

# FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH *of* SCOTLAND

Reformed in Doctrine, Worship, and Practice

“Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.”

[Psalm 60:4](#)

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# The First Book of Discipline

To the Great council of Scotland now admitted to [the] regiment, by the providence of God, and by the common consent of the Estates thereof, your honours' humble servants and ministers of Christ Jesus within the same wish grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the perpetual increase of the Holy Spirit.

From your honours we received a charge, dated at Edinburgh, 29th of April, in the year of God 1560, requiring and commanding us, in the name of the Eternal God, as we will answer in his presence, to commit to writing, and in a book to deliver unto your wisdoms our judgments touching the reformation of religion, which heretofore, in this realm (as in others), has been utterly corrupted. Upon the receipt whereof, so many of us as were in this town did convene, and in unity of mind do offer unto your wisdoms these subsequent heads for common order and uniformity to be observed in this realm, concerning doctrine, administration of sacraments, [election of ministers, provision for their sustenance,] ecclesiastical discipline, and policy of the kirk: most humbly requiring your honours that, as ye look for participation with Christ Jesus, that neither ye admit anything which God's plain word shall not approve, neither yet that ye shall reject such ordinances as equity, justice, and God's word do specify. For as we will not bind your wisdoms to our judgments, further than we are able to prove the same by God's plain scriptures, so must we most humbly crave of you, even as ye will answer in God's presence (before whom both ye and we must appear to render account of all our facts), that ye repudiate nothing, for pleasure nor affection of men, which ye are not able to improve by God's written and revealed word.

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## The First Head – Of Doctrine

Seeing that Christ Jesus is he whom God the Father has commanded only to be heard, and followed of his sheep, we urge it necessary that his evangel be truly and openly preached in every kirk and assembly of this realm; and that all doctrine repugning to the same be utterly suppressed as damnable to man's salvation.

### The Explication of the First Head

Lest upon this our generality ungodly men take occasion to cavil, this we add for explication. By preaching of the evangel, we understand not only the scriptures of the New Testament, but also of the Old: to wit, the law, prophets, and histories, in which Christ Jesus is no less contained in figure, than we have him now expressed in verity. And, therefore, with the apostle, we affirm that, All scripture inspired of God is profitable to instruct, to reprove, and to exhort [[2 Tim. 3:16](#)]. In which books of Old and New Testaments we affirm that all things necessary for the instruction of the kirk, and to make the man of God perfect, are contained and sufficiently expressed.

By the contrary doctrine, we understand whatsoever men, by laws, councils, or constitutions have imposed upon the consciences of men, without the expressed commandment of God's word: such as be vows of chastity, forswearing of marriage, binding of men and women to several and disguised apparels, to the superstitious observation of fasting days, difference of meat for conscience sake, prayer for the dead; and keeping of holy days of certain saints commanded by man, such as be all those that the Papists have invented, as the feasts (as they term them) of apostles, martyrs, virgins, of Christmas, Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, and other fond feasts of our lady. Which things, because in God's scriptures they neither have commandment nor assurance, we judge them utterly to be abolished from this realm; affirming further, that the obstinate maintainers and teachers of such abominations ought not to escape the punishment of the civil magistrate.

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## The Second Head – Of Sacraments

To Christ Jesus' holy evangel truly preached, it is of necessity that his holy sacraments are annexed, and truly ministered, as seals and visible confirmations of the spiritual promises contained in the word. And they are two, to wit, baptism, and the holy Supper of the Lord Jesus: which are then rightly ministered when, by a lawful minister, the people, before the administration of the same, are plainly instructed and put in mind of God's free grace and mercy offered unto the penitent in Christ Jesus; when God's promises are rehearsed, the end and use of the sacraments declared, and that in such a tongue as the people do understand; when further to them is nothing added, from them nothing diminished, and in their practice nothing changed besides the institution of the Lord Jesus, and practice of his holy apostles.

And albeit the Order of Geneva,[1] which now is used in some of our kirks, is sufficient to instruct the diligent reader how that both these sacraments may be rightly ministered, yet for a uniformity to be kept, we have thought good to add this as superabundant.

In baptism, we acknowledge nothing to be used except the element of water only (that the word and declaration of the promises ought to precede, we have said before). Wherefore, whosoever presumes in baptism to use oil, salt, wax, spittle, conjuration, or crossing, accuses the perfect institution of Christ Jesus of imperfection; for it was void of all such inventions devised by men. And such as would presume to alter Christ's perfect ordinance you ought severely to punish.

The Table of the Lord is then most rightly ministered when it approaches most nigh to Christ's own action. But plain it is, that at that Supper Christ Jesus sat with his disciples, and therefore do we judge that sitting at a table is most convenient to that holy action; that bread and wine ought to be there; that thanks ought to be given; distribution of the same made; and commandment given that the bread should be taken and eaten; and that all should likewise drink of the cup of wine, with declaration what both the one and the other is, we suppose no godly man will doubt. For as touching the damnable error of the Papists, who can defraud the common people of the one part of that holy sacrament: to wit, of the cup of the Lord's blood, we suppose their error to be so manifest that it needs no confutation. Neither yet intend we to confute anything in this our simple confession, but to offer public disputation to all that list oppugn anything affirmed by us.

That the minister break the bread, and distribute the same to those that are next unto him, commanding the rest, every one with reverence and sobriety, to break with others, we think it nighest to Christ's action, and to the perfect practice [of the apostles], as we read it in Saint Paul.

During which action, we think it necessary that some comfortable places of [the] scriptures be read, which may bring in mind the death of Christ Jesus, and the benefit of the same. For seeing that in that action we ought chiefly to remember the Lord's death, we judge the scriptures making mention of the same most apt to stir up our dull minds then, and at all times. Let the discretion of the ministers appoint the places to be read as they think good. What times we think most convenient for the administration of the one and of the other of these sacraments, shall be declared in the policy of the kirk.

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## The Third Head – Touching the Abolishing of Idolatry

As we require Christ Jesus to be truly preached, and his holy sacraments to be rightly ministered; so can we not cease to require idolatry, with all monuments and places of the same, as abbeys, monkeries, friaries, nunneries, chapels, chantries, cathedral kirks, canonries, colleges (other than presently are parish kirks or schools), to be utterly suppressed in all bounds and places of this realm (except only the palaces, mansions, and dwelling places adjacent thereto, with orchards and yards of the same): as also that idolatry may be removed from the presence of all persons, of what estate or condition that ever they be, within this realm.

For let your honours be assuredly persuaded, that where idolatry is maintained or permitted (where it may be suppressed), that there shall God's wrath reign, not only upon the blind and obstinate idolater, but also upon the negligent sufferers [of the same]; especially if God has armed their hands with power to suppress such abomination.

By idolatry, we understand the Mass, invocation of saints, adoration of images, and the keeping and retaining of the same; and, finally, all honouring of God not contained in his holy word.

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## The Fourth Head – Concerning Ministers and Their Lawful Election

In a kirk reformed or tending to reformation, none ought [to] presume either to preach, either yet to minister the sacraments, till that orderly they are called to the same. Ordinary vocation consists in election, examination, and admission. And because that election of ministers in this cursed Papistry has altogether been abused, we think expedient to entreat it more largely.

It appertains to the people, and to every several congregation, to elect their minister. And in case that they are found negligent therein the space of forty days, the best reformed kirk-to wit, the church of the superintendent with his council- may present unto them a man whom they judge apt to feed the flock of Christ Jesus, who must be examined as well in life and manners, as in doctrine and knowledge.

And that this may be done with more exact diligence, the persons that are to be examined must be commanded to compear [appear] before men of soundest judgment, remaining in some principal town next adjacent unto them as they that are in Fife, Angus, Mearns, or Strathearn, to present themselves in Saint Andrews; those that are in Lothian, Merse, or Teviotdale, to Edinburgh; and likewise those that are in other countries must resort to the best reformed cities or towns, that is, to the city of the superintendent. Where first in the schools or, failing thereof, in open assembly, and before the congregation, they must give declaration of their gifts, utterance, and knowledge, by interpreting some place of scripture to be appointed by the ministry. Which, being ended, the person that is presented, or that offered himself to the administration of the kirk, must be examined by the ministers and elders of the kirk, and that openly, and before all that list to hear, in all the chief points that now lie in controversy betwixt us and the Papists, Anabaptists, Arians, or other such enemies to the Christian religion. In which, if he is found sound, able to persuade by wholesome doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers, then he must be directed to the kirk and congregation where he should serve, that there, in open audience of his flock, in diverse public sermons, he may give confession of his faith in the articles of justification, of the office of Christ Jesus, of the number, effect, and use of the sacraments; and, finally, of the whole religion which heretofore has been corrupted by the Papists.

If his doctrine is found wholesome, and [he is] able to instruct the simple, and if the kirk justly can reprehend nothing in his life, doctrine, nor utterance, then we judge the kirk, which before was destitute, unreasonable if they refuse him whom the kirk did offer; and that they should be compelled, by the censure of the council and kirk, to receive the person appointed and approved by the judgment of the godly and learned, unless that the same kirk have presented a man better or as well qualified to the examination, before that this foresaid trial was taken of the person presented by the council of the whole kirk. As, for example, the council of the kirk presents to any kirk a man to be their minister, not knowing that they are otherwise provided: in the meantime, the kirk is provided of another, sufficient in their judgment for that charge, whom they present to the learned ministers and next reformed kirk to be examined. In this case the presentation of the people, to whom he should be appointed pastor, must be preferred to the presentation of the council or greater kirk; unless the person presented by the inferior kirk is judged unable for the regiment by the learned. For altogether this is to be avoided, that any man be violently intruded or thrust in upon any congregation. But this liberty with all care must be reserved to every several kirk, to have their votes

and suffrages in election of their ministers. But violent intrusion we call not, when the council of the kirk, in the fear of God, and for the salvation of the people, offers unto them a sufficient man to instruct them; whom they shall not be forced to admit before just examination, as before is said.

## What May Disable Any Person that He May Not be Admitted to the Ministry of the Kirk

It is to be observed that no person, noted with public infamy, or being unable to edify the kirk by wholesome doctrine, or being known [to be] of corrupt judgment, be either promoted to the regiment of the kirk, or yet received in ecclesiastical administration.

### Explication

By public infamy we understand not the common sins and offences which any has committed in time of blindness, by fragility (if of the same, by a better and more sober conversation, he has declared himself verily penitent); but such capital crimes as the civil sword ought and may punish with death by the word of God. For besides that the apostle requires the life of ministers to be so irreprehensible that they have a good testimony from those that are without, we judge it a thing unseemly and dangerous, that he shall have public authority to preach to others the life everlasting, from whom the civil magistrate may take the life temporal for a crime publicly committed. And if any object, that the prince has pardoned his offence, and that he has publicly repented, and so is not only his life in assurance, but also that he may be received to the ministry of the kirk: we answer, that repentance does not take away the temporal punishment of the law, neither does the pardon of the prince remove his infamy before man.

That the life and conversation of the person presented, or to be elected, may be the more clearly known, public edicts must be directed to all parts of this realm, or at the least to those parts where the person has been most conversant: as where he was nourished in letters, or where he continued from the years of infancy, and childhood was passed. Strait commandment would be given, that if any capital crimes were committed by him, that they should be notified; as, if he has committed willful murder, adultery, [were] a common fornicator, if he were a thief, a drunkard, a fighter, brawler, or contentious person. These edicts ought to be notified in the chief cities, with the like charge and commandment, with declaration that such as concealed his sins known did deceive and betray (so far as in them lay) the kirk, which is the spouse of Jesus Christ, and did communicate with the sins of that wicked man.

