, albeit divided on some crucial issues, yet conceding to one another freedom of utterance, as became men so deeply committed to the principle of liberty of conscience.

Mention has already been made of Edward Reyner of Lincoln (p. 32), a notable Congregational minister, well known to Owen and others at the Savoy; he had sat with them on a committee deputed to draw up the fundamentals of belief in 1652. Reyner did not attend the conference, but Calamy (*Account*, p. 444) relates that the Declaration was sent to him "into the country for his Suffrage with this Intimation; that the publishing of it should be stayed till his Answer was returned." Reyner's answer was to the effect that he fully consented to the confession of faith, but that there were some particulars in the platform, "so expressed as that he was not satisfied." Reyner is said to have resolved, when he adopted the Congregational way, not to admit to membership of his church any from parishes which had godly ministers, he was therefore probably critical of Article XXVI, which makes no reservation about the character of the minister in its permission to a believer to forsake his parish church

if it did not satisfy his idea of what a church should be. So far so good, but that the conference adopted the Declaration and presented it to Richard Cromwell, subject to its being revised in accordance with what reply the dispatch-rider brought back from Lincoln, is a story we may relegate to the apocrypha of the Savoy.

The subsequent history of the Declaration is a chequer of lights and shadows. In answer to an inquiry from

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Philip Schaff, when compiling his *Creeeds of Christendom* (1878), Dr. John Stoughton wrote: "The Savoy Declaration, which perhaps never had much weight with Congregationalists, is a document now little known except by historical students." No doubt if the truth is to be condensed into a single sentence Stoughton has said it, but on a wider survey we can find a few facts that qualify his judgment. Be it always remembered that the Declaration had to contend not only with the somewhat suspicious attitude of Congregationalists to such a formulary, but also it made a bad start; it was very early damped down by the blizzard of persecution; the churches carried on under abnormal conditions. Nevertheless the invaluable Thomas Jollie records that in 1674 a meeting of messengers of the associated churches of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire "owned" the Declaration. He also states a Cheshire minister dissented from what is said in the Declaration about the satisfaction of Christ (p. 90); two ministers were appointed to confer with him. (*Trans. Congl. Hist. Soc.* vi. 172.) Next we meet with the Declaration in 1689 when, persecution being over, Congregationalists and Presbyterians united, and in some parts of the provinces (but not in the London area) maintained their union for many years, on the terms set forth in the *Heads of Agreement* (1691). In token of their orthodoxy churches desirous of entering the union might own the Declaration (i.e. the confession of faith) to be agreeable to Scripture; or alternatively the doctrinal parts of the Thirty-nine Articles (to which the Toleration Act, 1689, required all Nonconformist ministers to subscribe); or else those of the Westminster Confession

or the Westminster Catechism (see Gordon, *Freedom after Ejection* (1917), pp. 155 ff.).

According to Thomas Harmer (1715–88), a Suffolk minister, the East Anglian churches of his day and “some time past have improved on the Savoy and go by the Heads of Agreement.” But there were evidently some churches in Suffolk not of this opinion. In 1745 a deacon of the church at Sweffling published an edition of the

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Declaration along with the church’s covenant (Browne, *op. cit.*, pp. 200, 483).

We have now to take notice of recognition given to the Declaration in a somewhat unexpected quarter. The Calvinistic Baptists in the course of the seventeenth century issued three confessions. Of these the third, 1677, substantially reproduces the Savoy confession of faith, and also incorporates a considerable part of the articles of church order. Between 1677 and 1809 this Confession was reissued six times, being in 1689 approved by messengers from 101 churches (the Baptists were in advance of the Congregationalists when it came to holding a general assembly). Dr. Whitley in his *Baptist Bibliography* (1916) states that this Confession is “still endorsed by the Strict and Particular Baptists.”<sup>1</sup> In America also the Declaration found favour, the confession of faith, that is, not the Articles of Church Order, which American Congregationalists judged inferior to their own Platform of 1648. The churches of Massachusetts made the Declaration official in 1680. It was adopted by the representatives of the Connecticut churches meeting at Saybrook in 1708. In 1865 a National Council of Congregational Churches meeting at Boston pronounced the Declaration satisfactory “for substance of doctrine” (G. G. Atkins and F. L. Fagley, *History of American Congregationalism* (1942), p. 126).

<sup>1</sup> I owe this reference to Dr. Nuttall.

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## ATTENDANCE AT THE CONFERENCE

*(See above, p. 11)*

The thirteen ministers whom we know to have been at the Savoy are: the six committee-men and the scribe (see p. 34), James Forbes, Thomas Jollie, Robert Otty and John Howe, then chaplain to Richard Cromwell, present as an observer. Also present were two Sussex ministers, John Stonestreet of Lindfield (ejected 1662), and George Vinter of Cowfold. According to Calamy (*Account* p. 689), Stonestreet said no man at the Savoy made “a greater shew of seriousness and zeal” than Vinter, who had previously been a vehement Presbyterian, and in 1662 conformed, and became an equally vehement episcopalian.

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**THE SAVOY DECLARATION****AN ADDITIONAL NOTICE**

There is no need to say much about the parts which are common to both the Westminster Confession and the Savoy Declaration. These have been much commented upon. It is perhaps worth noting, however, that while the emphasis on the sole authority of Scripture as against tradition is impressive, and while due recognition is made of the importance of the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, that authority is conceived of in excessively external and rationalistic fashion, with dire consequences for the future of Protestant orthodoxy. Chapter III on the divine decree is typical of the Achilles’ heel of Calvinism. Barth has decisively broken with traditional Calvinism on this point. For all its warning that this doctrine must be “handled with special prudence,” it is questionable whether the article succeeds in doing so. Predestination can only be thought of “in Christ”—in the moment of faith, and as it affects the experience of the particular

believer—and not made a speculative theory. And the uncompromising statement in Chapter X, that no one can be saved otherwise than through the Christian religion does not read well in the light of the section on the divine decree and of the relative indifference of the seventeenth century to missions.

The other great weakness of the Confession is the inadequacy of the teaching about the Christian's duty in society. This is, no doubt, characteristic of the time, and as with Calvin's Institutes, partly due to its form being roughly based on that of the Apostles' Creed. But it takes away from its authority as an adequate standard of Christian belief. There may be some significance in the

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fact, however, that the Savoy fathers are much less deferential to the civil magistrate than those of Westminster.

So far I have been rather negative. The Declaration's maturity and depth make much later theology seem impressionistic and shallow, and the section on the doctrine of God is, of course, magnificent. But in general, Westminster is not as attractive and dynamic as the Scots Confession of 1560, when the Reformation was younger.

Chapter XXVI on the Church, as expressed by the Savoy fathers, affirms the only catholic character of the doctrine of the Church which inspired the Independents of the school of Owen. This is of great importance for modern Congregationalism's understanding of itself. It is worth noting also that, as Dr. Micklem and others have constantly emphasized, Congregational churches have a definite Church Order and that with the requisite gifted officers have a right to the management of their own affairs. It is also emphasized that churches have a duty to take any internal dispute to the wider community of churches. In view of what is said in XXIV (p. 126), it is doubtful whether many of our small Congregational Churches have a right to the name. Perhaps there would not be such need for "stated synods" (XXVII), as there appears to be

today if Congregational churches were large and responsible enough to open “a way for the larger usefulness of the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost.”

The healthy liberality of the outlook of the fathers, in some directions at least, is indicated by XXIX (p. 127).

In general, it has to be said that while some extremely important principles in relation to Church Order are enunciated by the Declaration, it does not give all the guidance we need in the greatly changed circumstances of today, especially in relation to the communion of the churches with each other.

Daniel T. Jenkins

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## PREFACE.

*Confession* of the *Faith* that is in us, when justly called for, is so indispensable a due all owe to the Glory of the Sovereign GOD, that it is ranked among the Duties of the first Commandment, such as Prayer is; and therefore by *Paul* yoaked with Faith it self, as necessary to salvation: *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Our Lord Christ himself, when he was accused, of his Doctrine, considered simply as a matter of fact by preaching, refused to answer; because, as such, it lay upon evidence, and matter of testimony of others; unto whom therefore he refers himself: But when both the High Priest and *Pilate* expostulate his Faith, and what he held himself to be; he without any demur at all, cheerfully makes declaration, That he *was the Son of GOD*; so to the *High Priest*: And that he was a *King*, and *bom to be a King*; thus to *Pilate*; though upon the uttering of it his life lay at the stake: Which holy profession of his is celebrated for our example, I *Tim.* 6. 13.

*Confessions*, when made by a company of professors of Christianity joyntly meeting to that end, the most genuine and natural use of such *Confessions* is, That under the same form of words, they express the substance of the

same *common salvation, or unity of their faith*; whereby *speaking the same things, they shew themselves perfectly joyned in the same minde, and in the same judgement.* I Cor. 1. 10.

And accordingly such a transaction is to be looked upon but as a meet or fit *medium or means* whereby to express *that their common faith and salvation*, and no way is to be made use of as an *imposition* upon any: Whatever is of force or constraint in matters of this nature

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causeth them to degenerate from the *name and nature* of *Confessions*, and turns them from being *Confessions of Faith*, into *exactions and impositions of Faith*.

And such *common Confessions* of the Orthodox Faith, made in simplicity of heart by any such Body of Christians, with concord among themselves, ought to be entertained by all others that *love the truth as it is in Jesus*, with an answerable *rejoycing*: For if the unanimous opinions and assertions but in some few points of Religion, and that when by two Churches, namely, that of *Jerusalem*, (Acts 15.) and the *Messengers of Antioch* met, assisted by some of the *Apostles*, were by the Believers of those times received with so much joy, (as it is said, *They rejoyced for the consolation*) much more this is to be done, when the *whole substance of Faith, and form of wholesome words* shall be declared by the Messengers of a multitude of Churches, though wanting those advantages of counsel and authority of the *Apostles*, which *that Assembly* had. Which acceptation is then more specially due, when these shall (to choose) utter and declare their Faith, in the same *substance* for matter, yea, *words*, for the most part, that other Churches and Assemblies, reputed the *most Orthodox*, have done before them: For upon such a correspondency, all may see *that* actually accomplished, which the Apostle did but exhort unto, and pray for, (Rom. 15. 6, 8, 9.) in those *two* more eminent Churches of the *Corinthians* and the *Romans*; (and so in them for all the Christians of his time) that both *Jew and Gentile*, that is, men of different perswasions, (as they were) *might glorifie GOD with one minde and with one mouth*. And truly, the very

turning of the Gentiles to the owning of the same Faith, in the substance of it, with the Christian Jew (though differing in greater points than we do from our brethren) is presently after dignified by the Apostle with this stile, That it is the *Confession of Jesus Christ* himself; not as the *Object* onely, but as the *Author* and *Maker* thereof: (V. 9.) *I will confess to thee* (saith Christ to God) *among the Gentiles*. So that in all such accords, *Christ* is the *great*

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*and first Confessor*; and we, and all our Faith uttered by us, are but the *Epistles*, (as *Paul*) and *Confessions* (as *Isaiah* there) of *their Lord and ours*; He, but expressing what is written in his heart, through their hearts and mouthes, *to the glory of God the Father*: And shall not we all *rejoyce* herein, when as Christ himself is said to do it upon this occasion: as it there also follows, *I will sing unto thy Name*.

Further, as the *soundness* and *wholsomness* of the *matter* gives the *vigor* and *life* to such *Confessions*, so the *inward freeness*, *willingness* and *readiness* of the spirits of the *Confessors* do contribute the *beauty* and *loveliness* thereunto: as it is in *Prayer* to God, so in *Confessions* made to men. *If two or three meet, do agree*, it renders both, to either the more acceptable. The *Spirit of Christ* is in himself too *free*, great and generous a Spirit, to suffer himself to be used by any humane arm, to whip men into belief; he drives not, but *gently leads into all truth*, and *perswades* men to  *dwell in the tents of like precious Faith*; which would lose of its preciousness and value, if that sparkle of freeness shone not in it: The character of his people is to be a *willing people in the day of his power*, (not Mans) *in the beauties of holiness*, which are the *Assemblings* of the Saints: one glory of which *Assemblings* in that first Church, is said to have been, *They met with one accord*; which is there in that Psalm prophesied of, in the instance of that first Church, for all other that should succeed.

And as this great Spirit is in himself free, when, and how far, and in whom to work, so where and when he



doth work, he carrieth it with the same freedom, and is said to be a *free Spirit*, as he both is, and works in us: And where this *Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*.

