

THE
SECOND BOOK OF DISCIPLINE
OR
HEADS AND CONCLUSIONS
OF
THE POLITY OF THE CHURCH

AGREED UPON IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1578.

Inserted in the Registers of Assembly 1581.

Sworn to in the National Covenant, revived and ratified by the

Assembly 1638, and by many other Acts of Assembly.

AND ACCORDING TO WHICH
THE CHURCH GOVERNMENT IS ESTABLISHED BY LAW,
AN. 1592 and 1690.

1. Cor. xiv. 40.

"Let all things be done honestly, and by order, "

INTRODUCTION

By F. Maxwell Bradshaw, MA, LL.M. Formerly Procurator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia

The *Second Book of Discipline* was drawn up by a committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to serve as a statement of polity for that Church. It was approved without a dissenting vote by the Assembly of April, 1578, was ordered to be engrossed in its records by that of April, 1581, and, by necessary implication although not by express reference, in June, 1592, obtained parliamentary approval in the *Act for abolishing of the Actis contrair the trew Religion*.

Historically it stands between the *First Book of Discipline 1560* and the *Westminster Form of Presbyterian Church Government 1645*. Its standpoint is that polity is no mere matter of expediency, but a matter of faith: God's Word is its rule. The *First Book* was of necessity somewhat experimental. It also introduced superintendents and readers to meet a temporary situation. The *Second Book of Discipline* on the other hand, while still manifesting the vital dynamic of the Reformation era, in so far as it gives expression to the position of Andrew Melville shows also the maturity of the second generation of Scotland's reformers. At the same time modern research suggests this book is still very much the production of those leading the Church at around the date of the earlier work, for nineteen of the twenty-two committee members responsible for it were in that category. Its framers had learnt by trial and error, and now, with a clear vision of their objective, at one and the same time laid down the basic principles of their Presbyterian system and provided for the dangers and problems of their immediate situation.

The work is divided into 13 chapters comprising 135 numbered sections and four unnumbered paragraphs. At the outset it asserts the status of the Church by declaring that Church and State each derives its authority directly from God. Neither Church nor State may invade the other's preserves. Nevertheless they are not unrelated to each other: instead there are mutual rights and duties. For the Church there is to be "no meddling with the civil jurisdiction". The civil magistrate is not "to usurp dominion" in the Church, to which he is subject "spiritually and in ecclesiastical government", and which he is to maintain and defend (Chaps. I and X).

Doctrine, discipline and distribution are declared to be three divisions of the polity of the Church. Accordingly there is a threefold division in the Church's office-bearers, namely, ministers or preachers (to whom is annexed the administration of the sacraments), elders or governors, and deacons or distributors (Chap. II.2). Vocation is necessary for all who hold office. This is not merely to be a subjective test, but requires an outward calling to be manifested by the choice of the eldership made with the concurrence of the congregation. Thus the right of the people to a voice in the election of ministers and elders is not a matter of democracy; but election and ordination are directed to a true call, that the purity of the Church may be preserved (Chap. *ill.*).

It is very definitely asserted that there is only one order of the ministry, whether styled pastor, bishop or minister (Chap. IV. 1; XI. 9-13). The temporary office of Superintendent that had become a source of grave danger to the Church, is abolished by implication, through no provision being made for its existence. Other ecclesiastical titles not included in those of the regular offices of the Church are formally condemned (Chap. XI.).

The office of elder is declared to be perpetual and always necessary in the Church (Chap. VI., 2). The ministers are also elders (Chap. VI. 3). It was possible, on account of the unanimity of the Scottish Church at the time, to produce a fuller and more definite statement on the eldership than in the *Form of Presbyterian Church Government*. (For there was a difference of opinion in the Westminster Assembly between the Scots Commissioners, supported by some English Presbyterians in the tradition of Cartwright, on the one hand, and the Independents and many English Presbyterians on the other). In Scotland, by the time the *Second Book of Discipline* was adopted, the eldership had proved its usefulness, and that book substitutes life tenure for annual election (Chaps. VI. 2; VII. 17).