### Admission [of Ministers]

The admission of ministers to their offices must consist in consent of the people and kirk whereto they shall be appointed, and in approbation of the learned ministers appointed for their examination.

We judge it expedient that the admission of ministers be in open audience; that some especial minister make a sermon touching the duty and office of ministers, touching their manners, conversation, and life; as also touching the obedience which the kirk owes to its ministers. Commandment should be given as well to the minister as unto the people, both being present: to wit, that he with all careful diligence attend upon the flock of Christ Jesus, over the which he is appointed preacher; that he [will] walk in the presence of God so sincerely that the graces of the Holy Spirit may be multiplied unto him; and in the presence of men so soberly and uprightly that his life may confirm, in the eyes of men, that which by tongue and word he persuades unto others. The people would be exhorted to reverence and honour their ministers chosen, as the servants and ambassadors of the Lord Jesus, obeying the commandments which they pronounce from God's mouth and book, even as they would obey God himself; for whosoever hears Christ's ministers hears himself, and whosoever rejects them, [and] despises their ministry and exhortation, rejects and despises Christ Jesus.

Other ceremony than the public approbation of the people, and declaration of the chief minister, that the person there presented is appointed to serve that kirk, we cannot approve; for albeit the apostles used the imposition of hands, yet seeing the miracle is ceased, the using of the ceremony we judge is not necessary.

The minister, elected or presented, examined, and, as said is, publicly admitted, must neither leave the flock at his pleasure, to the which he has promised his fidelity and labours, neither yet may the flock reject nor change him at their appetite, unless they are able to convict him of such crimes as deserve deposition; whereof we shall after speak. We mean not but that the whole kirk, or the most part thereof, for just considerations, may transfer a minister from one kirk to another; neither yet mean we that men who now do serve, as it were of benevolence, may not be appointed and elected to serve in other places. But once being solemnly elected and admitted, we cannot approve that they should change at their own pleasure.

We are not ignorant that the rarity of godly and learned men shall seem to some a just reason why that so strait and sharp examination should not be taken universally; for so it shall appear that the most part of [the] kirks shall have no minister at all. But let these men understand that the lack of able men shall not excuse us before God if, by our consent, unable men be placed over the flock of Christ Jesus; as also that, amongst the Gentiles, godly, learned men were also rare as they are now amongst us, when the apostle gave the same rule to try and examine ministers which we now follow. And last, let them understand that it is alike to have no minister at all, and to have an idol in the place of a true minister; yea and in some cases, it is worse. For those that are utterly destitute of ministers will be diligent to search for them; but those that have a vain shadow do commonly, without further care, content themselves with the same, and so they remain continually deceived, thinking that they

have a minister, when in very deed they have none. For we cannot judge him a dispenser of God's mysteries that in no wise can break the bread of life to the fainting and hungry souls; neither judge we that the sacraments can be rightly ministered by him, in whose mouth God has put no sermon of exhortation.

The chiefest remedy left to your honours and to us, in all this rarity of true ministers, is fervent prayer unto God that it will please his mercy to thrust out faithful workmen into this his harvest; and next, that your honours, with consent of the kirk, are bound by your authority to compel such men as have gifts and graces able to edify the kirk of God, that they bestow them where greatest necessity shall be known. For no man may be permitted to live idle, or as himself list, but must be appointed to travail where your wisdoms and the kirk shall think expedient.

We cannot prescribe unto your honours certain rule how that ye shall distribute the ministers and learned men whom God has already sent unto you. But hereof we are assured, that it greatly hinders the progress of Christ's evangel within this poor realm that some altogether abstract their labours from the kirk, and others remain together in one place, the most part of them being idle. And therefore of your honours we require, in God's name, that by your authority which ye have of God, ye compel all men to whom God has given any talent to persuade, by wholesome doctrine, to bestow the same, if they are called by the kirk to the advancement of Christ's glory, and to the comfort of his troubled flock; and that ye, with the consent of the kirk, assign unto your chiefest workmen, not only towns to remain into, but also provinces, that by their faithful labours kirks may be erected, and order established, where none is now. And if on this manner ye will use your power and authority, chiefly seeking God's glory, and the comfort of your brethren, we doubt not but God shall bless you and your enterprises.

## For Readers

To the kirks where no ministers can be had presently, must be appointed the most apt men that distinctly can read the common prayers<sup>[2]</sup> and the scriptures, to exercise both themselves and the kirk, till they grow to greater perfection; and in process of time he that is but a reader may attain to the further degree, and by consent of the kirk and discreet ministers, may be permitted to minister the sacraments; but not before that he is able somewhat to persuade by wholesome doctrine, besides his reading, and is admitted to the ministry, as before is said. Some we know that of long time have professed Christ Jesus, whose honest conversation deserved praise of all godly men, and whose knowledge also might greatly help the simple, and yet they only content themselves with reading. These must be animated, and by gentle admonition encouraged, by some exhortation to comfort their brethren, and so they may be admitted to administration of the sacraments. But such readers as neither have had exercise, nor continuance in Christ's true religion, must abstain from

ministration of the sacraments till they give declaration and witnessing of their honesty and further knowledge.[3]

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## The Fifth Head – Concerning the Provision for the Ministers, and for the Distribution of the Rents and Possessions Justly Appertaining to the Kirk

Seeing that of our Master Christ Jesus and his apostle Paul we have that the workman is worthy of his reward, and that the mouth of the labouring ox ought not to be muzzled [[Luke 10:7](#); [1 Tim. 5:18](#)], it is of necessity that honest provision be made for the ministers, which we require to be such that they have neither occasion of solicitude, neither yet of insolence and wantonness. And this provision must be made not only for their own sustenance during their lives, but also for their wives and children after them. For we judge it a thing most contrary to reason, godliness, and equity, that the widow and children of him, who in his life did faithfully serve the kirk of God, and for that cause did not carefully make provision for his family, should, after his death, be left comfortless of all provision. [4]

It is difficult to appoint a several stipend to every minister, by reason that the charges and necessity of all will not be alike; for some will be continuers in one place, [and] some will be compelled to travel, and oft to change dwelling place (if they shall have charge of diverse kirks). Amongst these, some will be burdened with wife and children, and one with more than another; and some perchance will be single men. If equal stipends should be appointed to all those that in charge are so unequal, either should the one suffer penury, or else should the other have superfluity and too much.[5]

To him that travels from place to place, whom we call superintendents, who remain, as it were, a month or less in one place, for the establishing of the kirk, and for the same purpose changing to another place, further consideration must be had. And, therefore, to such we think six chalders [of] bear [barley], nine chalders [of] meal, three chalders [of] oats for his horse, 500 marks [of] money, to be eiked [increased] and pared [decreased] at the discretion of the prince and council of the realm; to be paid to him yearly, in manner foresaid.[6]

The children of the ministers must have the liberties of the cities next adjacent where their fathers labour, freely granted. They must have the privileges in schools, and bursaries in colleges: that is, that they shall be sustained at learning, if they are found apt thereto; and failing thereof, that they be

put to some handicraft, or exercised in some virtuous industry, whereby they may be profitable members in a commonwealth.[7]

And this in God's presence we witness, we require not so much for ourselves, or for any that to us appertains, as that we do for the increase of virtue and learning, and for the profit of the posterity to come. It is not to be supposed that any man will dedicate himself and [his] children so to God, and to serve his kirk, that he looks for no worldly commodity. But this cankered nature, which we bear, is provoked to follow virtue when it sees honour and profit annexed to the same; as, contrarily, then is virtue of many despised, when virtuous and godly men live without honour. And sorry would we be that poverty should discourage men from study, and from following the way of virtue, by the which they might edify the kirk and flock of Christ Jesus.

We have spoken nothing of the stipend of readers, because, if they can do nothing but read, they neither can be called nor judged true ministers. And yet regard must be had to their labours; but so that they may be spurred forward to virtue, and not by a stipend appointed for their reading, to be retained still in that estate. To a reader, therefore, that is lately entered, we think forty marks, or more or less, as the parishioners and reader can agree, sufficient: providing that he teach the children of the parish, which he must do, besides the reading of the common prayers,[8] and books of the New and Old Testaments. If from reading he

begins to exhort, and explain the scriptures, then ought his stipend to be augmented; till finally he comes to the honour of a minister. But and if he is found unable after two years, then must he be removed from that office, and discharged of all stipend, that another may be proven as long. For this always is to be avoided, that none who is judged unable to come at any time to some reasonable knowledge, whereby he may edify the kirk, shall be perpetually nourished upon the charge of the kirk. Further, it must be avoided that no child or person within age, that is, within 21 years of age, be admitted to the office of a reader; but readers ought to be endued with gravity, wit, and discretion, lest by their lightness the prayers or scriptures read are of less price and estimation. It is to be noted that the readers are put in by the kirk, and admission of the superintendent.

[For] the other sort of readers, who have long continued in godliness, and have some gift of exhortation, who are in hope to attain to the degree of a minister, and teach the children, we think an hundred marks, or more, at the discretion of the kirk, may be appointed; so that differ ence, as is said, is betwixt them and the ministers that openly preach the word, and minister the sacraments.

Rests yet two other sorts of people to be provided for, of that which is called the patrimony of the kirk: to wit, the poor, and teachers of the youth. Every several kirk must provide for the poor within itself; for fearful and horrible it is, that the poor, whom not only God the Father in his law, but Christ

Jesus in his evangel, and the Holy Spirit speaking by Saint Paul, has so earnestly commended to our care, are universally so contemned and despised. We are not patrons for stubborn and idle beggars who, running from place to place, make a craft of their begging, whom the civil magistrate ought to punish; but for the widow and fatherless, the aged, impotent, or lame, who neither can nor may travail for their sustenance, we say that God commands his people to be careful. And therefore, for such, as also for persons of honesty fallen in[to] decay and penury, ought such provision be made that [of] our abundance should their indigence be relieved. How this most conveniently and most easily may be done in every city, and other parts of this realm, God shall show you wisdom and the means, so that your minds are godly thereto inclined. All must not be suffered to beg that gladly so would do; neither yet must beggars remain where they choose; but the stout and strong beggar must be compelled to work, and every person that may not work must be compelled to repair to the place where he or she was born (unless of long continuance they have remained in one place), and there reasonable provision must be made for their sustenance, as the church shall appoint. The order nor sums, in our judgments, cannot be particularly appointed, until such time as the poor of every city, town, or parish are compelled to repair to the places where they were born, or of their residences, where their names and number must be taken and put in [a] roll; and then may the wisdom of the kirk appoint stipends accordingly.

## Of the Superintendents

Because we have appointed a larger stipend to those that shall be superintendents than to the rest of the ministers, we have thought good to signify unto your honours such reasons as moved us to make difference betwixt preachers at this time; as also how many superintendents we think necessary, with their bounds, office, [the manner of their] election, and causes that may deserve deposition from that charge.

We consider that if the ministers whom God has endued with his [singular] graces amongst us should be appointed to several and certain places, there to make their continual residence, that then the greatest part of this realm should be destitute of all doctrine; which should not only be occasion of great murmur, but also should be dangerous to the salvation of many. And therefore we have thought it a thing most expedient for this time that, from the whole number of godly and learned [men], now presently in this realm, be selected twelve or ten (for in so many provinces have we divided the whole), to whom charge and commandment shall be given to plant and erect churches, to set order and appoint ministers (as the former order prescribes) to the countries that shall be appointed to their care where none are now. And by these means [your] love and common care over all the inhabitants of this realm (to whom ye are equal debtors) shall evidently appear; as also the simple and ignorant (who perchance have never heard Christ Jesus truly preached) shall come to some knowledge by the which many that now are dead in superstition and ignorance shall attain to

some feeling of godliness, by the which they may be provoked to search and seek further knowledge of God, and his true religion and worshipping. Where, by the contrary, if they shall be neglected, they shall not only grudge, but also they shall seek the means whereby they may continue in their blindness, or return to their accustomed idolatry. And therefore we desire nothing more earnestly, than that Christ Jesus be universally once preached throughout this realm; which shall not suddenly be unless that, by you, men are appointed and compelled faithfully to travail in such provinces as to them shall be assigned.