Now, as to this *Confession* of ours, besides, that a conspicuous conjunction of the particulars mentioned, hath appeared therein: There are also *four remarkable Attendants* thereon, which added, might perhaps in the eyes of sober and indifferent spirits, give the whole

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of this Transaction a room and rank amongst other many good and memorable things of this age; at least all set together, do cast as clear a gleam and manifestation of Gods Power and Presence, as hath appeared in any such kinde of *Confessions*, made by so numerous a company these later years.

The first, is the *Temper*, (or distemper rather) of the *times*, during which, these *Churches* have been gathering, and which they have run through. All do (out of a general sense) complain that the times have been *perillous*, or *difficult times*; (as the Apostle foretold) and that in respect to danger from *seducing spirits*, more perillous then the hottest seasons of Persecution. We have sailed through an *Æstuation*, Fluxes and Refluxes of great varieties of *Spirits*, *Doctrines*, *Opinions* and *Occurrences*; and especially in the matter of *Opinions*, which have been accompanied in their several seasons, with powerful perswasions and temptations, to seduce those of our way. It is known men have taken the freedom (notwithstanding what Authority hath interposed to the contrary) to vent and vend their own vain and accursed imaginations, contrary to the great and fixed Truths of the Gospel, insomuch, as take the whole round and circle of delusions, the Devil hath in this small time, ran, it will be found, that every truth, of greater or lesser weight, hath by one or other hand, at one time or another, been questioned and called to the Bar amongst Us, yea, and impleaded, under the pretext (which hath some degree of Justice in it) that all should not be bound up to the Traditions of former times, nor take Religion upon trust.



Whence it hath come to pass, that many of the soundest Professors were put upon a new search and disquisition of such truths, as they had taken for granted, and yet had lived upon the comfort of: to the end they might be able to convince others, and establish their own hearts against that darkness and unbelief, that is ready to close with error, or at least to doubt of the truth, when error is speciously presented. And hereupon we do professedly

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account it one of the greatest advantages gained out of the temptations of these times; yea the honor of the Saints and Ministers of these Nations, That after they had sweetly been exercised in, and had improved *practical* and *experimental Truths*, this should be their further lot, to examine and discuss, and indeed, anew to learn over every *Doctrinal Truth*, both out of the Scriptures, and also with a fresh taste thereof in their own hearts; which is no other then what the Apostle exhorts to, *Try all things, holdfast that which is good. Conversion* unto God at *first*, what is it else then a *savoury* and *affectionate application*, and the bringing home to the heart with spiritual *light* and *life*, all *truths* that are necessary to salvation, together with other *lesser truths*? all which we had afore conversion taken in but notionally from common education and tradition.

Now that after this first gust those who have bin thus converted should be put upon a new probation and search out of the Scriptures, not onely of all principles explicitly ingredients to Conversion; (unto which the Apostle referreth the *Galatians* when they had diverted from them) but of all other superstructures as well as fundamentals; and together therewith, anew to experiment the power and sweetness of all these in their own souls: What is this but *tryed Faith* indeed? and equivalent to a new conversion unto the truth? *An Anchor* that is proved to be *sure* and *stedfast*, that will certainly hold in all contrary storms: This was the eminent seal and commendation which those holy Apostles that lived and wrote last; *Peter, John* and *Jude*; in their Epistles did set and

give to the *Christians* of the latter part of those *primitive times*. And besides, it is clear and evident by all the other Epistles, from first to last, that it cost the Apostles as much, and far more care and pains to preserve them they had converted, *in the truth*, then they had taken to turn them thereunto at first: And it is in it self as great a work and instance of the power of God, that *keeps*, yea, *guards us through faith unto salvation*.

This perswasion cometh not of him that calleth you.—Gal. 5. 8.

1 Pet. 1. 5

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Secondly, let this be added, (or superadded rather) to give full weight and measure, even to running over, that we have all along this season, held forth (though quarreled with for it by our brethren) this great principle of these times, *That amongst all Christian States and Churches, there ought to be vouchsafed a forbearance and mutual indulgence unto Saints of all persuasions, that keep unto, and holdfast the necessary foundations of faith and holiness, in all other matters extrafundamental, whether of Faith or Order.*

This to have been our constant principle, we are not ashamed to confess to the whole Christian world. Wherein yet we desire we may be understood, not as if in the *abstract* we stood indifferent to falsehood or truth, or were careless whether faith or error, in any Truths but fundamental, did obtain or not, so we had our liberty in our petty and smaller differences: or as if to make sure of that, we had cut out this wide cloak for it: No, we profess that the whole, and every particle of that Faith delivered to the Saints, (the substance of which we have according to our light here professed) is, as to the propagation and furtherance of it by *all Gospel-means*, as precious to us as our lives; or what can be supposed dear to us; and in our sphere we have endeavored to promote them accordingly: But yet withall, we have and

do contend, (and if we had all the power which any, or all of our brethren of differing opinions have desired to have over us, or others, we should freely grant it unto them all) we have and do contend for this, That *in the concrete*, the persons of all such gracious Saints, they and their errors, as they are in them, when they are but such errors as do and may stand with communion with Christ, though they should not repent of them, as not being convinced of them to the end of their days; that those, with their errors (that are purely spiritual, and intrench and overthrow not civil societies), as *concrete with their persons*, should for Christs sake be born withall by all Christians in the world; and they notwithstanding be permitted to enjoy all Ordinances and spiritual

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Priviledges according to their light, as freely as any other of their brethren that pretend to the greatest Orthodoxy; as having as equal, and as fair a right in and unto Christ, and all the holy things of Christ, that any other can challenge to themselves.

And this doth afford a full and invincible testimony on our behalf, in that whiles we have so earnestly contended for this just liberty of Saints in all the Churches of Christ, *we our selves have had no need of it*: that is as to the *matter* of the profession of *Faith* which we have maintained together with others: and of this, this subsequent Confession of Faith gives sufficient evidence. So as we have the confidence in Christ, to utter in the words of those two great Apostles, That *we have stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free* (in the behalf of others, rather than our selves) and having been *free, have not made use of out [our] liberty for a cloak of error or maliciousness* in our selves: And yet, loe, whereas from the beginning of the rearing of these Churches, that of the Apostle hath been (by some) prophcyed of us, and applyed to us, *That whiles we promised (unto others) liberty, we our selves would become servants of corruption, and be brought in bondage* to all sorts of fancies and imaginations: yet the whole world

may now see after the experience of many years ran through (and it is manifest by this Confession) that the great and gracious God hath not onely kept us in that common unity of the Faith and Knowledge of the Son of God, which the whole Community of Saints have and shall in their generations come unto, but also in the same Truths, both small and great, that are built thereupon, that any other of the best and more pure Reformed Churches in their best times (which were their first times) have arrived unto: This Confession withall holding forth a professed opposition unto the common errors and heresies of these times.

These *two considerations* have been taken from *the seasons* we have gone through.

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Thirdly, let the *space of time it self*, or days, wherein from first to last the whole of this Confession was framed and consented to by the whole of us, be duly considered by sober and ingenuous spirits: the whole of days in which we had meetings about it, (set aside the two Lords days, and the first days meeting, in which we considered and debated what to pitch upon) were but eleven days, part of which also was spent by some of us in prayer, others in consulting; and in the end all agreeing. We mention this small circumstance but to this end, (which still adds unto the former) That it gives demonstration, not of our *freeness* and *willingness* onely, but of our *readiness* and *preparedness* unto so great a work; which otherwise, and in other Assemblies, hath ordinarily taken up long and great debates, as in such a variety of matters of such concernment, may well be supposed to fall out. And this is no other then what the Apostle *Peter* exhorts unto, *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason or account of the hope that is in you.* The Apostle *Paul* saith of the spiritual Truths of the Gospel, *That God hath prepared them for those that love him.* The inward and innate constitution of the new creature being in it self such as is suted to all those Truths, as congenial thereunto: But although there

be this mutual *adaptness* between these two, yet such is the mixture of ignorance, darkness and unbelief, carnal reason, preoccupation of judgement, interest of parties, wantonness in opinion, proud adhering to our own perswasions, and perverse oppositions and averseness to agree with others, and a multitude of such like distempers *common to believing man*: All which are not onely mixed with, but at times, (especially in such times as have passed over our heads) are ready to overcloud our judgements, and do cause our eyes to be double, and sometimes prevail as well as lusts, and do byass our wills and affections: And such is their mixture, that although there may be existent an habitual preparedness in mens spirits, yet not always a present readiness [is] to be found,

1 Pet. 3.15.

1 Cor. 2: 9.

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specially not in such a various multitude of men, to make a solemn and deliberate profession of all truths, it being as great a work to finde the spirits of the just (perhaps the best) of Saints, ready for every truth, as *to be prepared for every good work*.

It is therefore to be looked at as a great and special work of the holy Ghost, that so numerous a company of Ministers, and other principal brethren, should so *readily, speedily* and *joyntly* give up themselves unto such a whole Body of *Truths that are after godliness*.

This argues they had not their faith to seek; but, as it said of *Ezra*, that *they were ready Scribes*, and (as Christ) *instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, being as the good *householders* of so many families of Christ, *bringing forth of their store and treasury New and Old*. It shews these truths had been familiar to them, and they acquainted with them, as with their *daily food and provision*, (as Christs allusion there insinuates) in a word, that *so they had preached*, and that *so their people had believed*, as the Apostle speaks upon one like particular occasion. And the Apostle *Paul* considers (in cases of

this nature) *the suddenness or length of the time*, either one way or the other; whether it were in mens *forsaking or learning* of the truth. Thus the *suddenness* in the *Galatians* case in leaving the truth, he makes a wonder of it: / *marvel that you are SO SOON* (that is, in so short a time) *removed from the true Gospel unto another*. Again on the contrary, in the *Hebrews* he aggravates their backwardness, *That when for the time you ought to be Teachers, you had need that one teach you the very first principles of the Oracles of God*. The Parable contrary to both these having fallen out in this transaction, may have some ingredient and weight with ingenuous spirits in its kinde, according to the proportion is put upon either of these forementioned in their adverse kinde, and obtain the like special observation.

This accord of ours hath fallen out without having *held any correspondency together*, or prepared consultation,

Gal. 1.6.

Heb. 5.12.

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by which we might come to be advised of one anothers mindes. We alledge not this as a matter of commendation in us; no, we acknowledge it to have been a great neglect: And accordingly one of the *first proposals* for union amongst us was, That there might be a constant correspondence held among the Churches for counsel and mutual edification, so for time to come to prevent the like omission.

We confess that from the first, every, or at least the generality of our Churches have been in a maner like so many Ships (though holding forth the same general colours) lancht singly, and sailing apart and alone in the vast Ocean of these tumultuating times, and they exposed to every wind of Doctrine, under no other conduct then the Word and Spirit and their particular Elders and principal Brethren, without Associations among our selves, or so much as holding out common lights to others, whereby to know where we were.

But yet whilst we thus confess to our own shame this neglect, let all acknowledge, that God hath ordered it for his high and greater glory, in that his singular care and power should have so watcht over each of these, as that all should be found to have steered their course by the same chart, and to have been bound for one and the same Port, and that upon this general search now made, that the same holy and blessed Truths of all sorts, which are currant and warrantable amongst all the other Churches of Christ in the world, should be found to be our Lading.

The whole, and every of these things when put together, do cause us (whatever men of prejudiced and opposite spirits may finde out to slight them) with a holy admiration, to say, That *this is no other then the Lords doing*; and which we with thanksgiving do take from his hand as a special *token upon us for good*, and doth *shew that God is faithful and upright towards those that are planted in his house*: And that as the *Faith* was but *once* for all, and intentionally *first delivered unto the Saints*; so the *Saints*, when

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not abiding scattered, but gathered under their *respective Pastors* according to *Gods heart into an house*, and Churches unto the *living God*, such *together* are, as *Paul* forespake it, the most steady and firm *pillar and seat of Truth* that God hath any where appointed to himself on earth, where his truth is best conserved, and publicly held forth; there being in such Assemblies weekly a *rich dwelling of the Word amongst them*, that is, a daily open house kept by the means of those good *Householders*, their Teachers and other Instructors respectively appropriated to them, whom Christ in the vertue of his *Ascension*, continues to *give as gifts* to his people, himself *dwelling amongst them*; to the end that by this, as the most sure standing permanent means, *the Saints might be perfected, till we all* (even all the Saints in present and future ages) do come by this constant and daily Ordinance of his unto *the unity of the Faith and Knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the*

*fulness of Christ* (which though growing on by parts and piecemeal, will yet appear compleat, when *that great and general Assembly* shall be gathered, then when this world is ended, and these dispensations have had their fulness and period) and *so that from henceforth* (such a provision being made for us) *we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine.*

And finally, this doth give a fresh and recent demonstration, that the *great Apostle* and *High-priest of our profession* is indeed *ascended* into heaven, and continues there with power and care, *faithful as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end:* and shewes that he will, as he hath promised, be with his own Institutions to the end of the world.