Development in the Church's ideas on polity since the *First Book of Discipline* is seen with regard to the office of deacon, "the last ordinary function in the Church", in that the deacons are no longer to sit in the consistories (Chap. viii. 3).

It may well occasion surprise that in so famous a statement of the Presbyterian polity the radical court of the system, the presbytery, is substantially omitted. There is no real ground for saying that by "the elderships" is meant presbyteries. The elderships are the sessions. When the *Second Book of Discipline* was prepared the courts of the Church were sessions (or consistories), General Assemblies, and, since 1562, synods, and the book limits itself to dealing with them. At the same time the presbytery fits naturally into the polity depicted. The basis of its composition is provided by Chapter VII. The abolition of superintendents would make it necessary that some body should assume their functions, and this the presbytery was able to do. In any case there was a gap between sessions and synods. Further, we have presbyteries foreshadowed in certain provisions: thus there is the fact that "landward" congregations (meaning country congregations outside the towns) might be grouped under one eldership (Chap. VII. 10), and also what is said about visitation (Chaps. VII. 5; XI. 11). Probably these tendencies show the influence of the weekly assembly for the interpretation of Scripture ("the exercise") established by the *First Book of Discipline*, or its Swiss counterparts. "Presbyteries" appears in Chapter VIII. 3, and "presbytery" in Chapter XI. 11; but in neither case does it necessarily connote the true presbytery. That we are not reading too much into the text, if we regard the presbytery as a natural development of the polity there set forth, is suggested by the fact that the *Second Book of Discipline* was adopted in April, 1578, and in October of that year an Act of Assembly declared that bishops should not usurp the powers of presbyteries; while at the Assembly of April, 1581, which gave definitive approval to the work, an Act was also passed for erecting 50 presbyteries of which 13 were to be formed forthwith. The legislation of 1592, which gave it statutory authority, gave approval to the whole conciliar system of Presbyterianism including specifically the presbytery.

The foregoing comments cannot cover every aspect of this document, but should suffice to indicate that it is of great importance in the development of the Presbyterian polity.

The text in modernised English spelling here adopted is taken from *The Subordinate Standards and Formularies of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria* authorised by the General Assembly of that Church, 23rd. November, 1893.

SECOND BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

CHAPTER 1.

Of the Church and Polity thereof in general, and wherein it is different from the Civil Polity.

1. The Church of God is sometimes largely taken for all them that profess the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and so it is a company and fellowship not only of the godly, but also of hypocrites professing always outwardly a true religion. Other times it is taken for the godly and elect only; and sometimes for them that exercise spiritual functions among the congregation of them that profess the truth.

2. The Church in this last sense has a certain power granted by God, according to which it uses a proper jurisdiction and government, exercised to the comfort of the whole Church. This power ecclesiastical is an authority granted by God the Father, through the Mediator Jesus Christ, to His Church gathered, and having the ground in the Word of God: to be put in execution by them to whom the spiritual government of the Church by lawful calling is committed.

3. The Polity of the Church flowing from this power, is an order or form of spiritual government which is exercised by the members appointed thereto by the Word of God: and therefore is given immediately to the Office-bearers by whom it is exercised to the well-being (benefit) of the whole body. This power is diversely used: for, sometimes it is severally (individually) exercised, chiefly by the teachers, sometimes conjunctly by mutual consent of them that bear the office and charge, after the form of judgement. The former is commonly called *potestas ordinis*, and the other *potestas jurisdictionis*. These two kinds of power have both one authority, one ground, one final cause, but are different in the manner and form of execution, as is evident by the speaking of our Master in Mat. xvi. and xviii.