## The Names of the Places of Residence, and Several Dioceses of the Superintendents

1. Imprimis, the superintendent of Orkney: whose diocese shall be to the Isles of Orkney, Shetland, Caithness, and Strathnaver. His residence to be in the town of Kirkwall.
2. The superintendent of Ross: whose diocese shall comprehend Ross, Sutherland, Moray, with the North Isles of the Skye, and the Lewis, with their adjacents. His residence to be in [the] Canonry of Ross.
3. The superintendent of Argyll: whose diocese shall comprehend Argyll, [Kintyre,] Lorne, the South Isles, Arran [and] Bute, with their adjacents, with Lochaber. His residence to be in [Argyll].
4. The superintendent of Aberdeen: whose diocese is betwixt Dee and Spey, containing the sheriffdom of Aberdeen and Banff. His residence to be in Old Aberdeen.
5. The superintendent of Brechin: whose diocese shall be the whole sheriffdoms of Mearns and Angus, and the Brae of Mar to Dee. His residence to be in Brechin.
6. The superintendent of Saint Andrews: whose diocese shall comprehend the whole sheriffdom of Fife and Fotheringham, to Stirling; and the whole sheriffdom of Perth. His residence to be in Saint Andrews.
7. The superintendent of Edinburgh: whose diocese shall comprehend the whole sheriffdoms of Lothian, and Stirling on the south side of the Water of Forth; and thereto is added, by consent of the whole church, Merse, Lauderdale, and Wedale. His residence to be in [Edinburgh].
8. The superintendent of Jedburgh: whose diocese shall comprehend Teviotdale, Tweeddale, Liddesdale, with the Forest of Ettrick. His residence to be [in Jedburgh].
9. The superintendent of Glasgow: whose diocese shall comprehend Clydesdale, Renfrew, Menteith, Lennox, Kyle, and Cunningham. His residence to be in Glasgow.
10. The superintendent of Dumfries: whose diocese shall comprehend Galloway, Carrick, Nithsdale, Annandale, with the rest of the dales in the West. His residence to be in Dumfries.

These men must not be suffered to live as your idle bishops have done heretofore; neither must they remain where gladly they would. But they must be preachers themselves, and such as may make no

long residence in any one place, till there are churches planted and provided of ministers, or at the least of readers.

Charge must be given to them that they remain in no one place above twenty or thirty days in their visitation, till they have passed through their whole bounds. They must thrice every week, at the least, preach; and when they return to their principal town and residence, they must be likewise exercised in preaching and in edification of the church there. And yet they must not be suffered to continue there so long, as they may seem to neglect their other churches; but after that they have remained in their chief town three or four mouths at most, they shall be compelled (unless by sickness only they are retained), to re-enter in visitation, in which they shall not only preach, but also examine the life, diligence, and behaviour of the ministers; as also the order of their churches, [and] the manners of the people. They must further consider how the poor are provided; how the youth are instructed. They must admonish where admonition needs; dress such things as by good counsel they are able to appease;<sup>[9]</sup> and, finally, they must note such crimes as are heinous, that, by the censure of the church, the same may be corrected.

If the superintendent is found negligent in any of these chief points of his office, and especially if he is noted negligent in preaching of the word, and in visitation of his churches, or if he is convicted of any of those crimes which in the common ministers are damned, he must be deposed, without respect of his person or office.

## Of the Election of Superintendents

In this present necessity, the nomination, examination, and admission of superintendents cannot be so strait as we require, and as afterwards it must be.

For this present, therefore, we think [it] sufficient that either your honours, by yourselves, nominate so many as may serve the fore-written

provinces; or that ye give commission to such men as in whom ye suppose the fear of God [to be] to do the same; and that the same men, being called in your presence, shall be by you, and by such as your honours please [to] call unto you for consultation in that case, appointed to their provinces. We think it expedient and necessary, that as well the gentlemen, as burgesses of every diocese, be made privy at the same time to the election of the superintendent, as well to bring the church in some practice of her liberty, as to make the pastor better favoured of the flock whom themselves have chosen. If your honours cannot find for this present [time] so many able men as the necessity requires, then, in our judgments, more profitable it is that those provinces vaik [remain vacant] till God provides better, than that men unable to edify and govern the church are suddenly placed in

that charge. For experience has taught us what pestilence has been engendered in the church by men unable to discharge their offices.

When, therefore, after three years, any superintendent shall depart, or chance to be deposed, the chief town within that province-to wit, the ministers, elders, and deacons, with the magistrate and council of the same town-shall nominate and by public edicts proclaim, as well to the superintendent, as to two or three provinces next adjacent, two or three of the most learned and most godly ministers within the whole realm, that from amongst them, one, with public consent, may be elected and appointed to the office then vaiking [vacant]. And this the chief town shall be bound to do within the term of twenty days. Which being expired and no man presented, then shall three of the next adjacent provinces, with consent of their superintendents, ministers, and elders, enter in into the right and privileges of the chief town, and shall present every one of them one, or two if they list, to the chief town, to be examined as the order requires. As also, it shall be lawful for all the churches of the diocese to nominate within the same time such persons as they think worthy to stand in election; which must be put in edict.

After the nominations are made, public edicts must be sent, first warning all men that have any objection against the persons nominated, or against any one of them, to be present in the chief town at [the] day and place affixed, to object what they can against the election of any one of them. Thirty days we think sufficient to be assigned thereto; thirty days, we mean, after that the nomination is made.

Which day of election being come, the whole ministers of that province, with three or more of the superintendents next adjacent, or that shall thereto be named, shall examine not only the learning, but also the manners, prudence, and ability to govern the church, of all those that are nominated; that he who shall be found most worthy may be burdened with the charge. If the ministers of the whole province should bring with them the votes of those that were committed to their care, the election should be the more free; but always, the votes of all those that convene must be required. The examinations must be publicly made; those that stand in election must publicly preach; and men must be charged in the name of God, to vote according to conscience, and not after affection. If anything is objected against any that stand in election, the superintendents and ministers must consider whether the objection is made of conscience, or of malice; and they must answer accordingly. Other ceremonies than sharp examination, approbation of the ministers and superintendents, with the public consent of the elders and people then present, we cannot allow.

The superintendent being elected, and appointed to his charge, must be subjected to the censure and correction of the ministers and elders, not only of his chief town, but also of the whole province over the which he is appointed overseer.

If his offences are known, and the ministers and elders of his province are negligent in correcting him, then the next one or two superintendents, with their ministers and elders, may convene him, and the ministers and elders of his chief town (provided that it is within his own province or chief town), and may accuse and correct as well the superintendent in those things that are worthy of correction, as the ministers and elders for their negligence and ungodly tolerance of his offences.

Whatsoever crime deserves correction or deposition of any other minister, deserves the same in the superintendent, without exception of person.

After that the church is established, and three years are passed, we require that no man be called to the office of a superintendent who has not two years, at the least, given declaration of his faithful labours in the ministry of some church.

No superintendent may be transferred at the pleasure or request of any one province; no, not without the consent of the whole council of the church, and that for grave causes and consideration.

Of one thing, in the end, we must admonish your honours: to wit, that, in appointing superintendents for this present [time], ye disappoint not your chief towns, and where learning is exercised, of such ministers as may profit more by residence in one place, than by continual travel from place to place. For if ye so do, the youth in those places shall lack the profound interpretation of the scriptures; and so it shall be long before that your gardens send forth many plants; where, by the contrary, if one or two towns are continually exercised as they may, the commonwealth shall shortly taste of their fruit, to the comfort of the godly.

## For the Schools

Seeing that the office and duty of the godly magistrate is not only to purge the church of God from all superstition, and to set it at liberty from bondage of tyrants; but also to provide, to the uttermost of his power, how it may abide in the same purity to the posterity following; we cannot but freely communicate our judgments with your honours in this behalf.

## The Necessity of Schools

Seeing that God has determined that his church here in earth shall be taught not by angels but by men; and seeing that men are born ignorant of all godliness; and seeing, also, God now ceases to illuminate men miraculously, suddenly changing them, as that he did his apostles and others in the primitive church: of necessity it is that your honours be most careful for the virtuous education and godly upbringing of the youth of this realm, if either ye now thirst unfeignedly [for] the advancement of Christ's glory, or yet desire the continuance of his benefits to the generation following. For as the

youth must succeed to us, so we ought to be careful that they have the knowledge and erudition to profit and comfort that which ought to be most dear to us-to wit, the church and spouse of the Lord Jesus.

Of necessity therefore we judge it, that every several church have a schoolmaster appointed, such a one as is able, at least, to teach grammar and the Latin tongue, if the town is of any reputation. If it is upland, where the people convene to doctrine but once in the week, then must either the reader or the minister there appointed, take care over the children and youth of the parish, to instruct them in their first rudiments, and especially in the catechism,[10] as we have it now translated in the book of our common order, called the Order of Geneva. And further, we think it expedient that in every notable town, and especially in the town of the superintendent, [there] be erected a college, in which the arts, at least logic and rhetoric, together with the tongues, be read by sufficient masters, for whom honest stipends must be appointed; as also provision for those that are poor, and are not able by themselves, nor by their friends, to be sustained at letters, especially such as come from landward.

The fruit and commodity hereof shall suddenly appear. For, first, the youth and tender children shall be nourished and brought up in virtue, in presence of their friends; by whose good attendance many inconveniences may be avoided, in the which the youth commonly fall, either by too much liberty, which they have in strange and unknown places, while they cannot rule themselves; or else for lack of good attendance, and of such necessities as their tender age requires. Secondly, the exercise of the children in every church shall be great instruction to the aged.

Last, the great schools, called universities, shall be replenished with those that are apt to learning; for this must be carefully provided, that no father, of what estate or condition that ever he be, use his children at his own fantasy, especially in their youth; but all must be compelled to bring up their children in learning and virtue.

The rich and potent may not be permitted to suffer their children to spend their youth in vain idleness, as heretofore they have done. But they must be exhorted, and by the censure of the church compelled, to dedicate their sons, by good exercise, to the profit of the church and to the commonwealth; and that they must do of their own expenses, because they are able. The children of the poor must be supported and sustained on the charge of the church, till trial is taken whether the spirit of docility is found in them or not. If they are found apt to letters and learning, then may they (we mean neither the sons of the rich, nor yet the sons of the poor) not be permitted to reject learning; but must be charged to continue their study, so that the commonwealth may have some comfort by them. And for this purpose must discreet, learned, and grave men be appointed to visit

all schools for the trial of their exercise, profit, and continuance: to wit, the ministers and elders, with the best learned in every town, shall every quarter take examination how the youth have profited.

A certain time must be appointed to reading, and to learning of the catechism; a certain time to the grammar, and to the Latin tongue; a certain time to the arts, philosophy, and to the tongues; and a certain [time] to that study in which they intend chiefly to travail for the profit of the commonwealth. Which time being expired, we mean in every course, the children must either proceed to further knowledge, or else they must be sent to some handicraft, or to some other profitable exercise; provided always, that first they have the form of knowledge of Christian religion: to wit, the knowledge of God's law and commandments; the use and office of the same; the chief articles of our belief; the right form to pray unto God, the number use, and effect of the sacraments; the true knowledge of Christ Jesus, of his office and natures, and such other [points] as without the knowledge whereof, neither deserves [any] man to be named Christian, neither ought any to be admitted to the participation of the Lord's Table. And therefore, these principles ought and must be learned in the youth.