It is true, that many sad miscarriages, divisions, breaches, fallings off from holy Ordinances of God, have along this time of tentation, (especially in the beginning of it) been found in some of our Churches; and no wonder, if what hath been said be fully

Eph. 4.12.

14.

Heb. 3.6.

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considered: Many reasons might further be given hereof, that would be a sufficient Apology, without the help of a retortion upon other Churches (that promised themselves peace) how that more destroying ruptures have befallen them, and that in a wider sphere and compass; which though it should not justifie us, yet may serve to stop others mouths.

Let *Rome* glory of the peace in, and *obedience* of her children, against the Reformed *Churches* for their divisions that [oc]curred (especially in the first rearing of them) whilst we all know the causes of their dull and stupid peace to have been carnal interests, worldly correspondencies, and coalitions strengthened by gratifications of all sorts of men by that Religion, the principles of blinde Devotion, Traditional Faith, Ecclesiastical Tyranny, by

which she keeps her children in bondage to this day. We are also certain, that the very same prejudice that from hence they would cast upon the Reformed (if they were just) do lye as fully against those pure Churches raised up by the Apostles themselves in those first times: for as *we have heard of their patience*, sufferings, consolations, and the transcending gifts poured out, and graces shining in them, *so we have heard complaints of their divisions* too, of the *forsakings of their Assemblies*, as the custom or *maner of SOME was* (which later were in that respect *felones de se*, and needed no other *delivering up to Satan* as their punishment, then what they executed upon themselves). We read of the *shipwrack* also of *Faith* and a *good Conscience*, and *overthrowings of the faith of SOME*; and still but of *some*, not *all*, nor the *most*: which is one piece of an Apologie the Apostle again and again inserts to future ages, and through mercy we have the same to make.

And truly we take the confidence professedly to say, that these tentations common to the purest *Churches of Saints separated from the mixture of the world*, though they grieve us (for *who is offended, and we burn not?*) yet they do not at all stumble us, as to the truth of our

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Heb. 10. 22.

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way, had they been many more: We say it again, these stumble us no more (as to that point) then it doth offend us against the power of Religion it self, to have seen, and to see daily in *particularpersons called out and separated from the world* by an effectual work of conversion, that they for a *while do suffer* under disquietments, vexations, turmoils, unsettlements of spirit, that they are tossed with tempests and horrid tentations, such as they had not in their former estate, whilst they *walked according to the course of this world*: For *Peter* hath sufficiently instructed us whose business it is to raise such storms, even the *Devil's*; and also whose designe it is, that *after they have suffered a while*, thereby they shall be *settled, perfected, stablished*, that

have so suffered, even *the God of all Grace*. And look what course of dispensation God holds to *Saints personally*, he doth the like to *bodies of Saints in Churches*, and the Devil the same for his part too: And that consolatory Maxim of the Apostle, *God shall tread down Satan under your feet shortly*, which *Paul* uttereth concerning the Church of *Rome*, shews how both *God* and *Satan* have this very hand therein; for he speaks that very thing in reference unto their divisions, as the coherence clearly manifests; and so you have both designs exprest at once.

Yea, we are not a little induced to think, that the *divisions*, breaches, &c. of those *primitive Churches* would not have been so frequent among the people themselves, and not the Elders onely, had not the freedom, liberties and rights of the Members (the Brethren, we mean) been stated and exercised in those Churches, the same which we maintain and contend for to be in ours.

Yea (which perhaps may seem more strange to many) had not those Churches been constituted of Members inlightened further then with notional and traditional knowledge, by a new and more powerful light of the *Holy Ghost*, wherein *they had been made partakers of the holy Ghost, and the heavenly gift, and their hearts had tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the*

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*world to come*, and of such Members at lowest, there had not fallen out those kindes of divisions among them.

For experience hath shewn, that the most common sort of meer *Doctrinal Professors* (such as the most are now a days) whose highest elevation is but *freedom from moral scandal joynd* with *devotion* to Christ through meer education, such as in many *Turks* is found towards *Mahomet*, that these finding and feeling themselves not much concerned in the *active part* of *Religion*, so they may have the honor (especially upon a Reformation of a new Refinement) that themselves are approved Members, admitted to the Lords Supper, and their children to the Ordinance of Baptism; they *regard not other*

*matters* (as *Gallio* did not) but do easily and readily give up themselves unto their Guides, being like dead fishes carried with the common stream; whereas those that have a further renewed light by a work of the holy Ghost, whether *saving* or *temporary*, are upon the quite contrary grounds apt to be busie about, and inquisitive into, what they are to receive and practise, or wherein their consciences are professedly concerned and involved: And thereupon they take the freedom to *examine* and *try the spirits, whether of God or no*: And from hence are more apt to dissatisfaction, and from thence to run into division, and many of such proving to be inlightned but with a *temporary*, not saving *Faith* (who have such a work of the Spirit upon them, and profession in them, as will and doth approve it self to the judgement of Saints, and ought to be so judged, until they be otherwise discovered) who at long run, prove hypocrites through indulgence unto lusts, and then out of their lusts persist to hold up these divisions unto breach of, or departings from Churches, and the Ordinances of God, and *God is even* with them for it, *they waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*; and even many of those that are sincere, through a mixture of darkness and erroneusness in their judgements, are for a season apt

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out of conscience *to be led away with the error of others, which lie in wait to deceive*.

Insomuch as the Apostle upon the example of those first times, foreseeing also the like events in following generations upon the like causes, hath been bold to set this down as a *ruled Case*, that likewise in other Churches so constituted and *de facto* empriviledged as that of the Church of *Corinth* was (which single Church, in the sacred Records about it, is the compleatest Mirror of Church-Constitution, Order and Government, and events thereupon ensuing, of any one Church whatever that we have story of) his Maxim is, *There must also be divisions amongst you*; he setly inserts an [ALSO]<sup>1</sup> in the case, as that which had been in his own observation, and that

which would be ἐπὶ τῷ πολὺ the fate of other Churches like thereunto, *so prophesieth he*: And he speaks this as peremptorily as he doth elsewhere in that other, *We must through many tribulations enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: Yea, and that *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*: There is a [MUST] upon both alike, and we bless God, that we have run through both, and do say, and we say no more; *That as it was then, so it is now*, in both respects.

However, such hath been the powerful hand of Gods Providence in *these*, which have been the worst of our *Tryals*, That out of an approved experience and observation of the issue, we are able to adde that other part of the Apostles Prediction. That therefore *such rents must be, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*; which holy issue God (as having aimed at it therein) doth frequently and certainly bring about in Churches, as he doth bring upon them that other fate of division. Let them therefore look unto it, that are the *Authors of such disturbances*, as the Apostle warneth, *Gal. 5. 10*. The *experiment is this*, That we have seen, and do daily see, that multitudes of holy and precious souls, and (in the holy Ghosts word) *approved Saints*, have been, and

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<sup>1</sup> The brackets are in original, as also round "MUST" below.

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are the more rooted and grounded by means of these shakings, and do continue to cleave the faster to Christ, and the purity of his Ordinances, and value them the more by this cost God hath put them to for the enjoying of them, *who having been planted in the House of the Lord, have flourished in the Courts of our God*, in these evil times, to *shew that the Lord is upright*. And this experimented event from out of such divisions, hath more confirmed us and is a lowder Apologie for us, then all that our opposites are able from our breaches to alleadge to prejudice us.

We will add a few words for *conclusion*, and give a more particular account of this our *DECLARATION*. In drawing up this *Confession of Faith*, we have had before us the *Articles of Religion*, approved and passed by both Houses of *Parliament*, after advice had with an *Assembly of Divines*, called together by them for that purpose. To which *Confession*, for the substance of it, we fully assent, as do our Brethren of *New-England*, and the Churches also of *Scotland*, as each in their general Synods have testified.

June 20, 1648.

A few things we have added for obviating some erroneous opinions, that have been more broadly and boldly here of late maintained by the Asserters, then in former times; and made some other additions and alterations in *method*, here and there, and some clearer explanations, as we found occasion.

We have endeavoured throughout, to hold to such Truths in this our *Confession*, as are more properly termed *matters of Faith*; and what is of *Church-order*, we dispose in certain Propositions by it self. To this course we are led by the Example of the Honorable *Houses of Parliament*, observing what was established, and what omitted by them in that *Confession* the Assembly presented to them. Who thought it not convenient to have matters of *Discipline* and *Church-Government* put into a *Confession of Faith*, especially such particulars thereof, as then were,

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and still are controverted and under dispute by men Orthodox and sound in Faith. The 30th *cap.* therefore of that *Confession*, as it was presented to them by the Assembly, which is of *Church-Censures*, their *Use*, *Kindes*, and in *whom placed*: As also *cap.* 31. of *Synods and Councils*, by *whom* to be called, of *what force* in their *decrees* and *determinations*. And the 4th *paragr.* of the 20th *cap.* which determines what *opinions* and practises *disturb the peace* of the Church, and how such disturbers ought to be proceeded against by the *Censures* of the Church, and punished by the *Civil Magistrate*. Also a

great part of the 24th *cap. of Marriage and Divorce*. These were such doubtful assertions, and so unsutable to a Confession of Faith, as the *Honorable Houses* in their great Wisdom thought fit to lay them aside: There being nothing that tends more to heighten dissentings among Brethren, then to determine and adopt the *matter* of their *difference*, under so high a title, as to be an *Article of our Faith*: So that there are two whole Chapters, and some Paragraphs in other Chapters in their Confession, that we have upon this account omitted; and the rather do we give this notice, because that Copy of the Parliaments, followed by us, is in few mens hands; the other as it came from the *Assembly*, being approved of in *Scotland*, was printed and hastened [i]nto the world before the *Parliament* had declared their Resolutions about it; which was not till *June 20. 1648.* and yet hath been, and continueth to be the Copy (ordinarily) onely sold, printed and reprinted for these *eleven* years. After the 19th *cap. of the Law*, we have added a *cap. of the Gospel*, it being a Title that may not well be omitted in a Confession of Faith: In which Chapter, what is dispersed, and by intimation in the *Assemblies Confession* with some little addition, is here brought together, and more fully under one head.

That there are not Scriptures annexed as in some Confessions (though in divers others it's otherwise)

Aug. 1647.

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Session 786.

we give the same account as did the Reverend Assembly in the same case: which was this; The Confession being large, and so framed, as to meet with the common errors, if the Scriptures should have been alledged with any clearness, and by shewing where the strength of the proof lieth, it would have required a volume.

We say, further, it being our utmost end in this (as it is indeed of a *Confession*) humbly to give an account

what we hold and assert in these matters; that others, especially the Churches of Christ may judge of us accordingly. This we aimed at, and not so much to instruct others, or convince gainsayers. These are the proper works of other institutions of Christ, and are to be done in the strength of express Scripture. *A Confession* is an Ordinance of another nature.

What we have laid down and asserted about *CHURCHES* and their *Government*, we humbly conceive to be the *Order* which Christ himself hath appointed to be observed, we have endeavoured to follow Scripture-light; and those also that went before us according to that Rule, desirous of nearest uniformity with *reforming Churches*, as with our Brethren in *New-England*, so with others, that differ from them and us.

The Models and Platforms of this subject laid down by learned men, and practised by Churches, are various: We do not judge it *brotherly*, or *grateful*, to insist upon comparisons as some have done; but this experience teacheth, That the *variety*, and possibly the *disputes* and *emulations* arising thence, have much strengthened, if not fixed, this unhappy perswasion in the mindes of some learned and good men, namely, *That there is no settled Order laid down in Scripture*; but it's left to the prudence of the Christian Magistrate, to compose or make choice of such a Form as is most sutable and consistent with their Civil Government. Where this opinion is entertained in the perswasion of Governors, there, Churches asserting their Power and Order to be

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*jure divino*, and the appointment of Jesus Christ, can have no better nor more honorable entertainment, then a Toleration or Permission.