4. This Power and Polity Ecclesiastical is different and distinct in its own nature from that power and polity which is called the Civil Power and appertains to the civil government of the commonwealth. Albeit (though) they be both of God, and tend to one end, if they are rightly used, to wit to advance the glory of God, and have godly and good subjects.

5. For this Power Ecclesiastical flows immediately from God and the Mediator Jesus Christ, and is *spiritual*, not having a temporal head on earth, but only Christ, the only Spiritual Head and Governor of His Church.

6. It is a title falsely usurped by Antichrist to call himself Head of the Church, and ought not to be attributed to angel or man, of what estate soever he may be, saving to Christ, the Only Head and Monarch of the Church.

7. Therefore this power and polity of the Church should lean upon the Word immediately as the only ground thereof, and should be taken from the pure fountains of the Scriptures: the Church hearing the voice of Christ, the only Spiritual King, and being ruled by His laws.

8. It is proper to kings, princes, and magistrates to be called lords and dominators over their subject whom they govern *civilly*, but it is proper to Christ only to be called Lord and Master in the *spiritual* government of the Church; and all others that bear office therein ought not to usurp dominion therein, nor be called lords, but only ministers, disciples, and servants. For it is Christ's proper office to command and rule in His Church universal and every particular Church, through His Spirit and Word, by the ministry of men.

9. Notwithstanding, as ministers and others of the ecclesiastical estate are subject to the Civil Magistrate, so ought the person of the magistrate to be subject to the Church spiritually and in ecclesiastical government. And the exercise of both these jurisdictions cannot stand in one person ordinarily. The civil power is called the Power of the Sword, and the other Power of the Keys.

10. The Civil Power should command the Spiritual to exercise and do their office according to the Word of God. The Spiritual rulers should require the Christian Magistrate to minister justice and punish vice, and to maintain the liberty and quietness of the Church within their bounds.

11. The Magistrate commands external things for external peace and quietness among the subjects. The Minister handles external things only for conscience cause.

12. The Magistrate handles external things only and actions done before men; but the Spiritual ruler judges both inward affections and external actions in respect of conscience, by the Word of God.

13. The Civil Magistrate craves and gets obedience by the Sword and other external means, but the Ministry by the Spiritual Sword and spiritual means.

14. The Magistrate neither ought to preach, minister the sacraments, nor exercise the censures of the Church, nor yet prescribe any rule how it should be done; but command the Ministers to observe the rule commanded in the Word, and punish the transgressors by civil means. The Ministers exercise not the civil jurisdiction, but teach the Magistrate how it should be exercised according to the Word.

15. The Magistrate ought to assist, maintain, and fortify the jurisdiction of the Church. The Ministers should assist their Princes in all things agreeable to the Word, provided they neglect not their own charge by involving themselves in civil affairs.

Finally, as ministers are subject to the judgement and punishment of the magistrate in external things if they offend: so ought the magistrates to submit themselves to the discipline of the Church, if they transgress in matters of conscience and religion.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Parts of the Polity of the Church, and Persons or Office-bearers to whom the Administration is committed.

1. As in the civil polity the whole commonwealth consists in them that are governors or magistrates, and them that are governed, or subjects; so in the polity of the Church some are appointed to be rulers, and the rest of the members thereof to be ruled, and obey according to the Word of God and inspiration of His Spirit, always under One Head and Chief Governor, Jesus Christ.

2. Again, the whole polity of the Church consists in three things, viz., in Doctrine, Discipline, and Distribution. With Doctrine is annexed the administration of the Sacraments. And according to the parts of this division arises a threefold sort of office-bearers in the Church, to wit, of Ministers or Preachers, Elders or Governors, and Deacons or Distributors.

3. And all these may be called by one general word, Ministers of the Church. For albeit (although) the Church of God is ruled and governed by Jesus Christ, who is the only King, High Priest, and Head thereof. yet He uses the ministry of men as the most necessary means for this purpose. For so He has from time to time, before the Law, under the Law, and in the time of the Gospel, for our great comfort raised up men endued with the gifts of the Spirit, for the spiritual government of His Church, exercising by them His own power, through His Spirit and Word to the building of the same.