## The Times Appointed to Every Course

Two years we think more than sufficient to learn to read perfectly, to answer to the catechism, and to have some entry in the first rudiments of grammar; to the full accomplishment whereof (we mean of the grammar) we think another three or four years, at most, sufficient. To the arts-to wit, logic and rhetoric-and to the Greek tongue, four years; and the rest, till the age of twenty-four years, to be spent in that study wherein the learner would profit the church or commonwealth, be it in the laws, or physics or divinity. Which time to twenty-four years being spent in the schools, the learner must be removed to serve the church or commonwealth, unless he is found a necessary reader in the same college or university. If God shall move your hearts to establish and execute this order, and put these things in practice, your whole realm (we doubt not), within few years, shall serve itself of true preachers, and of other officers necessary for your commonwealth.

## The Erection of Universities

The grammar schools and of the tongues being erected as we have said, next we think it necessary there be three universities in this whole realm, established in the towns accustomed: the first in Saint Andrews, the second in Glasgow, and the third in Aberdeen.

And in the first university and principal, which is Saint Andrews, there be three colleges. And in the first college, which is the entry of the university, there be four classes or seiges: the first, to the new supposts, shall be only dialectics; the next, only mathematics; the third, of physics only; the fourth of medicine. And in the second college, two classes or seiges: the first, in moral philosophy; the second

in the laws. And in the third college, two classes or seiges: the first, in the tongues, to wit, Greek and Hebrew; the second, in divinity.

## Of Readers, and of the Degrees, of Time, and Study

Item, In the first college, and in the first class, shall be a reader of dialectics, who shall accomplish his course thereof in one year. In the mathematics, which is the second class, shall be a reader who shall complete his course of arithmetic, geometry, cosmography, and astronomy, in one year. In the third class shall be a reader of natural philosophy, who shall complete his course in a year; and who, after these three years, by trial and examination, shall be found sufficiently instructed in these aforesaid sciences, shall be laureate and graduate in philosophy. In the fourth class shall be a reader of medicine, who shall complete his course in five years; after the study of the which time, being by examination found sufficient, they shall be graduate in medicine.

Item, In the second college, in the first class, one reader only in the ethics, economics, and politics, who shall complete his course in the space of one year. In the second class shall be two readers in the municipal and Roman laws, who shall complete their courses in four years; after the which time, being by examination found sufficient, they shall be graduate in the laws.

Item, In the third college, in the first class, a reader of the Hebrew, and another of the Greek tongue, who shall complete the grammars thereof in half a year, and the remnant of the year the reader of the Hebrew shall interpret a book of Moses, the prophets, or the psalms; so that his course and class shall continue one year. The reader of the Greek shall interpret some book of Plato, together with some place of the New Testament. And in the second class shall be two readers in divinity, the one in the New Testament, the other in the Old, who shall complete their course in five years; after which time, who shall be found by examination sufficient, shall be graduate in divinity.

Item, We think expedient that none be admitted unto the first college, and to be supports of the university, unless he have from the master of the school, and the minister of the town where he was instructed in the tongues, a testimonial of his learning, docility, age, and parentage; and likewise trial to be taken by certain examiners, deputed by the rector and principals of the same, and, if he is found sufficiently instructed in dialectics, he shall incontinent [ immediately], that same year, be promoted to the class of mathematics.

Item, That none be admitted to the class of the medicine but he that shall have his testimonial of his time well spent in dialectics, mathematics, and physics, and his docility in the last.

Item, that none be admitted unto the class of the laws, but he that shall have sufficient testimonials of his time well spent in dialectics, mathematics, physics, ethics, economics, and politics, and of his docility in the last.

Item, that none be admitted unto the class and seige of divines but he that shall have sufficient testimonials of his time well spent in dialectics, mathematics, physics, ethics, economics, moral philosophy, and the Hebrew tongue, and of his docility in the moral philosophy and the Hebrew tongue. But neither shall such as will apply them to hear the laws, be compelled to hear medicine; neither such as apply them to hear divinity be compelled to hear either medicine or yet the laws.

Item, in the second university, which is Glasgow, shall be two colleges only. In the first shall be a class of dialectics, another in mathematics, the third in physics, ordered in all sorts as Saint Andrews.

Item, In the second college, four classes; the first in moral philosophy, ethics, economics, and politics; the second of the municipal and Roman laws; the third of the Hebrew tongue; the fourth in divinity. Which shall be ordered in all sorts, conforming to it we have written in the order of the university of Saint Andrews.

The third university of Aberdeen shall be conformed to this university of Glasgow, in all sorts.

Item, We think needful, that there be chosen of the body of the university to every college a man of learning, discretion, and diligence, who shall receive the whole rents of the college, and distribute the same according to the erection of the college; and shall daily hearken the diet accounts; adjoining to him weekly one of the readers or regents, above whom he shall [take] attendance upon their diligence, as well in their reading as exercitation of the youth in the matter taught; upon the policy and upholding of the place; and for punishment of crimes, [he] shall hold a weekly convention with the whole members of the college. He shall be accountable yearly to the superintendent, rector, and rest of the principals convened, about the first of November. His election shall be in this sort: There shall be three of the most sufficient men of the university (not principals already) nominated by the members of the college whose principal is departed, sworn to follow their conscience, and publicly proponed through the whole university. After the which time eight days, the superintendent, by himself, or his special procurator, with the rector and rest of the principals, as a chapter convened, shall confirm one of the three they think most sufficient, being aforesworn to do the same with single eye, but [without] respect to feud or favour.

Item, in every college, we think needful at the least one steward, a cook, a gardener, [and] a porter, who shall be subject to [the] discipline of the principal, as the rest.

Item, that every university have a beadle subject to serve at all times throughout the whole university, as the rector and principals shall command.

Item, that every university have a rector chosen from year to year as shall follow. The principals, being convened with the whole regents chapterly, shall be sworn that every man in his room shall nominate such one as his conscience shall testify to be most sufficient to bear such charge and dignity; and three of them that shall be ofttest nominated shall be put in edict publicly, fifteen days afore Michaelmas. And then shall on Michaelmas evening convene the whole principals, regents, and supposts that are graduate, or at the least studied their time in ethics, economics, and politics, and no others younger; and every nation,[12] first protesting in God's presence to follow the sincere ditement and of their consciences, shall nominate one of the said three; and he that has most votes shall be confirmed by the superintendent and principal, and his duty with an exhortation proponed unto him: and this to be the 28 day of September; and thereafter oaths to be taken, hinc inde, of his just and godly government, and of the remnant's lawful submission and obedience. He shall be propined to the university, at his entry, with a new garment, bearing Insignia Magistratus; and be held monthly to visit every college, and with his presence decore and examine the lections and exercitation thereof. His assessors shall be a lawyer and a theologian, with whose advice he shall decide all questions civil, betwixt the members of the university. If any without the university pursue a member thereof, or be pursued by a member of the same, he shall assist the provost and bailles in those cases, or other judges competent, to see justice is ministered. And likewise, if any of the university be criminally pursued, he shall assist the judges competent, and see that justice be ministered.

Item, We think it expedient that in every college in every university there be twenty-four bursars, divided equally in all the classes and seiges, as is above expressed: that is, in Saint Andrews, seventy-two bursars; in Glasgow, forty-eight bursars; in Aberdeen, forty-eight; to be sustained only in meat upon the charges of the college; and [to] be admitted at the examination of the ministry and chapter of principals in the university, as well in docility of the persons offered, as of the ability of their parents to sustain them themselves, and not to burden the commonwealth with them.

## Of Stipends and Expenses Necessary

Item, We think expedient that the universities be doted [endowed] with temporal lands, with rents and revenues of the bishoprics' temporality, and of the kirks collegiate, so far as their ordinary charges shall require; and therefore, that it would please your honours, by advice of your honours' council and vote of parliament, to do the same. And to the effect the same may be shortly expedited, we have recollected the sums we think necessary the same.

Imprimis, For the ordinary stipend of the dialectician reader, the mathematician, physician, and moral philosopher, we think sufficient one hundred pounds for every one of them.

- Item, For the stipend of every reader in medicine and laws, one hundred thirty-three pounds, 6s.8d.
- Item, To every reader in Hebrew, Greek, and divinity two hundred pounds.
- Item, To every principal of a college, two hundred pounds.
- Item, To every steward, sixteen pounds of fee.
- Item, To every gardener, to every cook, and porter, each, ten marks.
- Item, To the board of every bursar, without the classes of theology and medicine, twenty pounds.
- Item, [To every bursar] in the class of theology, which will be only twelve persons in Saint Andrews, twenty-four pounds.
- Summa of yearly and ordinary expenses in the university of Saint Andrews, extends to 3796 lib.
- Summa of yearly and ordinary expenses of Glasgow, 2922 lib. Aberdeen, asmuch, 2922 lib.
- Summa of the ordinary charges of the whole, 9640 lib.

Item, the beadle's stipend shall be of every entrant and suppost of the university, two shillings; of every one graduate in philosophy, three shillings; of every one graduate in medicine or laws, four shillings; in theology, five shillings; all bursars being excepted.

Item, We have thought good, for building and upholding of the places, [that] a general collection be made; and that every earl's son, at his entry to the university, shall give forty shillings, and suchlike at every graduation, forty shillings. Item, Every lord's son suchlike at each time, thirty shillings; each freeholding baron's son, twenty shillings: every feuar [landholder] and substantial [well-to-do] gentleman's son, one mark. Item, Every substantial husband's and burgess' son, at each time, ten shillings. Item, Every one of the rest (excepting the bursars), five shillings at each time.

And that this be gathered in a common box, put in keeping to the principal of the theologians, every principal having a key thereof, to be counted each year once, with the relics [residue] of the principals to be laid into the same, about the fifteenth day of November, in presence of the superintendent, rector, and the whole principals; and, at their whole consent, or at the least the most part thereof, reserved and employed only upon the building and upholding of the places, and repairing of the same, as ever necessity shall require. And therefore, the rector, with his assistants, shall be held to visit the places each year once, incontinent after he is promoted, upon the last of October, or thereby.

## Of the Privilege of the University

Seeing we desire that innocence shall defend us rather than privilege, we think that each person of the university should answer before the provost and bailies of each town where the universities are, of all crimes whereof they are accused, only that the rector be assessor to them in the said actions. In civil matters, if the question is betwixt members of the university on each side, making their residence and exercitation therein for the time; in that case, the party called shall not be held to answer, but only before the rector and his assessors heretofore expressed. In all other cases of civil pursuit, the general rule of the law to be observed, Actor sequatur forum rei, etc.[13]

Item, that the rector and all inferior members of the university be exempted from all taxations, imposts [duties], charges of war, or any other charge that may onerate [burden] or abstract him or them from the care of their office: such as tutory, curatory, deaconry, or any suchlike, that are established, or hereafter shall be established, in our commonwealth; to the effect, that but trouble, that one may wait upon the upbringing of the youth in learning, that the other bestow his time only in that most necessary exercitation.

All other things touching the books to be read in each class, and all such particular affairs, we refer to the discretion of the masters, principals, and regents, with their well-advised councils: not doubting but if God shall grant quietness, and if your wisdoms grace to set forward letters in the sort prescribed, ye shall leave wisdom and learning to your posterity, a treasure more to be esteemed nor [than] any earthly treasure ye are able to provide for them; which, without wisdom, are more able to be their ruin and confusion, than help or comfort. And as this is most true, so we leave it with the rest of the commodities to be weighed by your honours' wisdom, and set forward by your authority to the most high advancement of this commonwealth, committed to your charge.