Yet therein there is this remarkable advantage to all parties that differ, about what in Government is of Christs appointment; in that such *Magistrates* have a far greater latitude in conscience, to tolerate and permit the several forms of each so bound up in their perswasion,

then *they* have to submit unto what the Magistrate shall impose: And thereupon the Magistrate exercising an indulgency and forbearance, with protection and encouragement to the people of God, so differing from him, and amongst themselves: Doth therein discharge as great a faithfulness to Christ, and love to his people, as can any way be supposed and expected from any Christian Magistrate, of what perswasion soever he is. And where this clemency from Governors is shewed to any sort of persons or Churches of Christ upon such a principle, it will in equity produce this just effect, That all that so differ from him, and amongst themselves, standing in equal and alike difference from the principle of such a Magistrate, he is equally free to give a like liberty to them, one as well as the other.

This faithfulness in our Governors we do with thankfulness to God acknowledge, and to their everlasting honor, which appeared much in the late Reformation. The *Hierarchie*, *Common-prayer-book*, and all other things grievous to Gods people, being removed, they made choice of an Assembly of learned men, to advise what Government and Order is meet to be established in the room of these things; and because it was known there were different opinions (as always hath been among Godly men) about forms of Church-Government, there was by the *Ordinance* first sent forth to call an Assembly, not onely a choice made of persons of several perswasions to sit as *Members* there, but liberty given to a *lesser number*, if dissenting, to report their Judgements and Reasons, as well and as freely as the *major part*.

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Hereupon the Honorable House of Commons (an Indulgence we hope will never be forgotten) finding by papers received from them, that the Members of the Assembly were not like to compose differences amongst themselves, so as to joyn in the same Rule for Church-Government, did Order further as followeth:

That a Committee of Lords and Commons, &c, do take into consideration the differences of the Opinions in the Assembly of Divines in point of Church-Government, and to endeavor a union if it be possible; and in case that cannot be bone, to endeavor the finding out some way, how far tender consciences, who cannot in all things submit to the same Rule which shall be established, may be born with according to the Word, and as may stand with the publique peace.

By all which it is evident the Parliament purposed not to establish the Rule of Church-Government with such vigor,<sup>1</sup> as might not permit and bear with a practise different from what they had established: In persons and Churches of different principles, if occasion were. And this Christian clemency and indulgence in our Governors, hath been the foundation of that *Freedom and Liberty*, in the managing of Church-affairs, which *our Brethren* as well as *WE*, that differ from them, do now, and have many years enjoyed.

Ordinance of  
Mar.14, 1645.

The Honorable Houses by several Ordinances of Parliament after much consultation, having settled Rules for Church-Government, and *such an Ecclesiastical Order* as they judged *would best joynt with the Laws and Government of the Kingdom*, did publish them, requiring the practise hereof throughout the Nation; and in particular, by the Ministers of the Province of *London*. But (upon the former reason, or the like charitable consideration) these *Rules* were not imposed by them under any *PENALTY* or rigorous inforcement, though frequently urged thereunto by some.

Our reverend Brethren of the Province of *London*,

<sup>1</sup> 1659 ed. has "rigor".

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having considered of these Ordinances, and the Church-Government laid down in them, declared their opinions to be, *That there is not a compleat rule in those Ordinances; also, that there are many necessary things not yet established, and some things wherein their consciences are not so fully satisfied.* These Brethren in the same paper, have published also their joynt *Resolution to practise in all things according to the rule of the Word, and according to these Ordinances, so far as they conceive them correspond to it, and in so doing they trust they shall not grieve the spirit of the truly godly, nor give any just occasion to them that are contrary minded, to blame their proceedings.*

We humbly conceive (that *WE* being dissatisfied in these things as our Brethren) the like liberty was intended by the honorable Houses, and may be taken by us of the *Congregational way* (without blame or grief to the spirits of those *Brethren* at least) to resolve, or rather to continue in the same resolution and practise in these matters, which indeed were our practises in times of greatest opposition, and before this reformation was begun.

And as our Brethren, *the Ministers of London*, drew up and published their *opinions* and *apprehensions* about Church-Government into an intire System; so we now give the like publique account of our consciences, and the rules by which we have constantly practised hitherto; which we have here drawn up, and do present. Whereby it will appear how much, or how little we differ in these things from our Presbyterian Brethren.

And we trust there is no just cause why any man, either for our differing from the present settlement, it being out of conscience, and not out of *contempt*, or our differences one from another, being not *wilful*, should charge either of us with that odious reproach of *Schism*. And indeed, if not for our differing from the State-settlement, much less because we differ from our Brethren, our differences being *in some lesser things, and circumstances*, onely, as themselves acknowledge. And let it be further considered, that we have not broken from them or their

Considerations and Cautions from Sion Coll. June 19, 1646. Jus divinum Minist. pub. by the Provincial Assembly of London in the Preface.

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Order by these differences (but rather they from us) and in that respect we less deserve their censure; our practise being no other then what it was in our breaking from Episcopacy, and long before Presbytery, or any such form as now they are in, was taken up by them; and we will not say how probable it is that the yoke of Episcopacy had been upon our neck to this day, if some such way (as formerly, and now is, and hath been termed *Schism*) had not with much suffering bin then practised & since continued in.

For *Novelty*, wherewith we are likewise both charged by the enemies of both, it is true, in respect of the publique and open profession, either of Presbytery or Independency, this Nation hath been a stranger to each way, it's possible ever since it hath been Christian; though for our selves we are able to trace the footsteps of an Independent Congregational Way in the ancientest customs of the Churches, as also in the writings of our soundest Protestant Divines, and (that which we are much satisfied in) a full concurrence throughout in all the substantial parts of Church-Governments, with our Reverend Brethren the *old Puritan non-Conformists*, who being instant in prayer and much sufferings, prevailed with the Lord, and we reap with joy, what they sowed in tears. Our Brethren also that are for Presbyterial subordinations, profess what is of weight against *Novelty* for their way.

Puritanis.  
Ang. by Dr.  
Aims near 50

years since,\*  
 as the opinions  
 of Whitehead,  
 Gilby, Fox,  
 Dearing,  
 Greenham,  
 Cartwright,  
 Fenner, Fulk,  
 Whitaker,  
 Rainold, Per-  
 kins, &c.

And now therefore seeing the Lord, in whose hand is the heart of Princes, hath put into the hearts of our Governors to tolerate and permit (as they have done many years) persons of each perswasion, to enjoy their consciences, though neither come up to the *Rule established by Authority*: And that which is more, to give us both protection, and the same encouragement that the most devoted *Conformists* in those former superstitious times enjoyed, yea, and by a publique Law to establish

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\* *Puritanismus Anglicanus*, Frankfort 1610; Latin translation of W. Bradshaw's *English Puritanisme*; a collection of the opinions of leading Puritans, with a Preface by William Ames.

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this Liberty for time to come; and yet further, in the midst of our fears, to set over us a *Prince* that owns this Establishment, and cordially resolves to secure our churches in the enjoyment of these Liberties, if we abuse them not to the disturbance of the Civil Peace.

This should be a very great engagement upon the hearts of all, though of different perswasions, to endeavor our utmost, *joyntly* to promote the honor and prosperity of such a Government and Governors by whatsoever means, which in our Callings as Ministers of the Gospel, and as Churches of Jesus Christ the Prince of peace, we are any way able to; as also to be peaceably disposed one towards another, and with mutual toleration to love as brethren, notwithstanding such differences, remembring, as it's very equal we should, the differences that are between *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, being differences between fellow-servants, and neither of them having

authority given from God or man, to impose their opinions, one more then the other. That our Governors after so solemn an establishment, should thus bear with us both, in our greater differences from their Rule, and after this, for any of us *to take a fellow-servant by the throat*, upon the account of a lesser reckoning, and nothing due to *him* upon it: is to forget, at least not to exercise, that compassion and tenderness we have found, where we had less ground to challenge or expect it.

Our Prayer unto God is, That *whereto we have* already attained, *we all may walk by the same rule*, and that *wherein we are otherwise minded*, God would reveal it to us in his due time.

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## DECLARATION OF FAITH

### CHAP. I.<sup>1</sup>

*Of the holy Scripture.*

Although the Light of Nature, and the Works of Creation and Providence, do so far manifest the Goodness, Wisdom and Power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his Will, which is necessary unto salvation: Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times, and in divers maners to reveal himself, and to declare that his Will unto his Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of Gods revealing his Will unto his people, being now ceased.

II. Under the name of holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testament; which are these:

*Of the Old Testament.*

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Josuah, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings,

<sup>1</sup> The text of this reprint of the Declaration of Faith and the Platform of Polity is that of the first edition (1658), as given in Williston Walker's *Creeks and Platforms of Congregationalism* (1893) pp. 367-408. The portions of the Declaration taken from the Westminster Confession are printed in Roman, the additions made at the Savoy in black faced type. Walker's notes, here reproduced, show the parts of the Confession omitted in the Declaration, in accordance with the text in P. Schaff's *Creeks of Christendom* (1878) III, pp. 600-673. The few changes in the Declaration by the Massachusetts Synod of 1680 are also indicated. The Confession drawn up at Saybrook, Connecticut, 1708, is identical with that of 1680, except for the addition of proof texts.

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1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

*Of the New Testament.*

Matthew,<sup>1</sup> Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Pauls Epistle to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 To Timothy, 2 To Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, The Revelation.

All which are given by **the** inspiration of God to be the Rule of Faith and Life.

III. The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of Divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of, then other humane writings.

IV. The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the Testimony of any man or Church; but wholly upon God (who is Truth it self) the Author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

V. We may be moved and induced by the Testimony of the Church, to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the Matter, the efficacy of the Doctrine, the majesty of the Style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is, to give all glory to God) the full discovery it makes of the onely way of Mans Salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the intire perfection thereof, are Arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence it self to be the Word of God; Yet notwithstanding, our full per-

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<sup>1</sup> West, prefaces: *The Gospels according to*.

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swasion and assurance of the infallible Truth and Divine Authority thereof, is from the inward work of the holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

VI. The whole Counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own Glory, mans Salvation, Faith and Life, is either expresly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new Revelations of the Spirit, or Traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word: And that there are some circumstances concerning the Worship of God and Government of the Church, common to humane actions and Societies, which are to be ordered by the Light of Nature and Christian prudence, according to the general Rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.

VII. All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for

Salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not onely the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the Native language of the people of God of old) and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of<sup>1</sup> writing of it was most generally known to the Nations) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all Ages, are therefore Authentical; so as in all Controversies of Religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these Original Tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them; therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar

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<sup>1</sup> West, reads *the*.

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language of every Nation unto which they come, that the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope.

IX. The infallible Rule of Interpretation of Scripture, is the Scripture it self; And therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places, that speak more clearly.

X. The Supreme Judge by which all controversies of Religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councils, Opinions of ancient Writers, Doctrines of men and private Spirits, are to be examined, and in whose Sentence we are to rest, can be no other, but the<sup>1</sup> **holy Scripture delivered by the Spirit; into which Scripture so delivered, our Faith is finally Resolved.**

## CHAP. II.

*Of God and of the holy Trinity.*

There is but one onely living and true God; who is infinite in Being and Perfection, a most pure Spirit, invisible, without body, parts or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the Counsel of his own immutable and most righteous Will, for his own Glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his Judgements, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God hath all Life, Glory, Goodness, Blessedness, **in**, and of himself; and is alone, in, and unto himself,

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<sup>1</sup> West, reads: *but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.*

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All-sufficient, not<sup>1</sup> standing in need of any Creatures, which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but onely manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: He is the alone Fountain<sup>2</sup> of all Being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most Sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth: In his sight all things are open and manifest, his Knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain: He is most holy in all his Counsels, in all his Works, and in all his Commands. To him is due from Angels and Men, and every other Creature, whatsoever Worship, Service or Obedience, **as Creatures, they owe unto the Creator, and whatever he is further** pleased to require of them.

III. In the Unity of the God-head there be three Persons, of one Substance, Power and Eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the holy Ghost: The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; The

Son is eternally begotten of the Father; The holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. **Which Doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our Communion with God, and comfortable Dependence upon him.**

CHAP. III.

*Of Gods Eternal Decree.*

God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy Counsel of his own Will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: Yet so, as thereby neither is God the Author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the Creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

<sup>1</sup> Saybrook reads *nor*.