4. And to take away all occasion of tyranny, He wills that they should rule with mutual consent of brother, and equality of power, every one according to their functions.

5. In the New Testament and time of the Gospel He has used the ministry of the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Doctors in the administration of the Word; the Eldership for good order and administration of discipline; the Deaconship to have the care of the ecclesiastical goods.

6. Some of these ecclesiastical functions are ordinary, and some extraordinary or temporary. There are three extraordinary functions, the Office of the Apostle, of the Evangelist, and of the Prophet, which are not perpetual, and how have ceased in the Church of God, except when it pleased God, extraordinarily, for a time to stir up some of them again. There are four ordinary functions or offices in the Church of God: the office of Pastor, Minister or Bishop, the Doctor, the Presbyter or Elder, and the Deacon.

7. These offices are ordinary and ought to continue perpetually in the Church, as necessary for the polity and government of the same, and no more offices ought to be received or suffered in the true Church of God established according to His Word.

8. Therefore all the ambitious titles invented in the kingdom of Antichrist, and in his usurped hierarchy, which are not of one of these four sorts, together with the offices depending thereupon, in one word ought all utterly to be rejected.

CHAPTER III.

How the Persons that bear Ecclesiastical Functions are Admitted to their Office.

1. Vocation or Calling is common to all that should bear office in the Church, which is the lawful way by which qualified persons are promoted to any spiritual office within the Church of God: without this lawful Calling it was never permissible (lawful) to any person to meddle with any function ecclesiastical.

2. There are two sorts of Calling, one extraordinary, by God Himself immediately, as was (that) of the Prophets and Apostles, which in Churches established, and already well-reformed, has no place.

3. The other Calling is ordinary, which, besides the Calling of God and inward testimony of a good conscience, has the lawful approbation and outward judgement of men, according to God's Word and order established in His Church. None ought to presume to enter in any office ecclesiastical, without he have this testimony of a good conscience before God, who only knows the hearts of men.

4. This ordinary and outward Calling has two parts: election and ordination. Election is the choosing out of a person or person most suitable (best qualified) to the vacant office by the judgement of the Eldership and consent of the Congregation to whom the person or persons are to be appointed. The qualities in general requisite in all them who should bear charge in the Church, consist in soundness of religion and godliness of life, according as they are sufficiently set forth in the Word.

5. In this ordinary election, it is to be eschewed (shunned) that no person be intruded into any of the offices of the Church contrary to the will of the Congregation to whom they are appointed, or without the voice of the Eldership. None ought to be intruded or placed in the ministry in places already planted, or in any place that is not vacant for any worldly respect; and that which is called the benefice ought to be nothing else than the stipend of the ministers that are lawfully called.

6. Ordination is the separation and sanctifying (consecrating) of the person appointed to God and His Church, after he is well-trying and found qualified. The ceremonies of ordination are fasting, earnest prayer, and imposition of hands of the Eldership.

7. All these, as they must be raised up by God, and by Him made able for the work whereto they are called; so ought they to know their message to be limited within God's Word, without the which bounds they ought not to pass. All these should take the titles and names only (lest they be exalted and puffed up in themselves) which the Scriptures give unto them, as those which import labour, travail, and work: and are names of offices and service, and not of idleness, dignity, worldly honour or pre-eminence, which by Christ our Master is expressly reprov'd and forbidden.

8. All these office-bearers should have their own particular flocks amongst whom they exercise their charge, and should make residence with them, and take the inspection and oversight of them, every one in his vocation. And, generally, these two things ought they all to respect, the glory of God and edifying of His Church, in discharging their duties in their Calling.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Office-Bearers in Particular, and First of the Pastors or Ministers.