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## The Sixth Head – Of the Rents and Patrimony of the Kirk

These two sorts of men, that is to say, the ministers and the poor, together with the schools, when order shall be taken thereabout, must be sustained upon the charges of the church. And therefore provision must be made, how and of whom such sums must be lifted. But before we enter in this head, we must crave of your honours, in the name of the eternal God, and of his Son Christ Jesus, that ye have respect to your poor brethren, the labourers and manurers of the ground; who by these cruel beasts, the Papists, have been so oppressed that their life to them has been dolorous and bitter. If ye will have God author and approver of your reformation, ye must not follow their footsteps; but ye must have compassion upon your brethren, appointing them to pay so reasonable teinds [tithes], that they may feel some benefit of Christ Jesus now preached unto them.

With the grief of our hearts we hear that some gentlemen are now as cruel over their tenants as ever were the Papists, requiring of them whatsoever before they paid to the church; so that the Papistical tyranny shall only be changed into the tyranny of the lord or of the laird. We dare not flatter your honours, neither yet is it profitable for you that so we do. If you permit such cruelty to be used, neither shall ye, who by your authority ought to gainstand such oppression, neither [shall] they that use the same, escape God's heavy and fearful judgments. The gentlemen, barons, earls, lords, and others, must be content to live upon their just rents, and suffer the church to be restored to her liberty, that, in her restitution, the poor, who heretofore by the cruel Papists have been spoiled and oppressed, may now receive some comfort and relaxation.[14]

Neither do we judge it to proceed from justice that one man shall possess the teinds of another; but we think it a thing most reasonable, that every man have the use of his own teinds, provided that he answer to the deacons and treasurers of the church of that which justly shall be appointed unto him. We require deacons and treasurers rather to receive the rents, nor the ministers themselves; because that of the teinds must not only the ministers be sustained, but also the poor and schools. And therefore we think it most expedient that common treasurers, to wit, the deacons, be appointed from year to year, to receive the whole rents appertaining to the church; and that commandment be given, that no man be permitted either to receive either yet to intromit with anything appertaining to the sustenance of the persons foresaid, but such as by common consent of the church are thereto appointed.

If any think this prejudicial to the tacks and assedations [holdings and leases] of those that now possess the teinds, let them understand that an unjust possession is no possession before God; for those of whom they received their title and presupposed right, were and are thieves and murderers, and had no power so to alienate the patrimony and common good of the church. And yet we are not so extreme, but that we wish just recompense to be made to such as have disbursed sums of money to those unjust possessors (so that it has not been of late days in prejudice of the church); but such as are found and known to be done of plain collusion in no wise ought to be maintained of you. And for that purpose, we think it most expedient that whosoever have assedation [lease] of teinds or churches be openly warned to produce their assedation and assurance, that cognition being taken, the just tacksman [lessee] may have a just and reasonable recompense for the years that are to run, the profit of the years passed being considered and deducted; and the unjust and surmised may be served accordingly. So that the church, in the end, may recover her liberty and freedom, and that only for relief of the poor.

Your honours may easily understand that we speak not now for ourselves, but in favour of the poor and the labourers defrauded and oppressed by the priests, and by their confederate pensioners. For while that the priest's pensioner's idle belly is delicately fed, the poor, to whom a portion of that

appertains, were pined with hunger; and moreover the true labourers were compelled to pay that which [they] ought not: for the labourer is neither debtor to the dumb dog, called the bishop, neither yet unto his hired pensioner; but is debtor only unto the church. And the church is only bound to sustain and nourish of her charges the persons before mentioned: to wit, the ministers of the word, the poor, and the teachers of the youth.

But now to return to the former head. The sums able to sustain these forenamed persons, and to furnish all things appertaining to the preservation of good order and policy within the church, must be lifted off the teinds: to wit, the teind sheaf, teind hay, teind hemp, teind lint [flax], teind fish, teind calf, teind foal, teind lamb, teind wool, teind cheese, etc. And because that we know that the tithes reasonably taken, as is before expressed, will not suffice to discharge the former necessity, we think that all things doted [endowed] to hospitality, all annual rents, both in burgh and land, pertaining to priests, chantries, colleges, chaplainries, and to friars of all orders, to the sisters of the Sienine,[15] and to all others of that order, and such others within this realm, be received still to the use of the church or churches within the towns or parishes where they were doted. Furthermore to the upholding of the universities and sustenance of the superintendents, the whole revenue of the temporality of the bishops', deans', and archdeans' lands, and all rents of lands pertaining to the cathedral churches whatsoever. And further, merchants and rich craftsmen in free burghs, who have nothing to do with the manuring of the ground, must make some provision in their cities, towns, or dwelling places, for to support the need of the church.

To the ministers, and failing thereof the readers, must be restored their manses and their glebes [lands]; for else they cannot seize their flock at all times as their duty is. If any glebe exceed six acres of land, the rest to remain in the possessor's hands, while order is taken therein.[16]

The receivers and collectors of these rents and duties must be the deacons or treasurers appointed from year to year in every church, and that by common consent and free election of the church. The deacons may distribute no part of that which is collected, but by commandment of the ministers and elders; and they may command nothing to be delivered, but as the church before has determined; to wit, the deacons shall of the first pay the sums, either quarterly, or from half year to half year, to the ministers which the kirk has appointed. The same they shall do to the schoolmasters, readers, and hospitals (if any be), always receiving acquittances [receipts] for their discharge.

If any extraordinary sums lie [remain] to be delivered, then must the ministers, elders, and deacons consult whether the deliverance of those sums does stand with the common utility of the church or not; and if they do universally agree and condescend either upon the affirmative or the negative, then because they are in credit and office for the year, they may do as best seems unto them. But if there is controversy amongst themselves, the whole church must be made privy; and after that the

matter be expounded [explained], and the reasons heard, the judgment of the church with the minister's consent shall prevail.

The deacons shall be bound and compelled to make accounts to the ministers and elders of that which they have received, as oft as the policy shall appoint. And the elders, when they are changed (which must be every year), must clear their accounts before such auditors as the church shall appoint. And both the deacons and elders being changed, shall deliver to them that shall be now elected, all sums of money, corns, and other profits resting in their hands; the tickets whereof must be delivered to the superintendents in their visitation, and by them to the great council of the church, that as well the abundance as the indigence of every church may be evidently known, that a reasonable equality may be had throughout the whole realm. If this order is precisely kept, corruption cannot suddenly enter. For the free and yearly election of deacons and elders shall suffer none to usurp a perpetual dominion over the church; the knowledge of the rental shall suffice them to receive no more than whereof they shall be bound to make accounts; the deliverance of the money to the new officers shall not suffer private men [to] use in their private business that which appertains to the public affairs of the church.

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## The Seventh Head – Of Ecclesiastical Discipline

As that no commonwealth can flourish or long endure without good laws, and sharp execution of the same, so neither can the church of God be brought to purity, neither yet be retained in the same, without the order of ecclesiastical discipline, which stands in reprovng and correcting of those faults which the civil sword does either neglect, either may not punish. Blasphemy, adultery, murder, perjury, and other crimes capital, worthy of death, ought not properly to fall under censure of the church; because all such open transgressors of God's laws ought to be taken away by the civil sword. But drunkenness, excess (be it in apparel, or be it in eating and drinking), fornication, oppression of the poor by exactions, deceiving of them in buying or selling by wrong mete or measure, wanton words and licentious living tending to slander, do properly appertain to the church of God, to punish the same as God's word commands.

But because this accursed Papistry has brought in such confusion in the world, that neither was virtue rightly praised, neither vice severely punished; the church of God is compelled to draw the sword, which of God she has received, against such open and manifest offenders, cursing and excommunicating all such, as well those whom the civil sword ought to punish as the others, from all participation with her in prayers and sacraments, till open repentance manifestly appears in them. As the order of excommunication and proceeding to the same ought to be grave and slow, so, being

once pronounced against any person, of what estate and condition that ever they be, it must be kept with all severity. For laws made and not kept engenders contempt of virtue and brings in confusion and liberty to sin. And therefore this order we think expedient to be observed before and after excommunication.

First, if the offence is secret and known to few, and rather stands in suspicion than in manifest probation, the offender ought to be privately admonished to abstain from all appearance of evil; which, if he promises to do, and to declare himself sober, honest, and one that fears God, and fears to offend his brethren, then may the secret admonition suffice for his correction. But if he either contemns the admonition, or, after promise made, does show himself no more circumspect than he was before, then must the minister admonish him; to whom if he is found disobedient, they must proceed according to the rule of Christ, as after shall be declared.

If the crime is public, and such as is heinous, as fornication, drunkenness, fighting, common swearing, or execration, then ought the offender to be called into the presence of the minister, elders, and deacons, where his sin and offence ought to be declared and aggravated [stressed], so that his conscience may feel how far he has offended God, and what slander he has raised in the church. If signs of unfeigned repentance appear in him, and if he requires to be admitted to public repentance, the ministry may appoint unto him a day when the whole church convenes together, that in presence of all he may testify the repentance which before them he professed: which, if he accepts, and with reverence does, confessing his sin, and damning the same, and earnestly desiring the congregation to pray to God with him for mercy, and to accept him in their society, notwithstanding his former offence, then the church may, and ought [to] receive him as a penitent. For the church ought to be no more severe than God declares himself to be, who witnesses that, In whatsoever hour a sinner unfeignedly repents, and turns from his wicked way, that he will not remember one of his iniquities [cf. [Ezek. 18:21-22](#); [33:14-16](#)]. And therefore the church ought diligently to advert that it excommunicate not those whom God absolves.

If the offender called before the ministry is found stubborn, hard-hearted, or one in whom no sign of repentance appears, then must he be dismissed with an exhortation to consider the dangerous estate in which he stands; assuring him, if they find in him no other token of amendment of life, that they will be compelled to seek a further remedy. If he within a certain space shows his repentance to the ministry, they must present him to the church as before is said.

But if he continues in his impenitence, then the church must be admonished that such crimes are committed amongst them, which by the ministry has been reprehended, and the person provoked to repent; whereof, because no signs appear unto them, they could not but signify unto the church the

crimes, but not the person, requiring them earnestly to call to God to move and touch the heart of the offender, so that suddenly and earnestly he may repent.

If the person maligns, then the next day of public assembly, the crime and the person must be both notified unto the church, and their judgment must be required, if that such crimes ought to be suffered unpunished amongst them. Request also would be made to the most discreet and to the nearest friends of the offender to travail with him to bring him to knowledge of himself, and of his dangerous estate; with a commandment given to all men to call to God for the conversion of the impenitent. If a solemn and a special prayer were made and drawn for that purpose, the thing should be the more gravely done.

The third Sunday, the minister ought to require if the impenitent has declared any signs of repentance to any of the ministry; and if he has, then may the minister appoint him to be examined by the whole ministry, either then instantly, or at another day affixed to the consistory: and if repentance appears, as well of the crime, as of his long contempt, then may he be presented to the church, and make his confession, and to be accepted, as before is said. But if no man signifies his repentance, then he ought to be excommunicated; and by the mouth of the minister, consent of the ministry, and commandment of the church, such a contemner must be pronounced excommunicated from God, and from the society of his church.

After which sentence may no person (his wife and family only excepted) have any kind of conversation with him, be it in eating and drinking, buying or selling, yea, in saluting or talking with him, except that it be at the commandment or licence of the ministry for his conversion; that he, by such means confounded, seeing himself abhorred of the faithful and godly, may have occasion to repent and be so saved. The sentence of his excommunication must be published universally throughout the realm, lest that any man should pretend ignorance.