<sup>2</sup> Walker, following Schaff, says West, reads *foundation*, but Schaff in his parallel Latin version has *fans*, i.e. fountain, which is no doubt the correct reading.

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II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed Conditions, yet hath he not decreed any thing, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such Conditions.

III. By the Decree of God for the manifestation of his Glory, some Men and Angels are predestinated unto everlasting Life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting Death.

IV. These Angels and Men thus predestinated, and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto Life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his Will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting Glory, out of his meer free Grace and Love, without any fore-sight of Faith or good Works, or perseverance in either of them or any other thing in the Creature, as Conditions or Causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious Grace.

VI. As God hath appointed the Elect unto Glory, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of his Will fore-ordained all the means thereunto: Wherefore they who are elected, being fain in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto Faith in Christ by his spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power, through Faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the Elect onely.

VII. The rest of mankinde God was pleased, according to the unsearchable Counsel of his own Will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his Creatures, to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious Justice.

VIII. The Doctrine of this high mystery of Predestina-

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tion is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may from the certainty of their effectual Vocation, be assured of their eternal Election. So shall this Doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

#### CHAP. IV.

##### *Of Creation.*

It pleased God the Father, Son and holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal Power, Wisdom and Goodness, in the beginning, to create or make **out** of nothing the World, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

II. After God had made all other creatures, he created Man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal

Souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, after his own Image, having the Law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own Will, which was subject unto change, Besides this Law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil; which whiles they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the Creatures.

#### CHAP. V.

##### *Of Providence.*

God the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures, actions and things from

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the greatest even to<sup>1</sup> the least by his most wise and holy Providence, according **unto**<sup>2</sup> his infallible fore-knowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own Will, to the praise of the glory of his Wisdom, Power, Justice, Goodness and Mercy.

II. Although in relation to the fore-knowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly; yet by the same Providence he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second Causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. God in his ordinary Providence maketh use of Means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them at his pleasure.

IV. The almighty Power, unsearchable Wisdom, and infinite Goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his Providence, **in** that **his determinate Counsel**<sup>3</sup> extendeth it self even to the first Fall, and all other sins of Angels and Men (and that not by a bare permission) **which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth**, and otherwise ordereth and governeth<sup>4</sup> in a manifold Dispensation to his own **most** holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth onely from the Creature, and not from God,

who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.

V. The most wise, righteous and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption, and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

<sup>1</sup> 1680 reads *unto*. <sup>2</sup> West, and 1680 read *to*.

<sup>3</sup> West, reads, *it extendeth...*

<sup>4</sup> West, reads, *but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them in a ...*

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VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blinde and harden, from them he not onely withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been inlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects, as their corruption makes occasions of sin; and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softning of others.<sup>1</sup>

VII. As the Providence of God doth in general reach to all Creatures, so after a most special maner it taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

## CHAP. VI.

*Of the fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof.*

**God having made a Covenant of Works and Life, thereupon, with our first parents and all their posterity in them, they**

being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan **did wilfully transgress the Law of their Creation, and break the Covenant** in eating the forbidden fruit.<sup>2</sup>

II. By this sin they, **and we in them**, fell from<sup>3</sup> original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

III. They being the Root, **and by God's appointment standing in the room and stead** of all mankinde, the guilt

<sup>1</sup> Saybrook reads *them*.

<sup>2</sup> West, reads: "Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory."

<sup>3</sup> West, reads *their*.

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of this sin was imputed, and<sup>1</sup> corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

IV. From this Original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to **all** good, and wholly enclined to all evil, do proceed all Actual transgressions.

V. This Corruption of nature during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it **be** through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both it self and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin.

VI. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous Law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in his own nature bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the Law, and so made subject to death, with **all** miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal.

## CHAP. VII.

### *Of God's Covenant with Man.*

**The** distance between God and the Creature is **so** great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience

unto him as their Creator, yet they could never have **attained the reward of Life,<sup>2</sup> but by some voluntary condescension on Gods part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of Covenant.**

II. The first Covenant made with man, was a Covenant of Works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

III. Man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by that Covenant, the Lord was pleased to make

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, *the same death in sin and ...*

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward but ...*

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a second, commonly called the Covenant of Grace; wherein he freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life, his holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.

IV. This Covenant of Grace is frequently set forth in the Scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the Testator, and to the everlasting Inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

V. **Although<sup>1</sup> this Covenant hath been differently and variously administred in respect of Ordinances and Institutions** in the time of the Law, and since **the coming of Christ in the flesh; yet for the substance and efficacy of it, to all its spiritual and saving ends, it is** one and the same; **upon the account of which** various dispensations, it is called the Old and New Testament.

<sup>1</sup> A large variation from the West, follows, possibly in view of Chap. XX on the Gospel. West, reads:

“V. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances, delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the



elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament.

VI. Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity and less outward glory, yet in them it is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations."

## CHAP. VIII.

### *Of Christ the Mediator.*

It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to chuse and ordain the Lord Jesus his onely begotten Son, **according to a Covenant made between them both**, to be the Mediator between God and Man; the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Savior of his Church, the Heir of all things and Judge of the World; unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

II. The Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him Mans nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance: So that two whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, were inseparably joyned together in one Person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which Person is very God and very Man, yet one Christ, the onely Mediator between God and Man.

III. The Lord Jesus in his Humane nature, thus united to the Divine in **the Person of the Son**, was sanctified and anointed with the holy Spirit above measure, having in him all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell,



to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of Grace and Truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the Office of a Mediator and Surety; which Office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by his Father, who **also** put all Power and Judgement into his hand, and gave him Commandment to execute the same.

IV. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly

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undertake; which that he might discharge, he was made under the Law, and did perfectly fulfil it, **and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have born and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us**, enduring<sup>1</sup> **most grievous torments immediately** from God **in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body, was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption, on the third day he arose from the dead with the same Body in which he suffered, with which also he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return to judge Men and Angels at the end of the world.**

V. The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the Justice of **God**,<sup>2</sup> and purchased not onely reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the Kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.

VI. Although the work of Redemption was not actually wrought by Christ, till after his Incarnation; yet the vertue, efficacy and benefits thereof were communicated to<sup>3</sup> the Elect in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those Promises, Types and Sacrifices wherein he was revealed and signified to be the seed of the Woman, which should bruise the Serpents head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and to day the same, and for ever.

VII. Christ in the work of Mediation acteth according to both Natures, by each Nature doing that which is

proper to<sup>4</sup> it self; yet by reason of the unity of the Person, that which is proper to one Nature, is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the Person denominated by the other Nature.

VIII. To all those for whom Christ hath purchased Redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *endured*. <sup>2</sup> West, reads, *his Father*.

<sup>3</sup> West, reads *unto*. <sup>4</sup> Saybrook reads *in*.

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communicate the same, making intercession for them, and revealing unto them in and by the Word, the mysteries of salvation, effectually perswading them by his Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit, overcoming all their enemies by his almighty Power and Wisdom, and in such maner and ways as are most consonant to his most wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

## CHAP. IX.

### *Of Free-will.*

God hath endued the Will of man with that natural liberty **and power of acting upon choice** that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of Nature determined to do good or evil.

II. Man in his state of Innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that which **was**<sup>I</sup> good and well pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

III. Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

IV. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone inables him

freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly nor onely will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of Glory onely.

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *is*.

## CHAP. X.

### *Of Effectual Calling.*

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those onely, he is pleased in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, inlightning their mindes spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh, renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual Call is of Gods free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, untill being quickned and renewed by the holy Spirit he is thereby enabled to answer this Call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III. Elect Infants dying in Infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ,<sup>1</sup> who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth: so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the Ministry of the Word.

IV. Others not elected, although they may be called by the Ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet **not being effectually**

**drawn by the Father, they neither do nor can<sup>2</sup>** come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men not professing the Christian Religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the Light of Nature, and the Law of that Religion they do profess: And to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.

<sup>1</sup> Savoy omits, *through the Spirit*.

<sup>2</sup> West, reads *yet they never truly come unto Christ*.

## CHAP. XI.

### *Of Justification.*

Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their person as righteous, not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christs sake alone; nor by imputing Faith it self, the act of believing, or any other Evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness, but by imputing **Christs active obedience unto** the whole Law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness,<sup>2</sup> they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by Faith; which Faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.

II. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ, and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead Faith, but worketh by Love.

III. Christ by his Obedience and Death did fully discharge the Debt of all those that are<sup>3</sup> justified, and did **by the sacrifice of himself, in the blood of his Cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due unto them** make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to **Gods**<sup>4</sup> Justice in their behalf; Yet in as much as he was given by the Father for them, and his Obedience and Satisfaction accepted in

their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is onely of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

IV. God did from all eternity decree to justifie all

<sup>1</sup> Saybrook reads *to*.

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving...*

<sup>3</sup> West, reads, *thus.* <sup>4</sup> West, reads, *his Father's.*

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the Elect, and Christ did in the fulness of time dye for their sins, and rise again for their justification: Nevertheless, they are not justified **personally**, until the holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.

V. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and although they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins fall under Gods fatherly displeasure: and **in that condition they** have not **usually**<sup>1</sup> the light of his Countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

VI. The justification of Believers under the old Testament, was in all these respects one and the same with the justification of Believers under the new Testament.

## CHAP. XII.

### *Of Adoption.*

All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth in and for his onely Son Jesus Christ to make partakers of the grace of Adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and priviledges of the Children of God, have his Name put upon them, receive the Spirit of Adoption, have access to the Throne of Grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the

day of Redemption, and inherit the promises as Heirs of everlasting Salvation.

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, *and not have the light...*

### CHAP. XIII.

#### *Of Sanctification.*

They **that** are **united to Christ**, effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, through the vertue of Christs death and resurrection, are **also** further sanctified really and personally **through the same vertue**,<sup>1</sup> by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakned, and mortified, and they more and more quickned, **and** strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of **all** true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

II. This Sanctification is throughout **in** the whole man, yet imperfect in this life, there abideth<sup>2</sup> still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

III. In which war, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome, and so the Saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

### CHAP. XIV.

#### *Of saving Faith.*

The grace of Faith, whereby the Elect are inabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, "They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are further sanctified, really and personally, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection,

by his Word and Spirit," æ 1680, as usual, follows the Savoy, save in the first line: "They that are effectually called," i.e. almost a restoration of the West.<sup>2</sup> 1680 reads *abide*.

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Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the Ministry of the Word; by which also, and by the administration of the **seals**, Prayer, **and other means, I it is increased and strengthened.**

II. By this Faith a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the Authority of God himself speaking therein, and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatnings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving Faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by vertue of the covenant of Grace.

III. This Faith, **although it be** different in degrees, **and may be** weak or strong, yet **it is in the least degree of it different in the kind or nature of it (as is all other saving grace) from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; And therefore, though it** may be many times assailed and weakened,<sup>2</sup> **yet it** gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our Faith.

## CHAP. XV.

*Of Repentance unto life and salvation.*<sup>3</sup>

**Such of the Elect as are converted at riper years, having sometimes lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling giveth them Repentance unto life.**

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, *administration of the sacraments and prayer, it is, ...*

<sup>2</sup> Savoy has considerable addition. West, reads, "This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory;" ...

<sup>3</sup> This chapter is rewritten and rearranged. West, reads, "*Of Repentance Unto Life.*"

Repentance unto Life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is

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**II. Whereas there is none that doth good, and sinneth not, and the hest of men may through the power and deceitfulness of their corruptions dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall into great sins and provocations; God hath in the covenant of Grace mercifully provided, that Believers so sinning and falling, be renewed through repentance unto Salvation.**

**III. This saving Repentance is an Evangelical Grace,** I whereby a person being by the holy Ghost made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth by Faith in Christ humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency, praying for pardon and strength of Grace, with a purpose, and endeavor by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things.

**IV. As Repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof; so** it is every mans duty to repent of his particular **known** sins particularly.<sup>2</sup>

to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.

II. By it a sinner, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with him, in all the ways of his commandments.

III. Although repentance be not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God's free grace in Christ; yet is it of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.

IV. As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.

V. Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man's duty to endeavour to repent of his particular sins, particularly.

VI. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof, upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy; so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him."

<sup>1</sup> cf. note above, section I. <sup>2</sup> cf. note above, section V.