1. Pastors, Bishops or Ministers, are they who are appointed to particular congregations, which they rule by the Word of God, and over the which they watch. In respect whereof sometimes they are called Pastors, because they feed their congregation; sometimes *Episcopi* or Bishops, because they watch over their flock; sometimes Ministers, by reason of their service or office; and sometimes also Presbyters or Seniors, for the gravity in manners which they ought to have in taking care of the spiritual government which ought to be most dear to them.

2. They that are called to the Ministry, or that offer themselves thereunto, ought not to be elected without (unless) one certain (a specific) flock be assigned to them (individually).

3. No one ought to introduce himself into, or usurp, this office without lawful calling.

4. They that are once called by God and duly elected by man, after that they have once accepted the charge of the Ministry, may not leave their functions; the deserters should be admonished, and, in case of obstinacy, finally excommunicated.

5. No pastor may leave his flock without license of the Provincial or National Assembly, which, if he do, after admonition not obeyed, let the censures of the Church strike upon him.

6. Unto the Pastor appertains teaching of the Word of God, in season and out of season, publicly and privately, always striving to edify and discharge his conscience, as God's Word prescribes to him.

7. Unto the Pastors only appertains the administration of the Sacraments, in like manner as the administration of the Word; for both are appointed by God as means to teach us, the one by the ear, and the other by the eyes and other senses, that by both knowledge may be transferred to the mind.

8. It appertains by the same reason to the Pastor to pray for the people, and especially for the flock committed to his charge, and to bless them in the name of the Lord, who will not suffer the blessings of His faithful servants to be frustrated.

9. He ought also to watch over the manners of his flock, that the better he may apply the doctrine to them, in reprehending the dissolute persons, and exhorting to continue the Godly in the fear of the Lord.

10. It appertains to the Minister, after lawful proceeding by the Eldership, to pronounce the sentence of binding or loosing upon any person, according to the power of the keys granted to the Church.

11. It belongs to him also, after lawful proceeding in the matter by the Eldership to solemnise marriage betwixt them that are to be joined therein; and to pronounce the blessing of the Lord upon them that enter into that holy bond in the fear of God.

12. And generally, all public declarations that are to be made in the Church before the congregation concerning the ecclesiastical affairs belonging to the office of a Minister; for his is a messenger and herald between God and the people in all these affairs.

CHAPTER V.

Of Doctors and their Office, and of the Schools.

1. One of the two ordinary and perpetual functions that labour in the Word is the office of the Doctor, who also may be called Prophet, Bishop, Elder, Catechiser, that is teacher of the Catechism and rudiments of religion.
2. His office is to open up the mind of the Spirit of God in the Scriptures simply, without such application as the Minister uses, to the end that the faithful may be instructed, and sound doctrine taught, and that the purity of the Gospel be not corrupted through ignorance or evil opinions.
3. He is different from the Pastor, not only in name but in diversity of gifts. For the Doctor is given the word of knowledge to open up by simple teaching the mysteries of faith; to the Pastor the gift of wisdom, to apply the same by exhortation to the manners of the flock, as occasion craves.
4. Under the name and office of a Doctor we comprehend also the order in Schools, Colleges, and Universities, which has been from time to time carefully maintained as well among the Jews and Christians as among the profane nations.
5. The Doctor being an Elder, as has been said, should assist the Pastor in the government of the Church, and concur with the Elders his brethren in all assemblies; by reason the interpretation of the Word which is sole judge in ecclesiastical matters is committed to his charge.
6. But to preach to the people, to minister the Sacraments, and to celebrate marriages, pertains not to the Doctor, unless he be otherwise called ordinarily; howbeit the Pastor may teach in the Schools, as he who has also the gift of knowledge oftentimes meet therefor, as the example of Poly carp and others testify.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Elders and their Office.