His children begotten or born after that sentence and before his repentance, may not be admitted to baptism, till either they are of age to require the same, or else that the mother, or some of his especial friends, members of the church, offer and present the child, abhorring and damning the iniquity and obstinate contempt of the impenitent. If any think it severe that the child should be punished for the iniquity of the father, let them understand that the sacraments appertain only to the faithful and to their seed; but such as stubbornly contemn all godly admonition, and obstinately remain in their iniquity, cannot be accounted amongst the faithful.

## The Order for Public Offenders

We have spoken nothing of those that commit horrible crimes, as murderers, man-slayers, and adulterers; for such (as we have said) the civil sword ought to punish to death. But in case they are permitted to live, then must the church, as before is said, draw the sword which of God she has received, holding them as accursed even in their [very] fact; the offender being first called, and order of the church used against him, in the same manner as the persons that for obstinate impenitence are publicly excommunicated; so that the obstinate impenitent, after the sentence of excommunication, and the murderer or adulterer, stand in one case as concerning the judgment of [the church]: that is, neither of both may be received in the fellowship of the church to prayers or sacraments (but to hearing of the word they may), till first they offer themselves to the ministry, humbly requiring the ministers and elders to pray to God for them, and also to be intercessors to the church, that they may be admitted to public repentance, and so to the fruition of the benefits of Christ Jesus, distributed to the members of his body.

If this request is humbly made, then may not the ministers refuse to signify the same unto the church, the next day of public preaching, the minister giving exhortation to the church to pray to God to perform the work which he appears to have begun, working in the heart of the offender unfeigned repentance of his grievous crime, and the sense and feeling of his great mercy, by the operation of his Holy Spirit. Thereafter a day ought publicly to be assigned unto him to give open confession of his offence and contempt, and so to make a public satisfaction to the church of God. Which day, the offender must appear in presence of the whole church, and with his own mouth damn his own impiety, publicly confessing the same; desiring God of his grace and mercy, and his congregation, that it will please them to accept him in their society, as before is said. The minister must examine him diligently whether he finds a hatred and displeasure of his sin, as well of his crime as of his contempt: which, if he confesses, he must travail with him, to see what hope he has of God's mercy.

And if he finds him reasonably instructed in the knowledge of Christ Jesus [and] in the virtue of his death, then may the minister comfort him by God's infallible promises, and demand of the church if they are content to receive that creature of God (whom Satan before had drawn in his nets), in the society of their body, seeing that he declares himself penitent. Which, if the church grants, as they may not justly deny the same, then ought the minister in public prayer to commend him to God, confess the sin of that offender, and of the whole church desire mercy and grace for Christ Jesus' sake. Which prayer being ended, the minister ought to exhort the church to receive that penitent brother in their favour, as they require God to receive themselves when they have offended; and in sign of their consent, the elders and chief men of the church shall take the penitent by the hand, and one or two in name of the whole shall kiss and embrace him with all reverence and gravity, as a member of Christ Jesus.

Which being done, the minister shall exhort the reconciled to take diligent heed in times coming that Satan trap him not in such crimes, admonishing him that he will not cease to tempt and try all means possible to bring him from that obedience which he has given to God, and to the ordinance of his Son Christ Jesus. The exhortation being ended, the minister ought to give public thanks unto God for the conversion of that their brother, and for the benefits which we receive by Jesus Christ, praying for the increase and continuance of the same.

If the penitent, after that he has offered himself to the ministry, or to the church, is found ignorant in the principal points of our religion, and chiefly in the article of justification, and of the office of Christ Jesus, then he ought to be exactly instructed before he is received. For a mockery of God it is to receive them in repentance who knows not wherein stands their remedy, when they repent their sin.

## Persons Subject to Discipline

To discipline must all estates within this realm be subject if they offend, as well the rulers as they that are ruled; yea, and the preachers themselves, as well as the poorest within the church. And because the eye and mouth of the church ought to be most single and irreprehensible, the life and conversation of the ministers ought most diligently to be tried. Whereof we shall speak, after that we have spoken of the election of elders and deacons, who must assist the ministers in all public affairs of the church, etc.

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## The Eighth Head – Touching the Election of Elders and Deacons, etc.

Men of best knowledge in God's word, of cleanest life, men faithful, and of most honest conversation that can be found in the church, must be nominated to be in election; and the names of the same must be publicly read to the whole kirk by the minister, giving them advertisement that from amongst these must be chosen elders and deacons. If any of the nominated is noted with public infamy, he ought to be repelled; for it is not seemly that the servant of corruption shall have authority to judge in the church of God. If any man knows others of better qualities within the church than those that are nominated, let them be put in election, that the church may have the choice.

If churches are of smaller number than that seniors and deacons can be chosen from amongst them, then may they well be joined to the next adjacent church; for the plurality of churches, without ministers and order, shall rather hurt than edify.

The election of elders and deacons ought to be used every year once (which we judge to be most convenient the first day of August); lest that by long continuance of such officers, men presume upon the liberty of the church. It hurts not that one man is retained in office more years than one, so that he is appointed yearly, by common and free election; provided always, that the deacons, treasurers, be not compelled to receive the office again for the space of three years.

How the votes and suffrages may be best received, so that every man may give his vote freely, every several church may take such order as best seems to them.

The elders being elected must be admonished of their office, which is to assist the minister in all public affairs of the church: to wit, in judging and discerning causes; in giving of admonition to the licentious liver; in having respect to the manners and conversation of all men within their charge; for by the gravity of the seniors, the light and unbridled life of the licentious ought [to] be corrected and bridled.

Yea, the seniors ought to take heed to the life, manners, diligence, and study of their ministers. If he is worthy of admonition, they must admonish him; of correction, they must correct him. And if he is worthy of deposition, they, with consent of the church and superintendent, may depose him, so that his crime so deserves. If a minister is light in conversation, by his elders and seniors he ought to be admonished. If he is negligent in study, or one that vakes [attends] not upon his charge and flock, or one that propones not fruitful doctrine, he deserves sharper admonition and correction. To the which, if he is found stubborn and disobedient, then may the seniors of one church complain to the ministry of the two next adjacent churches, where men of greater gravity are; to whose admonition, if he is found disobedient, he ought to be discharged from his ministry till his repentance appears, and a place is vacant for him.

If any minister is deprehended in any notable crime, as whoredom, adultery, murder, man slaughter, perjury, teaching of heresy, or any such as deserve death, or [that] may be a note of perpetual infamy, he ought to be deposed for ever. By heresy, we mean pernicious doctrine plainly taught, and obstinately defended, against the foundation and principles of our faith. And such a crime we judge to deserve perpetual deposition from the ministry; for most dangerous we know it to be, to commit the flock to a man infected with the pestilence of heresy.

Some crimes deserve deposition for a time, and while [until] the person gives declaration of greater gravity and honesty: as if a minister is deprehended drunk, in brawling or fighting, an open slanderer, an infamer of his neighbour, factious and [a] sower of discord, he may be commanded to cease from his ministry, till he declare the signs of repentance; upon the which, the church shall abide him the

space of twenty days or further, as the church shall think expedient, before that they proceed to a new election.

Every inferior church shall by one of their seniors and one of their deacons, once in the year, notify unto the ministry of the superintendent's church, the life, manners, study, and diligence of their ministers, to the end that the discretion of some may correct the lenity of others.

Not only may the life and manners of the ministers come under censure and judgment of the church, but also [the life and manners] of their wives, children, and family. Judgment must be taken, that he neither lives riotously, neither yet avariciously; yea, respect must be had how they spend the stipend appointed to their living. If a reasonable stipend is appointed, and they live avariciously, they must be admonished to live so as they receive; for as excess and superfluity is not tolerable in a minister, so is avarice and the careful solicitude of money and gear utterly to be damned in Christ's servants, and especially in those that are fed upon the charge of the church. We judge it unseemly and not tolerable that ministers shall be boarded in common ale-houses or taverns.

Neither yet must a minister be permitted to frequent and commonly haunt the court, unless it is for a time, when he is either sent by the church, either yet called for by the authority for his counsel and judgment. Neither yet must he be one of the council in civil affairs, be he never judged so apt for that purpose; but either must he cease from the ministry (which at his own pleasure he may not do), or else from bearing charge in civil affairs, unless it is to assist the parliament, if he is called.

The office of the deacons, as is before declared, is to receive the rents and gather the alms of the church, to keep and distribute the same, as by the ministry of the kirk shall be appointed. They may also assist in judgment with the ministers and elders, and may be admitted to read in the assembly if they are required, and are found able thereto.

The elders and deacons, with their wives and households, must be under the same censure that is prescribed for the ministers: for they must be careful over their office; and seeing that they are judges to the manners of others, their own conversation ought to be irreprehensible. They must be sober, humble, lovers and entertainers of concord and peace; and, finally, they ought to be the example of godliness to others. And if the contrary thereof appears, they must be admonished by the minister, or by some of their brethren of the ministry, if the fault is secret; and if it is open and known, it must be rebuked before the ministry, and the same order kept against the senior or deacon, that before is described against the minister.

We think it not necessary that any public stipend shall be appointed either to the elders, or yet to the deacons, because their travail continues but for one year; and also because that they are not so

occupied with the affairs of the church, but that reasonably they may attend upon their domestical business.

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## The Ninth Head – Concerning the Policy of the Church

Policy we call an exercise of the church in such things as may bring the rude and ignorant to knowledge, or else inflame the learned to greater fervency, or to retain the church in good order. And thereof there are two sorts: the one utterly necessary, as that the word be truly preached, the sacraments rightly ministered, common prayers publicly made; that the children and rude persons be instructed in the chief points of religion, and that offences be corrected and punished. These things, we say, are so necessary, that without the same there is no face of a visible kirk. The other is profitable, but not of mere necessity: as, that psalms should be sung; that certain places of the scriptures should be read when there is no sermon; [and] that this day or that day, few or many in the week, the church should assemble. Of these and such others we cannot see how a certain order can be established. For in some churches the psalms may be conveniently sung; in others, perchance, they cannot. Some churches may convene every day; some thrice or twice in the week; some perchance but once. In these, and such like, must every particular church, by their own consent, appoint their own policy.

In great towns, we think expedient that every day there be either sermon, or else common prayers, with some exercise of reading the scriptures. What day the public sermon is, we can neither require or greatly approve that the common prayers be publicly used, lest that we shall either foster the people in superstition, who come to the prayers as they come to the Mass; or else give them occasion to think that those are no prayers which are made before and after sermon.

In every notable town, we require that one day, besides the Sunday, be appointed to the sermon and prayers; which, during the time of sermon, must be kept free from all exercise of labour, as well of the master as of the servants. In smaller towns, as we have said, the common consent of the church must put order. But the Sunday must straitly be kept, both before and after noon, in all towns. Before noon, the word must be preached and sacraments ministered, as also marriage solemnized, if occasion offer. After noon, must the young children be publicly examined in their catechism in audience of the people, in doing whereof the minister must take great diligence, as well to cause the people to understand the questions proponed, as the answers, and the doctrine that may be collected thereof. The order and how much is appointed for every Sunday, is already distincted in our Book of Common Order; which catechism is the most perfect that ever yet was used in the church.[17] At afternoon also may baptism be ministered, when occasion is offered of great travail

before noon. It is also to be observed that prayers be used at afternoon upon the Sunday, where there is neither preaching nor catechism.

It appertains to the policy of the church to appoint the times when the sacraments shall be ministered. Baptism may be ministered whensoever the word is preached; but we think it more expedient that it be ministered upon the Sunday, or upon the day of prayers, only after the sermon; partly to remove this gross error by the which many deceived think that children are damned if they die without baptism; and partly to make the people assist the administration of that sacrament with greater reverence than they do. For we do see the people begin already to wax weary by reason of the frequent repetition of those promises.