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**V. Such is the provision which God hath made through Christ in the covenant of Grace, for the preservation of Believers unto salvation, that although there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation; yet there is no sin so great, that it shall<sup>1</sup> bring damnation on them<sup>2</sup> who truly repent;<sup>3</sup> which makes the constant preaching of Repentance necessary.**

#### CHAP. XVI.

##### *Of good Works.*

Good works are onely such as God hath commanded in his holy Word, and not such as without the warrant thereof are devised by men out of blinde zeal, or upon pretence of good intentions.<sup>4</sup>

II. These good Works done in obedience to Gods commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively Faith, and by them Believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edifie their Brethren, adorn the profession of the Gospel, stop the mouthes of the adversaries, and glorifie God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.

III. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ: And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

IV. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more then God requires,



<sup>1</sup> West, reads *can.* <sup>2</sup> West, reads, *upon those.*

<sup>3</sup> cf. note above, section IV. <sup>4</sup> West, reads *intention.*

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as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do.

V. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion that is between them, and the glory to come; and the infinite distance that is between us and God, whom by them we can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants; and because as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit, and as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of Gods judgement.<sup>1</sup>

VI. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of Believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him, not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprouceable in Gods sight, but that he looking upon them in his son is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

VII. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and to others: yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by Faith, nor are done in a right maner, according to the Word, nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God; and yet their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God.

## CHAP. XVII.

### *Of the Perseverance of the Saints.*

They whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally



<sup>1</sup> Saybrook reads *judgments*.

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nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

II. This Perseverance of the Saints depends not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the Decree of Election,<sup>1</sup> from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, **and union with him, the oath of God,** the abiding of **his**<sup>2</sup> Spirit, and of<sup>3</sup> the seed of God within them, and the nature of the Covenant of Grace, from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

III. **And though**<sup>4</sup> they may through the temptation of Satan, and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur Gods displeasure and grieve his holy Spirit, come to **have** their graces and comforts **impaired,**<sup>5</sup> have their hearts hardned, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgements upon themselves; **yet they are and shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.**

## CHAP. XVIII.

### *Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.*

Although **temporary believers**<sup>6</sup> and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes, and carnal presumptions of being in the favor of God, and state<sup>7</sup> of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *flowing*. <sup>2</sup> West, reads *the*. <sup>3</sup> 1680 omits *of*.

<sup>4</sup> 1680 reads *Nevertheless*.

<sup>5</sup> West, reads, *come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts*.

<sup>6</sup> West, reads *hypocrites*. <sup>7</sup> West, reads *estate*.

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sincerity, endeavoring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the<sup>1</sup> state of Grace, and may rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

II. This<sup>2</sup> certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable perswasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded **on the blood and righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel, and also upon** the inward evidence of those graces unto which promises are made, **and on the immediate witness** of the Spirit, **testifying our Adoption, and as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy.**

III. This infallible Assurance doth not so belong to the essence of Faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet being inabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may without extraordinary revelation in the right use of ordinary means attain thereunto: And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his<sup>3</sup> calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and chearfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

IV. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished and intermitted, as by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience, and grieveth the Spirit, by some sudden or vehement temptation,

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *a*.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is rewritten. West, reads: "This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable perswasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit

is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.”<sup>3</sup> Saybrook reads *their*.

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by Gods withdrawing the light of his countenance,<sup>1</sup> suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light; yet are they **neither**<sup>2</sup> utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of Faith, that love of Christ and the Brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which by the operation of the Spirit this assurance may in due time be revived, and by the which in the mean time they are supported from utter despair.

## CHAP. XIX.

### *Of the Law of God.*

God gave to Adam a Law **of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil**, as a Covenant of Works, by which he bound him and all his posterity **to** personal, entire, exact and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatned death upon the breach of it, and indued him with power and ability to keep it.

II. This Law **so written in the heart**, continued to be a perfect Rule of righteousness after **the fall of man**,<sup>3</sup> and was delivered by God upon<sup>4</sup> mount Sinai in ten Commandments, and written in two Tables; the four first Commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.

III. Beside this Law commonly called Moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel<sup>5</sup> Ceremonial Laws, containing several Typical Ordinances, partly of Worship,<sup>6</sup> prefiguring Christ, his Graces, Actions, Sufferings and Benefits, and partly holding forth divers

<sup>1</sup> Savoy omits *and*. <sup>2</sup> West, reads *never*.

<sup>3</sup> West, reads, “This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and as such, was delivered by God,” ...

<sup>4</sup> 1680 and Saybrook read *on*.

<sup>5</sup> West., 1680, and Saybrook add, *as a church under age*.

<sup>6</sup> Saybrook reads *worshipping*.

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Instructions of Moral Duties: All which Ceremonial Laws **being appointed onely to the time of Reformation, are by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and onely lawgiver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end, abrogated and taken away.**<sup>1</sup>

IV. To them also<sup>2</sup> he gave sundry Judicial Laws, which expired together with the State of that people, not obliging any now **by vertue of that Institution, their** general equity **onely being still of moral use.**<sup>3</sup>

V. The Moral Law doth for ever binde all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not onely in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the Authority of God the Creator, who gave it: neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

VI. Although true Believers be not under the Law, as a Covenant of Works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the Will of God, and their duty, it directs and binde them to walk accordingly, discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts and lives, so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of humiliation for, and hatred against sin, together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin, and the threatnings of it serve to shew what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatned in the Law. The promises of it in like maner shew them Gods approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, although not as due to them by

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, *All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated under the New Testament.*

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *as a body politic.*

<sup>3</sup> West, reads, *not obliging any other, now, further than the general*

*equity thereof may require.*

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the Law, as a Covenant of Works; so as a mans doing good, and refraining from evil, because the Law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the Law, and not under Grace.

VII. Neither are the forementioned uses of the Law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it, the Spirit of Christ subduing and inabling the will of man to do that freely and chearfully, which the will of God revealed in the Law required<sup>1</sup> to be done.

## CHAP. XX.<sup>2</sup>

*Of the Gospel, and of the extent of the Grace<sup>3</sup> thereof.*

**The Covenant of Works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life, God was pleased to give unto the Elect the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling them, and begetting in them Faith and Repentance: in this promise the Gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and was therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.**

II. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, is revealed onely in and by the Word of God; neither do the works of Creation or Providence, with the Light of Nature, make discovery of Christ, or of Grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of him by the Promise or Gospel, should be enabled thereby to attain saving Faith or Repentance.

III. The revelation of the Gospel unto sinners, made in divers times, and by sundry parts, with the addition of Promises and Precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the Nations and persons to whom it is granted, is meerly of the Sovereign will and good pleasure of God, not being annexed by vertue of any promise to the due

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *requireth*.

<sup>2</sup> This whole chapter is a Savoy addition. See *Preface* p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Saybrook reads *Graces*.

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**improvement of mens natural abilities, by vertue of common light received without it, which none ever did make or can so do: And therefore in all ages the Preaching of the Gospel hath been granted unto persons and nations, as to the extent or straitning of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God.**

**IV. Although the Gospel be the onely outward means of revealing Christ and saving Grace, and is as such abundantly sufficient thereunto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses, may be born again, quickned or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an efectual, irresistible work of the holy Ghost upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life, without which no other means are sufficient for their conversion unto God.**

#### CHAP. XXI.<sup>1</sup>

##### *Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.*

The Liberty which Christ hath purchased for Believers under the Gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the **rigor and** curse of the<sup>2</sup> Law, and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the **fear and** sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a childe-like love and willing minde: All which were common also to Believers under the Law, **for the substance of them;** but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the Ceremonial Law, **the whole Legal administration of the Covenant of Grace,** to which the Jewish Church was

<sup>1</sup> Chapter XX. in the Westminster, from this point onward the numbering of the chapters in the West, and Savoy is not identical.

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *the curse of the moral law.*

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subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of Grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, then Believers under the Law did ordinarily partake of.

II. God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, **or not contained in it**;<sup>1</sup> so that to believe such Doctrines, or to obey such Commands out of conscience, is to betray true Liberty of Conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blinde obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience, and Reason also.

III. They who upon pretence of Christian Liberty do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, **as they do thereby pervert the main designe of the Grace of the Gospel to their own destruction; so they wholly**<sup>2</sup> destroy the end of Christian Liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, *or beside it in matters of faith or worship.*

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *lust, do thereby destroy...*

<sup>3</sup> West, has fourth section which Savoy, following the example of Parliament, omitted,

“And because the power which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as, either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, [and by the power of the Civil Magistrate]”. The clause enclosed in brackets has been omitted by modern American Presbyterians.

CHAP. XXII.<sup>1</sup>*Of religious Worship, and the Sabbath-day.*

**The** light of Nature sheweth that there is a God, who hath Lordship and Sovereignty over all, is **just**, good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and all the soul, and with all the might: But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited **by**<sup>2</sup> his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.

II. Religious Worship is to be given to God the Father, **Son**, and holy Ghost, and to him alone; not to Angels, Saints, or any other Creatures;<sup>3</sup> and since the Fall, not without a Mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

III. Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of **natural**<sup>4</sup> worship, is by God required of all men; **but**<sup>5</sup> that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, **love**, and perseverance; and **when with others**<sup>6</sup> in a known tongue.

IV. Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter, but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

V. The<sup>7</sup> reading of the Scriptures, Preaching, and

<sup>1</sup> West, chapter XXI. <sup>2</sup> West, reads *to*. <sup>3</sup> West, reads *creature*.

<sup>4</sup> West, reads *religious*. <sup>6</sup> West, reads *and*.

<sup>6</sup> West, reads, *and if vocal in a known tongue*.

<sup>7</sup> Section V. reads in West., "The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear, the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God with understanding, faith, and reverence, singing

of psalms with grace in the heart; as, also, the due administration and

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hearing the word of God, singing of Psalms, as also the administration of **Baptism and the Lords Supper**, are all parts of religious Worship of God, **to be performed** in obedience unto God with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear: Solemn **humiliations, with** Fastings and Thanksgiving upon special occasions, are in their several times and seasons to be used in a holy and religious maner.

VI. Neither Prayer nor any other part of religious Worship, is now under the Gospel either tyed unto, or made more acceptable by any place, in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshipped every where in spirit and **in** truth, as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself, so more solemnly in the publique assemblies, which are not carelesly nor<sup>1</sup> wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God by his Word or Providence calleth thereunto.

VII. As it is of the law of Nature, that in general a<sup>2</sup> proportion of time **by Gods appointment** be set apart for the worship of God; so by<sup>3</sup> his Word in<sup>4</sup> a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seaven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lords day, and is to be continued to the end of the World as the Christian Sabbath, **the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.**

VIII. This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering<sup>5</sup> their common affairs beforehand, do not onely observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly imployments and

worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ, are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: besides religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings upon special occasions: which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in an holy and religious manner.”

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *or*. <sup>2</sup> West, reads *due*. <sup>3</sup> West, reads *in*.  
<sup>4</sup> West, reads *by*. <sup>5</sup> Savoy omits *of*

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recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the publique and private exercises of his Worship, and in the duties of Necessity and Mercy.

### CHAP. XXIII.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Of Lawful Oaths and Vows.*

A Lawful Oath is a part of religious Worship, wherein<sup>2</sup> the person swearing **in truth, righteousness and judgement**, solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth or promiseth, and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth.

II. The name of God onely is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence: Therefore to swear vainly, or rashly, by that glorious or<sup>3</sup> dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful and to be abhorred; yet as in matters of weight and moment an Oath is warranted by the Word of God under the New Testament, as well as under the Old; so a lawful Oath, being imposed by Lawful authority in such matters, ought to be taken.

III. Whosoever taketh an Oath, **warranted by the Word of God**, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is full perswaded is the truth: neither may any man binde himself by Oath to any thing, but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what **he** is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse an Oath touching any thing that is good and just, being **lawfully**<sup>4</sup> imposed by Authority.

IV. An Oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation: It cannot oblige to sin, but in any thing not

<sup>1</sup> West, chapter XXII.

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *wherein, upon just occasion, the person...*

<sup>3</sup> West, reads *and.* <sup>4</sup> West, reads, *being imposed by lawful authority*

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sinful, being taken it bindes to performance, although to a mans own hurt; nor is it to be violated, although made to Hereticks or Infidels.

V. A Vow, **which is not to be made to any Creature, but God alone**<sup>1</sup> is of the like nature with a promissory Oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.<sup>2</sup>

VI. Popish monastical Vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may intangle himself.

#### CHAP. XXIV.<sup>3</sup>

##### *Of the Civil Magistrate.*

God the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil Magistrates to be under him, over the people for his own glory and the publique good; and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that **do**<sup>4</sup> good, and for the punishment of evil doers.

II. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute

<sup>1</sup> Savoy adds, no omission: the words are taken from West, section VI, see note below.

<sup>2</sup> Between section V. and VI. the Savoy omits one whole section and part of a second. They read as follows:

“VI. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith and conscience of duty, in way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want, whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, or to other things, so far and so long as they may fitly conduce thereunto.

VII. No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded, or which is not in his own power, and for the performance whereof he hath no promise of ability from God. In which respects, popish monastical vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are super-

stitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may entangle himself.”

<sup>3</sup> West, chapter XXIII. <sup>4</sup> West, reads *are*.

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the Office of a Magistrate, when called thereunto: in the management<sup>1</sup> whereof, as they ought specially to maintain<sup>2</sup> Justice and Peace, according to the wholesome Laws of each Commonwealth; so for that end they may lawfully now under the new Testament wage war upon just and necessary occasion.

**III. Although<sup>3</sup> the Magistrate is bound to encourage,**

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *managing*. <sup>2</sup> Savoy omits *piety*.

<sup>3</sup> This section has been more revised than any other in the West., and is the only variation of moment between the Confessions of 1680 and of Saybrook, and the Savoy. The section omitted from the West, by the Savoy is as follows:

“III. 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: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.”

The new section adopted at the Savoy did not however commend itself to the Massachusetts divines at Boston in 1680 or those at Saybrook in 1708. They rejected the greater part of the Savoy section and adopted in its stead the following, based in part on the IVth section of chapter XXI. (West. ch. XX), rejected from the West, by the Savoy.

“III. They who upon pretense of Christian liberty shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercises of it, resist the Ordinance of God, and for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices as are contrary to the Light of Nature, or to the known Principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation, or to the power of godliness, or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church, they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church, and by the power of the civil Magistrate; yet in such differences about the Doctrines of the Gospel, or ways of the worship of God, as may befall men exercising a good conscience, manifesting it in their conversation, and holding the foundation, and duely observing the Rules of peace and order, there is no warrant for the Magistrate to abridge them of their liberty.”

American Presbyterians made a further revision in 1788:

“III. Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and Sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet as nursing

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**promote, and protect the professors and profession of the Gospel, and to manage and order civil administrations in a due subserviency to the interest of Christ in the world, and to that end to take care that men of corrupt mindes and conversations do not licentiously publish and divulge Blasphemy and Errors in their own nature, subverting the faith, and inevitably destroying the souls of them that receive them: Yet in such differences about the Doctrines of the Gospel, or ways of the worship of God, as may befall men exercising a good conscience, manifesting it in their conversation, and holding the foundation, not disturbing others in their ways or worship that differ from them; there is no warrant for the Magistrate under the Gospel to abridge them of their liberty.**

IV. It is the duty of people to pray for Magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them Tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their Authority for conscience sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the Magistrates just and legal Authority, nor free the people from their obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, much less hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people, and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be Hereticks, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.

fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his Church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

CHAP. XXV.<sup>1</sup>*Of Marriage.*<sup>2</sup>

Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more then one wife, nor for any woman to have more then one husband at the same time.

II. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankinde with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed, and for preventing of<sup>3</sup> uncleanness.

III. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgement to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry<sup>4</sup> in the Lord, and therefore such as profess the true Reformed religion, should not marry with Infidels, Papists, or other Idolaters: neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked by marrying with such as are<sup>5</sup> wicked in their life, or maintain damnable Heresie.<sup>6</sup>

IV. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous Marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> West, chapter XXIV. <sup>2</sup> West, reads *and Divorce*.

<sup>3</sup> Saybrook omits *of*. <sup>4</sup> Savoy omits *only*.

<sup>5</sup> Savoy omits *notoriously*. <sup>6</sup> West, reads *heresies*.

<sup>7</sup> At this point the Savoy, following the example of Parliament, makes a large omission from the West., which continues as follows: "The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own.

V. Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.

VI. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no

CHAP. XXVI.<sup>1</sup>*Of the Church.*

The Catholique or Universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the Elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the Head thereof, and is<sup>2</sup> the Spouse, the Body, the fulness of him that filleth all<sup>3</sup> in **all**.

II. **The**<sup>4</sup> whole body of men throughout the world, professing the faith of the Gospel and obedience unto God by Christ according unto it, not destroying their own profession by any Errors everting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation,<sup>5</sup> are, and may be called the visible Catholique Church of Christ, although as such it is not intrusted with the administration of any ordinances, or

way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage; wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it, not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.”

<sup>1</sup> West, chapter XXV. <sup>2</sup> Saybrook omits *is*. <sup>3</sup> Saybrook adds *and*.

<sup>4</sup> The remaining sections of this chapter are much changed in the Savoy. In the West, section II reads:

The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel, (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those, throughout the world, that profess the true religion, and of their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.

Sections III. and IV. of the West, are wholly omitted from the Savoy, they read:

III. Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.

IV. This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less, visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.

<sup>5</sup> The Confessions of 1680 and Saybrook add “*they and their children with them*”—doubtless influenced by the Half-Way Covenant, for which see Walker, pp. 238 ff.

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**have any officers to rule or govern in, or over the whole Body.I**

III. The<sup>2</sup> purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no Churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan: Nevertheless **Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a visible Kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.**<sup>3</sup>

IV. There<sup>4</sup> is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be Head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God, **whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.**

V. **As**<sup>5</sup> the Lord in his care and love towards his Church, hath in his infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own Glory; so according to his promise, we expect that in the later days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the Kingdom of his dear Son broken, the Churches of Christ being enlarged, and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition then they have enjoyed.

## CHAP. XXVII.<sup>8</sup>

### *Of the Communion of Saints.*

All Saints that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit and<sup>7</sup> Faith, **although they are not made**

<sup>1</sup> The Confessions of 1680 and Saybrook read "although as such it is not intrusted with any Officers to rule or govern over the whole body."

<sup>2</sup> This is section V. of the West.

<sup>3</sup> West, closes, "Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth to worship God according to his will."

<sup>4</sup> This is section VI. of West. <sup>5</sup> No corresponding section in West.

<sup>6</sup> West, chapter XXVI. <sup>7</sup> West, reads *by*.

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**thereby one person with him**, have fellowship<sup>1</sup> in his Graces, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection and Glory: and being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, publique and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward Man.

II. **All**<sup>2</sup> Saints are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the Worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities: which communion, **though especially to be exercised by them in the relations wherein they stand, whether in Families or Churches, yet** as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who in every place call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

CHAP. XXVIII.<sup>4</sup>*Of the Sacraments.*

Sacraments are holy Signs and Seals of the Covenant of Grace, immediately instituted by **Christ**,<sup>5</sup> to represent **him**<sup>6</sup> and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him,<sup>7</sup> **and solemnly to engage us**<sup>8</sup> to the service of God in Christ, according to his Word.

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, *with him*.

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *Saints by profession are bound*.

<sup>3</sup> Here Savoy omits section III of West: "This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in anywise partakers of the substance of his Godhead, or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another, as saints, take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods and possessions."

<sup>4</sup> West, chapter XXVII.

<sup>5</sup> West, reads *God*. <sup>6</sup> West, reads *Christ*.

<sup>7</sup> West, reads, *as also to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world*.

<sup>8</sup> West, reads *them*.

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II. There is in every Sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union between the signe and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

III. The grace which is exhibited in or by the Sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them, neither doth the efficacy of a Sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of Institution, which contains together with a Precept authorizing the use thereof, a Promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

IV. There be onely two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Lords<sup>1</sup> Supper; neither of which may be dispensed by any but a Minister of the Word lawfully called.<sup>2</sup>

V. The Sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were for substance the same with those of the New.

### CHAP. XXIX.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Of Baptism.*

Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ to be unto the party baptized a signe<sup>4</sup> and seal of the Covenant of Grace, of his ingraffing into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ to walk in newness of life; which Ordinance<sup>5</sup> is by Christs own appointment to be continued in his Church until the end of the world.

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, *Supper of the Lord.* <sup>2</sup> West, reads *ordained.*

<sup>3</sup> West, chapter XXVIII.

<sup>4</sup> West, reads, *not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church, but also to be, unto him a sign...*

<sup>5</sup> West, reads *sacrament.*

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II. The outward Element to be used in this Ordinance, is Water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, by a Minister of the Gospel lawfully called.<sup>1</sup>

III. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but Baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

IV. Not onely those that do actually profess faith in, and obedience unto Christ, but also the Infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized, **and those onely.**

V. Although it be a great sin to contemn or neglect this Ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it; or that all that are baptized, are undoubtedly regenerated.

VI. The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administred, yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this Ordinance, the grace promised is not onely offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the holy Ghost to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of Gods own Will in his appointed time.

VII. Baptism<sup>2</sup> is but once to be administred to any person.

### CHAP. XXX.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Of the Lords Supper.*

Our Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, called the Lords Supper, to be observed in his Churches<sup>4</sup> unto<sup>5</sup> the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, **and** shewing forth of the Sacrifice of himself in his death,

<sup>1</sup> Savoy omits *thereunto*; 1680 and Saybrook keep it.

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *The sacrament of baptism.* <sup>3</sup> West, chapter XXIX.

<sup>4</sup> West, reads *church.* <sup>5</sup> 1680 reads *to.*

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the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their further ingagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.<sup>1</sup>

II. In this Sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real Sacrifice made at all for remission of sin<sup>2</sup> of the quick or dead, but onely a **memorial**<sup>3</sup> of that one offering up of himself upon the Cross once for all, and a spiritual Oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same; so that the Popish Sacrifice of the Mass (as they call it) is most abominable,<sup>4</sup> injurious to Christs **own**<sup>5</sup> onely Sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the Elect.

III. The Lord Jesus hath in this Ordinance appointed his Ministers<sup>6</sup> to pray and bless the Elements of Bread and Wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use, and to take and break the Bread, to take the Cup, and (they communicating also themselves) to give both to the Communicants, but to none who are not then present in the Congregation.

IV. Private Masses, or receiving the Sacrament by a Priest, or any other alone, as likewise the denial of the Cup to the people, worshiping the Elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are contrary to the nature of this Sacrament, and to the Institution of Christ.

V. The outward Elements in this Sacrament duely set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him Crucified, as that truly, yet Sacramentally onely, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the Body and Blood of Christ;

<sup>1</sup> West, reads, *as members of his mystical body.*

<sup>2</sup> West, reads *sins.* <sup>3</sup> West, reads *commemoration.*

<sup>4</sup> West, reads *abominably.* <sup>5</sup> West, reads *one.*

<sup>6</sup> West, reads, "*appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray,*" etc. This phrase, is restored in the Confessions of 1680 and Saybrook.

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albeit in substance and nature they still remain truly and onely Bread and Wine as they were before.

VI. The Doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of Bread and Wine into the substance of Christs Body and Blood (commonly called Transubstantiation) by consecration of a Priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthroweth the nature of the Sacrament, and hath been, and is the cause of manifold Superstitions, yea of gross Idolatries.

VII. Worthy Receivers outwardly partaking of the visible Elements in this Sacrament, do then also inwardly by Faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death; the Body and Blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the Bread **or**<sup>1</sup> Wine; yet as really, but spiritually present to the Faith of Believers in that Ordinance, as the Elements themselves are to their outward senses.

VIII. All<sup>2</sup> ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lords Table, and cannot without great sin against him, whilst they remain such, partake of these holy Mysteries, or be admitted thereunto; yea whosoever shall receive unworthily, are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, eating and drinking **Judgement**<sup>3</sup> to themselves.

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *and*.

<sup>2</sup> This section has been rewritten. West, reads:

“VIII. Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, to their own damnation. Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with him, so are they unworthy of the Lord’s table, and cannot, without great sin against Christ, while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto.”

<sup>3</sup> West. reads *damnation*.

CHAP. XXXI.<sup>2</sup>

*Of the state of Man*<sup>1</sup> after Death, and of the Resurrection  
of the Dead.

The Bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption, but their souls (which neither die nor

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *men*, but the American revisers have adopted *man*.

<sup>2</sup> This is chapter XXXII, in the West. After the example set by Parliament the Savoy, and its followers at Boston in 1680, and at Saybrook in 1708, reject two whole chapters of the Westminster, XXX. and XXXI. These read as follows:

## CHAP. XXX.

*Of Church Censures.*

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.

II. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the Word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require.

III. Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren: for deterring of others from the like offences; for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honour of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the Church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

IV. For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season, and by excommunication from the Church, according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person.

## CHAP. XXXI.

*Of Synods and Councils.*

For the better government and further edification of the Church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils.

II. As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers and other fit persons to consult and advise with about matters of religion; so, if magistrates be open enemies to the Church, the ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons, upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies.

III. It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially, to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his Church; to receive complaints in cases of maladministra-

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sleep) having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them, the souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest Heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: And the souls of the wicked are cast into Hell, where they remain in torment<sup>1</sup> and utter darkness, reserved to the Judgement of the great day: Besides these two places for<sup>2</sup> souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.

II. At the last day such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed, and all the dead shall be raised up with the self-same bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.

III. The bodies of the unjust shall by the Power of Christ be raised to dishonor; the bodies of the just by his Spirit unto honor, and to be made conformable to his own glorious Body.

tion, and authoritatively to determine the same: which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission, not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God, appointed thereunto in his Word.

IV. All synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both.

V. Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary; or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate."

American Presbyterians in 1788, added to chapter XXXI., section I.: "And it belongeth to the overseers and other rulers of the particular churches, by virtue of their office, and the power which Christ hath given them for edification, and not for destruction, to appoint such assemblies; and to convene together in them, as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the Church."

Section II. they wholly rejected.

<sup>1</sup> West, reads *torments*. <sup>2</sup> 1680 reads *of*.

CHAP. XXXII.<sup>1</sup>*Of the last Judgement.*

God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the World in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom all Power and Judgement is given of the Father; in which day not onely the Apostate Angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the Tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

II. The end of Gods appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the Glory of his Mercy in the eternal salvation of the Elect, and of his Justice in the damnation of the Reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient: for then shall the righteous go into everlasting Life, and receive that fulness of joy and **glory, with everlasting reward<sup>2</sup> in the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know no God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power.**

III. As Christ would have us to be certainly perswaded that there shall be a<sup>3</sup> Judgement, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.

<sup>1</sup> West, chapter XXXIII., and last.

<sup>2</sup> West, reads, *fulness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence.*

<sup>3</sup> West, reads *day of.*

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**SAVOY DECLARATION**  
 OF THE  
**INSTITUTION**  
 OF  
**CHURCHES,**  
 AND THE  
**ORDER**  
 APPOINTED IN THEM BY  
**JESUS CHRIST.**

By the appointment of the Father all Power for the Calling, Institution, Order, or Government of the Church, is invested in a Supreme and Sovereign maner in the Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head thereof.

II. In the execution of this Power wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calleth out of the World unto Communion with himself, those that are given unto him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of Obedience, which he prescribeth to them in his Word.

III. Those thus called (through the Ministry of the Word by his Spirit) he commandeth to walk together in particular Societies or Churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that publique Worship, which he requireth of them in this world.

IV. To each of these Churches thus gathered, according unto his minde declared in his Word, he hath given all that Power and Authority, which is any way needfull for their carrying on that Order in Worship and Discipline, which he hath instituted for them to observe with Commands and Rules, for the due and right exerting and executing of that Power.

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V. These particular Churches thus appointed by the Authority of Christ, and intrusted with power from him for the ends before expressed, are each of them as unto

those ends, the seat of that Power which he is pleased to communicate to his Saints or Subjects in this world, so that as such they receive it immediately from himself.

VI. Besides these particular Churches, there is not instituted by Christ any Church more extensive or Catholique entrusted with power for the administration of his Ordinances, or the execution of any authority in his name.

VII. A particular Church gathered and compleated according to the minde of Christ, consists of Officers and Members: The Lord Christ having given to his called ones (united according to his appointment in Church-order) Liberty and Power to choose Persons fitted by the holy Ghost for that purpose, to be over them, and to minister to them in the Lord.

VIII. The Members of these Churches are Saints by Calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing (in and by their profession and walking) their obedience unto that Call of Christ, who being further known to each other by their confession of the Faith wrought in them by the power of God, declared by themselves or otherwise manifested, do willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God in professed subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup>

IX. The Officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church so called, and gathered for the peculiar administration of Ordinances, and execution

<sup>1</sup> Churches sometimes embodied their "consent to walk together" in a covenant. Thus, those forming themselves into a church at Axminster, Devon, are described as "voluntarily giving up themselves to the Lord and to each other by the will of God, solemnly Covenanting and engaging to walk together in a due and faithfull attendance upon the Lord Jesus Christ in all his Ordinances and Appointments." The word "covenant" does not occur in the Article (perhaps it was avoided as open to some objection), but the wording is much the same as that used at Axminster. See *Visible Saints*, p. 74.

of Power or Duty which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are Pastors, Teachers, Elders and Deacons.

X. Churches thus gathered and assembling for the Worship of God, are thereby visible and publique, and their Assemblies (in what place soever they are, according as they have liberty or opportunity) are therefore Church or Publique Assemblies.

XI. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the holy Ghost, unto the Office of Pastor, Teacher or Elder in a Church, is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the Church it self, and solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer, with Imposition of Hands of the Eldership of that Church, if there be any before constituted therein: And of a Deacon, that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by Prayer, and the like Imposition of Hands.<sup>1</sup>

XII. The Essence of this Call of a Pastor, Teacher or Elder unto Office, consists in the Election of the Church, together with his acceptation of it, and separation by Fasting and Prayer: And those who are so chosen, though not set apart by Imposition of Hands, are rightly constituted Ministers of Jesus Christ, in whose Name and Authority they exercise the Ministry to them so committed. The Calling of Deacons consisteth in the like Election and acceptation with separation by Prayer.

XIII. Although it be incumbent on the Pastors and Teachers of the Churches to be instant in Preaching the Word, by way of Office; yet the work of Preaching the Word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also gifted and fitted by the holy Ghost for it, and approved (being by lawful ways and means in the Providence of God called thereunto) may publicquely, ordinarily and constantly perform it; so that they give themselves up thereunto.

XIV. However, they who are ingaged in the work of Publique Preaching, and enjoy the Publique Maintenance

<sup>1</sup> See *Introduction*, p. 34, and *Visible Saints*, pp. 90 ff.

Calling, and gathered according to the Order of the Gospel) they stand related to, as Pastors or Teachers; yet ought they not to neglect others living within their Parochial Bounds, but besides their constant publique Preaching to them, they ought to enquire after their profiting by the Word, instructing them in, and pressing upon them (whether young or old) the great Doctrines of the Gospel, even personally and particularly, so far as their strength and time will admit.<sup>1</sup>

XV. Ordination alone without the Election or precedent consent of the Church, by those who formerly have been Ordained by vertue of that Power they have received by their Ordination, doth not constitute any person a Church-Officer, or communicate Office-power unto him.<sup>2</sup>

XVI. A Church furnished with Officers (according to the minde of Christ) hath full power to administer all his Ordinances; and where there is want of any one or more Officers required, that Officer, or those which are in the Church, may administer all the Ordinances proper to their particular Duty and Offices; but where there are no teaching Officers, none may administer the Seals, nor can the Church authorize any so to do.

XVII. In the carrying on of Church-administrations, no person ought to be added to the Church, but by the consent of the Church it self; that so love (without dissimulation) may be preserved between all the Members thereof.

XVIII. Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed and instituted as a means of Edification, that those who walk not according to the Rules and Laws appointed by him (in respect of Faith and Life, so that just offence doth arise to the Church thereby) be censured in his Name and Authority: Every Church hath Power in it self to exercise and execute all those Censures appointed by him in the way and Order prescribed in the Gospel.

<sup>1</sup> See *Introduction*, pp. 28 ff. <sup>2</sup> See *Introduction*, p. 120.

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XIX. The Censures so appointed by Christ, are Admonition and Excommunication: and whereas some offences are or may be known onely to some, it is appointed by Christ, that those to whom they are so known, do first admonish the offender in private: in publique offences where any sin, before all; or in case of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offence being related to the Church, and the offender not manifesting his repentance, he is to be duely admonished in the Name of Christ by the whole Church, by the Ministry of the Elders of the Church; and if this Censure prevail not for his repentance, then he is to be cast out by Excommunication with the consent of the Church.

XX. As all Believers are bound to joyn themselves to particular Churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do, so none are to be admitted unto the Priviledges of the Churches, who do not submit themselves to the Rule of Christ in the Censures for the Government of them.

XXI. This being the way prescribed by Christ in case of offence, no Church-members upon any offences taken by them, having performed their duty required of them in this matter, ought to disturb any Church-order, or absent themselves from the publique Assemblies, or the Administration of any Ordinances upon that pretence, but to wait upon Christ in the further proceeding of the Church.

XXII. The Power of Censures being seated by Christ in a particular Church, is to be exercised onely towards particular Members of each Church respectively as such; and there is no power given by him unto any Synods or Ecclesiastical Assemblies to Excommunicate, or by their publique Edicts to threaten Excommunication, or other Church-censures against Churches, Magistrates, or their people upon any account, no man being obnoxious to that Censure, but upon his personal miscarriage, as a Member of a particular Church.

XXIII. Although the Church is a Society of men, assembling for the celebration of the Ordinances according

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to the appointment of Christ, yet every Society assembling for that end or purpose, upon the account of cohabitation within any civil Precincts and Bounds, is not thereby constituted a Church, seeing there may be wanting among them, what is essentially required thereunto; and therefore a Believer living with others in such a Precinct, may joyn himself with any Church for his edification.<sup>1</sup>

XXIV. For the avoiding of Differences that may otherwise arise, for the greater Solemnity in the Celebration of the Ordinances of Christ, and the opening a way for the larger usefulness of the Gifts and Graces of the holy Ghost; Saints living in one City or Town, or within such distances as that they may conveniently assemble for divine Worship, ought rather to joyn in one Church for their mutual strengthening and edification, then to set up many distinct Societies.

XXV. As all Churches and all the Members of them are bound to pray continually for the good or prosperity of all the Churches of Christ in all places, and upon all occasions to further it; (Every one within the bounds of their Places and Callings, in the exercise of their Gifts and Graces) So the Churches themselves (when planted by the providence of God, so as they may have opportunity and advantage for it) ought to hold communion amongst themselves for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification.

XXVI. In Cases of Difficulties or Differences, either in point of Doctrine or in Administrations, wherein either the Churches in general are concerned, or any one Church in their Peace, Union, and Edification, or any Member or Members of any Church are injured in, or by any proceeding in Censures, not agreeable to Truth and Order: it is according to the minde of Christ, that many Churches holding communion together, do by their Messengers meet in a Synod or Council, to consider and give their advice in, or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the Churches concerned; Howbeit these Synods so

<sup>1</sup> See *Introduction*, p. 45.

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assembled are not entrusted with any Church-Power, properly so called, or with any Jurisdiction over the Churches themselves, to exercise any Censures, either over any Churches or Persons, or to impose their determinations on the Churches or Officers.

XXVII. Besides these occasional Synods or Councils, there are not instituted by Christ any stated Synods in a fixed Combination of Churches, or their Officers in lesser or greater Assemblies; nor are there any Synods appointed by Christ in a way of Subordination to one another.<sup>1</sup>

XXVIII. Persons that are joyned in Church-fellowship, ought not lightly or without just cause to withdraw themselves from the communion of the Church whereunto they are so joyned: Nevertheless, where any person cannot continue in any Church without his sin, either for want of the Administration of any Ordinances instituted by Christ, or by his being deprived of his due Priviledges, or compelled to any thing in practice not warranted by the Word, or in case of Persecution, or upon the account of conveniency of habitation; he consulting with the Church, or the Officer or Officers thereof, may peaceably depart from the communion of the Church, wherewith he hath so walked, to joyn himself with some other Church, where he may enjoy the Ordinances in the purity of the same, for his edification and consolation.

XXIX. Such reforming Churches as consist of Persons sound in the Faith and of Conversation becoming the Gospel, ought not to refuse the communion of each other, so far as may consist with their own Principles respectively, though they walk not in all things according to the same Rules of Church-Order.

XXX. Churches gathered and walking according to the minde of Christ, judging other Churches (though less pure) to be true Churches, may receive unto occasional communion with them, such Members of those Churches as are credibly testified to be godly, and to live without offence.



<sup>1</sup> See *Introduction*, p. 37.