Four times in the year we think sufficient to the administration of the Lord's Table, which we desire to be distinct, that the superstition of times may be avoided so far as may be. Your honours are not ignorant how superstitiously the people run to that action at Pasche, even as [if] the time gave virtue to the sacrament; and how the rest of the whole year they are careless and negligent, as that it appertains not unto them but at that time only. We think therefore most expedient, that the first Sunday of March be appointed for one [time]; the first Sunday of June for another; the first Sunday of September for the third; and the first Sunday of December for the fourth. We do not deny but that any several church, for reasonable causes, may change the time, and may minister offer; but we study to suppress superstition. All ministers must be admonished to be more careful to instruct the ignorant than ready to satisfy their appetites; and more sharp in examination than indulgent, in admitting to that great mystery such as are ignorant of the use and virtue of the same. And therefore we think that the administration of the Table ought never to be without that examination pass before, especially of those whose knowledge is suspect. We think that none are apt to be admitted to that mystery who cannot formally say the Lord's Prayer, the articles of the belief, and declare the sum of the law.

Further, we think it a thing most expedient and necessary, that every church have a Bible in English, and that the people be commanded to convene to hear the plain reading or interpretation of the scripture, as the church shall appoint; that by frequent reading this gross ignorance, which in the cursed Papistry has overflowed all, may partly be removed. We think it most expedient that the scriptures be read in order: that is, that some one book of the Old and the New Testament be begun and orderly read to the end. And the same we judge of preaching, where the minister for [the] most part remains in one place. For this skipping and divagation [wandering] from place to place of the scripture, be it in reading, or be it in preaching, we judge not so profitable to edify the church, as the continual following of one text.

Every master of household must be commanded either to instruct, or else cause [to] be instructed, his children, servants, and family, in the principles of the Christian religion; without the knowledge whereof ought none to be admitted to the Table of the Lord Jesus. For such as are so dull and so ignorant, that they can neither try themselves, neither yet know the dignity and mystery of that action, cannot eat and drink of that Table worthily. And therefore of necessity we judge it, that every year at least, public examination be had by the ministers and elders of the knowledge of every person within the church: to wit, that every master and mistress of household come themselves, and their family (so many as are come to maturity), before the ministers and elders, to give confession of their faith, and to answer to such chief points of religion as the ministers shall demand. Such as are ignorant in the articles of their faith; understand not, nor cannot rehearse the commandments of God; know not how to pray, neither whereinto their righteousness consists, ought not to be admitted to the Lord's Table. And if they stubbornly continue, and suffer their children and servants to continue in wilful ignorance, the discipline of the church must proceed against them unto excommunication; and then the matter must be referred to the civil magistrate. For seeing that the just lives by his own faith, and that Christ Jesus justifies by knowledge of himself, we judge it insufferable that men shall be permitted to live and continue in ignorance as members of the church of God.

Moreover, men, women, and children would be exhorted to exercise themselves in the Psalms, that when the church convenes, and does sing, they may be the more able together with common heart and voice to praise God.

In private houses we think it expedient, that the most grave and discreet person use the common prayers at morn and at night, for the comfort and instruction of others. For seeing that we behold and see the hand of God now presently striking us with divers plagues, we think it a contempt of his judgments, or a provocation of his anger more to be kindled against us, if we are not moved to repentance of our former unthankfulness, and to earnest invocation of his name, whose only power may (and great mercy will), if we unfeignedly convert unto him, remove from us these terrible plagues which now for our iniquities hang over our heads. Convert us, O Lord, and we shall be converted [cf. [Jer. 17:14](#)].

## For Preaching, and Interpreting of Scriptures, etc.

To the end that the church of God may have a trial of men's knowledge, judgments, graces, and utterances; and also, that such as somewhat have profited in God's word may from time to time grow to more full perfection to serve the church, as necessity shall require: it is most expedient that in every town, where schools and repair of learned men are, that there be one certain day every week appointed [to] that exercise which Saint Paul calls prophesying. The order whereof is expressed by

him in these words: Let two or three prophets speak; and let the rest judge. But if anything be revealed to him that sitteth by, let the former keep silence. [For] ye may, one by one, all prophesy, that all may learn, and all may receive consolation. And the spirits (that is, the judgments) of the prophets, are subject to the prophets [1 Cor. 14:29-32]. Of which words of the apostle, it is evident that in Corinth, when the church did assemble for that purpose, some place of scripture was read; upon the which, first one gave his judgment to the instruction and consolation of the auditors; after whom did one other either confirm what the former had said, or did add what he had omitted, or did gently correct or explain more properly where the whole verity was not revealed to the former. And in case some things were hid from the one and from the other, liberty was given to the third to speak his judgment for edification of the church. Above the which number of three (as appears), they passed not, for avoiding of confusion.

These exercises, we say, are things most necessary for the church of God this day in Scotland. For thereby (as is said) shall the church have judgment and knowledge of the graces, and utterances of every man within their own body; the simple, and such as have somewhat profited, shall be encouraged daily to study and proceed in knowledge; the church shall be edified (for this exercise must be patent to such as list to hear and learn); and every man shall have liberty to utter and declare his mind and knowledge to the comfort and edification of the church.

But lest that of a profitable exercise might arise debate and strife, curious, peregrine [strange] and unprofitable questions are to be avoided. All interpretations disagreeing from the principles of our faith, repugning to charity, or that stand in plain contradiction to any other manifest place of scripture, are to be rejected. The interpreter in that exercise may not take to himself the liberty of a public preacher, yea, although he is a minister appointed; but he must bind himself to his text, that he enter not by digression in explaining common-places. He may use no invective in that exercise, unless it is with sobriety in confuting heresies. In exhortations or admonitions he must be short, that the time may be spent in opening of the mind of the Holy Ghost in that place, in following the file [course] and dependence of the text, and in observing such notes as may instruct and edify the auditure. For avoiding of contention, neither may the interpreter, neither yet any of the assembly, move any question in open audience, whereto himself is not content to give resolution without reasoning with any other; but every man ought to speak his own judgment to the edification of the church.

If any is noted with curiosity, or bringing in any strange doctrine, he must be admonished by the moderators, the ministers and elders, immediately after that the interpretation is ended. The whole members and number of them that are of the assembly ought to convene together, where examination should be had, how the persons that did interpret did handle and convey the matter; they themselves being removed till every man has given his censure; after the which, the persons

being called, the faults (if any notable be found) are noted, and the person gently admonished. In that last assembly all questions and doubts (if any arise) should be resolved without contention.

The ministers of the parish churches to landward, adjacent to every chief town, and the readers, if they have any gift of interpretation, within six miles must assist and concur to those that prophesy within the towns; to the end that they themselves may either learn, or else others may learn by them. And moreover, men in whom are supposed any gifts to be which might edify the church if they were well applied, must be charged by the ministers and elders to join themselves with that session and company of interpreters, to the end that the church may judge whether they are able to serve to God's glory, and to the profit of the church in the vocation of ministers or not. And if any are found disobedient, and not willing to communicate the gifts and spiritual graces of God with their brethren, after sufficient admonition, discipline must proceed against them; provided that the civil magistrate concur with the judgment and election of the church. For no man may be permitted to live as best pleases him within the church of God; but every man must be constrained, by fraternal admonition and correction, to bestow his labours, when of the church they are required, to the edification of others.

What day in the week is most convenient for that exercise, and what books of the scriptures shall be most profitable to be read, we refer to the judgment of every particular church, we mean, to the wisdom of the ministers and elders.

## Of Marriage

Because that marriage, the blessed ordinance of God, in this cursed Papistry has partly been contemned, and partly has been so infirmed, that the persons conjoined could never be assured of continuance, if the bishops and prelates list to dissolve the same; we have thought good to show our judgments how such confusion in times coming may be best avoided.

And first, public inhibition must be made that no persons under the power and obedience of others, such as sons and daughters, [and] those that are under curators, neither men nor women, contract marriage privily and without knowledge [of their parents, tutors, or curators, under whose power they are for the time]: which if they do, the censure and discipline of the church [ought] to proceed against them. If the son or daughter, or others, have their heart touched with desire of marriage, they are bound to give that honour to the parents that they open unto them their affection, asking of them counsel and assistance, how that motion, which they judge to be of God, may be performed. If the father, friend, or master, gainstand their request, and have no other cause than the common sort of men have (to wit, lack of goods, or because they are not so high-born as they require), yet must not the parties whose hearts are touched make any covenant till further declaration is made unto the

church of God. And, therefore, after they have opened their minds to their parents, or such others as have charge over them, they must declare it also to the ministry, or to the civil magistrate, requiring them to travail with their parents for their consent, which to do they are bound. And if they, to wit, the magistrate or ministers, find no just cause why the marriage required may not be fulfilled, then, after sufficient admonition to the father, friend, master, or superior, that none of them resist the work of God, the ministry or magistrate may enter in the place of the parent, and by consenting to their just requests may admit them to marriage. For the work of God ought not to be hindered by the corrupt affections of worldly men. The work of God we call [it], when two hearts (without filthiness before committed) are so joined, that both require and are content to live together in that holy bond of matrimony.

If any man commits fornication with the woman whom he required in marriage, then do both lose this foresaid benefit, as well of the church as of the magistrate; for neither of both ought to be intercessors or advocates for filthy fornicators. But the father, or nearest friend, whose daughter being a virgin is deflowered, has power by the law of God to compel the man that did that injury to marry his daughter. Or, if the father will not accept him by reason of his offence, then may he require the dot [dowry] of his daughter; which if the offender is not able to pay, then ought the civil magistrate to punish his body by some other punishment.

And because that fornication, whoredom, and adultery, are sins most common to this realm, we require of your honours, in the name of the Eternal God, that severe punishment, according as God has commanded, be executed against such wicked offenders. For we doubt not but such enormous crimes, openly committed, provoke the wrath of God, as the apostle speaks, not only upon the offenders, but also upon such places as where, without punishment, they are committed.

But to return to our former purpose: marriage ought not to be contracted amongst persons that have no election for lack of understanding; and therefore we affirm, that bairns [children] and infants cannot lawfully be married in their minor age, to wit, the man within fourteen years of age, and the woman within twelve years, at the least. Which if it chance any to have been, and have kept their bodies always separate, we cannot judge them bound to adhere as man and wife, by reason of that promise, which in God's presence was no promise at all. But if in the years of judgment they have embraced the one the other, then by reason of their last consent, they have ratified that which others did promise for them in their youth.

In a reformed church, marriage ought not to be secretly used, but in open face and public audience of the church. And for avoiding of dangers, it is expedient that the banns be publicly proclaimed three Sundays (unless the persons are [so] known, that no suspicion of danger may arise, and then may the banns be shortened at the discretion of the ministry). But in no wise can we admit marriage

to be used secretly, however honourable that the persons are. The Sunday before sermon we think most convenient for marriage, and it to be used no day else without the consent of the whole ministry.

Marriage once lawfully contracted, may not be dissolved at man's pleasure, as our master Christ Jesus does witness, unless adultery is committed; which, being sufficiently proven in presence of the civil magistrate, the innocent (if they so require) ought to be pronounced free, and the offender ought to suffer the death as God has commanded. If the civil sword foolishly spares the life of the offender, yet the church may not be negligent in their office, which is to excommunicate the wicked, and to repute them as dead members, and to pronounce the innocent party to be at freedom, be they never so honourable before the world. If the life is spared (as it ought not to be) to the offenders, and if the fruits of repentance of long time appear in them, and if they earnestly desire to be reconciled with the church, we judge that they may be received to participation of the sacraments, and of the other benefits of the church (for we would not that the church should hold those excommunicate whom God absolved, that is, the penitent).

If any demand, whether that the offender after reconciliation with the church, may not marry again: we answer, that if they cannot live continent, and if the necessity is such as that they fear further offence of God, we cannot forbid them to use the remedy ordained of God. If the party offended may be reconciled to the offender, then we judge that in nowise shall it be lawful to the offender to marry any other, except the party that before has been offended; and the solemnization of the latter marriage must be in the open face of the church like as the former, but without proclamation of banns.

This we do offer as the best counsel that God gives unto us in so doubtful a case. But the most perfect reformation were, if your honours would give to God his honour and glory, that ye would prefer his express commandment to your own corrupt judgments, especially in punishing of those crimes which he commands to be punished with death. For so should ye declare yourselves God's true and obedient officers, and your commonwealth should be rid of innumerable troubles.

We mean not, that sins committed in our former blindness (which are almost buried in oblivion) shall be called again to examination and judgment. But we require that the law may now and hereafter be so established and executed, that this ungodly impunity of sin have no place within this realm. For in the fear of God we signify unto your honours, that whosoever persuades unto you that ye may pardon where God commands death, deceives your souls, and provokes you to offend God's Majesty.

## Of Burial

Burial in all ages has been held in estimation, to signify that the same body that was committed to the earth should not utterly perish, but should rise again. And the same we would have kept within this realm, provided that superstition, idolatry, and whatsoever has proceeded of a false opinion, and for advantage sake, may be avoided; as singing of Mass, placebo, and dirge, and all other prayers over or for the dead, are not only superfluous and vain, but also are idolatry, and do repugn to the plain scriptures of God. For plain it is, that everyone that dies departs either in the faith of Christ Jesus, or else departs in incredulity. Plain it is, that they that depart in the true faith of Christ Jesus, rest from their labours, and from death [do] go to life everlasting, as by our Master and by his apostle we are taught. But whosoever departs in unbelief or in incredulity, shall never see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him. And so, we say that prayers for the dead are not only superfluous and vain, but do expressly repugn to the manifest scriptures and verity thereof.

For avoiding all inconveniencies, we judge it best, that neither singing nor reading be at the burial. For albeit things sung and read may admonish some of the living to prepare themselves for death, yet shall some superstitious and ignorant persons ever think that the works, singing, or reading of the living do and may profit the dead. And therefore, we think most expedient that the dead be conveyed to the place of burial with some honest company of the church, without either singing or reading; yea, without all land of ceremony heretofore used, other than that the dead be committed to the grave, with such gravity and sobriety, as those that are present may seem to fear the judgments of God, and to hate sin, which is the cause of death.[18]

We are not ignorant that some require a sermon at the burial, or else some places of scriptures to be read, to put the living in mind that they are mortal, and that likewise they must die. But let those men understand that the sermons which are daily made, serve for that use; which if men despise, the preaching of the funeral sermons shall rather nourish superstition and a false opinion (as before is said), than that they shall bring such persons to any godly consideration of their own estate. Attour [Moreover], either shall the ministers for the most part be occupied in preaching funeral sermons, or else they shall have respect to persons, preaching at the burial of the rich and honourable, but keeping silence when the poor or despised departs; and this with safe conscience cannot the ministers do. For, seeing that before God there is no respect of persons, and that their ministry appertains to all alike, whatsoever they do to the rich, in respect of their ministry, the same they are bound to do to the poorest under their charge.

In respect of diverse inconveniencies, we think it neither seemly that the church appointed to preaching and ministration of the sacraments shall be made a place of burial; but that some other secret and convenient place, lying in the most free air, be appointed for that use; the which place ought to be well walled and fenced about, and kept for that use only.

## For Reparation of Churches

Lest that the word of God, and ministration of the sacraments, by unseemliness of the place come in contempt, it is of necessity that the churches and places where the people ought publicly to convene be with expedition repaired in doors, windows, thatch, and with such preparations within, as appertains as well to the majesty of the word of God as unto the ease and commodity of the people. And because we know the slothfulness of men in this behalf, and in all others which may not redound to their private commodity, strait charge and commandment must be given that within a certain day the reparations must be begun, and within another day, to be affixed by your honours, that they be finished. Penalties and sums of money must be enjoined, and without pardon taken from the contemners.

The reparation would be according to the possibility and number of the church. Every church must have doors, closed windows of glass, thatch or slate able to withhold rain, a bell to convocate the people together, a pulpit, a basin for baptism, and tables for the ministration of the Lord's Supper. In greater churches, and where the congregation is great in number, must reparation be made within the church for the quiet and commodious receiving of the people: the expenses to be lifted partly of the people, and partly of the teinds [tithes], at the consideration of the ministry.

## For Punishment of Those that Profane the Sacraments and Do Contemn the Word of God, and Dare Presume to Minister Them, Not Being Thereto Lawfully Called

As Satan has never ceased from the beginning to draw mankind in one of two extremities: to wit, that men should be either so ravished with gazing upon the visible creatures that, forgetting the cause why they were ordained, they attributed unto them a virtue and power which God has not granted unto them; or else that men should so contemn and despise God's blessed ordinance and holy institutions, as [if] that neither in the right use of them were there any profit, neither yet in their profanation were there any danger; as this wise, we say, Satan has blinded the most part of mankind from the beginning; so doubt we not, but that he will strive to continue in his malice even to the end. Our eyes have seen, and presently do see the experience of the one and of the other. What was the opinion of most part of men of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, during the darkness of superstition, is not unknown; how it was gazed upon, kneeled unto, borne in procession, and finally worshipped and honoured as Christ Jesus himself. And so long as Satan might then retain man in that damnable idolatry, he was quiet, as one that possessed his kingdom of darkness peaceably. But since that it has pleased the mercies of God to reveal unto the unthankful world the light of his word, the right use and administration of his sacraments, he assays man upon the contrary part. For where (not long ago) men stood in such admiration of that idol in the Mass, that none durst presume to have said the Mass, but the foresworn shaven sort, the Beast's marked men; some dare now be so

bold as, without all convocation, to minister (as they suppose), the true sacraments in open assemblies. And some idiots (yet more wickedly and more impudently) dare counterfeit in their houses that which the true ministers do in the open congregation; they presume (we say) to do it in houses without reverence, without word preached, and without minister, other than of companion to companion. This contempt proceeds, no doubt, from the malice and craft of that serpent who first deceived man, of purpose to deface the glory of Christ's evangel, and to bring his blessed sacraments in a perpetual contempt. And further, your honours may clearly see how proudly and stubbornly the most part despise the evangel of Christ Jesus offered unto you; whom unless that sharply and stoutly ye resist, we mean as well the manifest despiser as the profaner of the sacraments, ye shall find them pernicious enemies ere it be long. And therefore, in the name of the Eternal God, and of his Son Christ Jesus, we require of your honours that, without delay, strait laws be made against the one and the other.

We dare not prescribe unto you what penalties shall be required of such. But this we fear not to affirm, that the one and the other deserve death; for if he who does falsify the seal, subscription, or coin of a king is adjudged worthy of death; what shall we think of him who plainly does falsify the seals of Christ Jesus, Prince of the kings of the earth? If Darius pronounced that a balk [beam] should be taken from the house of that man, and he himself hanged upon it, that durst attempt to hinder the re-edification of the material temple, what shall we say of those that contemptuously blaspheme God, and manifestly hinder the [spiritual] temple of God (which is the souls and bodies of the elect) to be purged, by the true preaching of Christ Jesus, from the superstition and damnable idolatry in which they have been of long plunged and held captive? If ye (as God forbid) declare yourselves careless over the true religion, God will not suffer your negligence unpunished. And therefore, more earnestly we require, that strait laws may be made against the stubborn contemners of Christ Jesus, and against such as dare presume to minister his sacraments, not orderly called to that office, lest that while there are none found to gainstand impiety, the wrath of God is kindled against the whole.

The Papistical priests have neither power nor authority to minister the sacraments of Christ Jesus, because that in their mouth is not the sermon of exhortation. And, therefore, to them must strait inhibition be made, notwithstanding any usurpation which they have had in that behalf in the time of blindness. It is neither the clipping of their crowns, the crossing of their fingers, nor the blowing of the dumb dogs called the bishops, neither yet the laying on of their hands, that makes them true ministers of Christ Jesus. But the Spirit of God inwardly first moving the hearts to seek Christ's glory and the profit of his church, and thereafter the nomination of the people, the examination of the learned, and public admission (as before is said), make men lawful ministers of the word and sacraments. We speak of an ordinary vocation, where churches are reformed, or at least tend to reformation, and not of that which is extraordinary, when God by himself, and by his only power, raises up to the ministry such as best pleases his wisdom.

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## The Conclusion

Thus have we, in these few heads, offered unto your honours our judgments, according as we were commanded, touching the reformation of things which heretofore have altogether been abused in this cursed Papistry. We doubt not but some of our petitions shall appear strange unto you at the first sight. But if your wisdoms deeply consider that we must answer not only unto men, but also before the throne of the Eternal God, and of his Son Christ Jesus, for the counsel which we give in this so grave a matter, your honours shall easily consider, that more assured it is to us to fall in the displeasure of all men in earth, than to offend the Majesty of God, whose justice cannot suffer flatterers and deceitful counsellors unpunished.

That we require the church to be set at such liberty that she neither is compelled to feed idle bellies, neither yet to sustain the tyranny which heretofore by violence has been maintained, we know will offend many. But if we should keep silence hereof, we are most assured to offend the just and righteous God, who by the mouth of his apostle has pronounced this sentence: He that laboureth not, let him not eat [[2 Thess. 3:10](#)]. If we in this behalf, or in any other, require or ask any [other] thing than by God's expressed commandment, by equity and good conscience ye are bound to grant, let it be noted, and after repudiated; but if we require nothing which God requires not also, let your honours take heed how ye gainstand the charge of him whose hand and punishment ye cannot escape.

If blind affection rather leads you to have respect to the sustenance of those your carnal friends, who tyrannically have empired above the poor flock of Christ Jesus, than that the zeal of God's glory provokes and moves you to set his oppressed church at freedom and liberty, we fear your sharp and sudden punishments, and that the glory and honour of this enterprise be reserved unto others.

And yet shall this our judgment abide to the generations following for a monument and witness, how lovingly God called you and this realm to repentance, what counsellors God sent unto you, and how ye [have] used the same. If obediently ye hear God now calling, we doubt not but he shall hear you in your greatest necessity. But if, following your own corrupt judgments, ye contemn his voice and vocation, we are assured that your former iniquity, and present ingratitude, shall together crave just punishment from God, who cannot long delay to execute his most just judgments, when, after many offences and long blindness, grace and mercy offered are contemptuously refused.

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of his Holy Spirit, so illuminate your hearts that ye may clearly see what is pleasing and acceptable in his presence; so bow the same to his

obedience that ye may prefer his revealed will to your own affections; and so strengthen you by the spirit of fortitude that boldly ye may punish vice and maintain virtue within this realm, to the praise and glory of his Holy name, to the comfort and assurance of your own consciences, and to the consolation and good example of the posterities following. Amen. So be it.

By your honours' Most humble Servants, etc.

From Edinburgh, the 20 of May 1560

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## Website Contact

Rev Keith M Watkins

kmwatkins@fpchurch.org.uk

## Moderator of Synod

Rev J Bruce Jardine

FP Manse, Tarbert

Isle of Harris, HS3 3DF

UK

## Clerk of Synod

Rev Keith M Watkins

Free Presbyterian Manse, Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA, UK.

kmwatkins@fpchurch.org.uk

## General Treasurer

Mr William Campbell

133 Woodlands Road, Glasgow,

G3 6LE, UK.

wc.fpchurch@btconnect.com

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