1. The word Elder in the Scriptures sometimes is the name of age, sometimes of office. When it is the name of an office, sometimes it is taken largely comprehending as well the Pastors and Doctors as those who are called Seniors or Elders.
2. In this our division, we call those Elders whom the Apostles call Presidents or Governors. Their office, as it is ordinary, so it is perpetual, and always necessary in the Church of God. The Eldership is' a spiritual function, as is the Ministry. Elders once lawfully called to the office, and having gifts of God meet to exercise the same, may not leave it again. Albeit, such a number of Elders may be chosen in certain congregations, that one part of them may relieve another for a reasonable space, as was among the Levites under the law in serving of the temple. The number of Elders in a congregation cannot well be limited, but should be according to the bounds and necessity of the people.
- It is not necessary that all Elders be also teachers of the Word, albeit the chief ought to be such, and so are worthy of double honour. What manner of persons they ought to be, we refer it to the express Word of God, and specially the canons written by the Apostle Paul.
4. Their office is, as well severally as conjointly, to watch diligently upon the flock committed to their charge, both publicly and privately, that no corruption of religion or manners enter therein.
5. As the Pastors and Doctors should be diligent in teaching and sowing the seed of the Word, so the Elders should be careful in seeking the fruit of the same in the people.
6. It appertains to them to assist the Pastor in examination of them that come to the Lord's table: *item*, in visiting the sick.
7. They should cause the Acts of Assembly, as well particular as general, to be put in execution carefully.
8. They should be diligent in admonishing all men of their duty according to the rule of the Gospel. Things that they cannot correct by private admonition they should bring to the assembly of the Eldership.
9. Their principal office is to hold assemblies with the Pastors and Doctors, who are also of their number: for establishing of good order and execution of discipline. Unto which assemblies all persons are subject that remain within their bounds.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Elderships and Assemblies, and Discipline.

1. Elderships and Assemblies are commonly constituted of Pastors, Doctors, and such as we commonly call Elders, that labour not in the Word and doctrine, of whom, and of whose several powers has been spoken.

2. Assemblies are of four sorts. For, either are they of particular churches and congregations, one or more, or of a province, or of a whole nation, or of all and divers nations professing one Jesus Christ.

3. All the ecclesiastical Assemblies have power to convene lawfully together for treating of things concerning the Church, and pertaining to their charge. They have power to appoint times and places to that effect; and at one meeting to appoint the diet, time, and place for another.

4. In all the Assemblies a Moderator should be chosen by the common consent of all the brethren, who should propose matters, gather the votes, and cause good order to be kept in the Assemblies. Diligence should be taken, chiefly by the Moderator, that only ecclesiastical things be handled in the Assemblies, and that there be no meddling with anything pertaining to the civil jurisdiction.

5. Every Assembly has power to send forth from them of their own number, one or more visitors to see how all things are ruled in the bounds of their jurisdiction. Visitation of more churches (than one) is no ordinary office ecclesiastic in the person of one man, neither may the name of a bishop be attributed to the visitor only, neither is it necessary to abide in one man's person, but it is the part of the Eldership to send out qualified persons to visit *pro re nata*.

6. The final end of all Assemblies is first to keep the religion and doctrine in purity, without error and corruption, next to keep comeliness and order in the Church.

7. For this order's sake they may make certain rules and constitutions appertaining to the good behaviour of all the members of the Church in their vocation.

8. They have power also to abrogate and abolish all statutes and ordinances concerning ecclesiastical matters that are found noisome and unprofitable, and agree not with the time, or are abused by the people.

9. They have power to execute ecclesiastical discipline and punishment upon all transgressors and proud contemners of the good order and polity of the Church, and so all discipline is in their hands.

10. The first kind and sort of Assemblies, although they are within particular congregations, yet they exercise the power, authority, and jurisdiction of the Church with mutual consent, and therefore bear sometimes the name of the Church. When we speak of the Elders of the particular congregations, we mean not that every particular parish can, or may have their own particular Elderships especially to landward. but we think three or four, more or fewer, particular Churches may have one common Eldership to them all, to judge their ecclesiastical causes. Albeit this is meet, that some of the Elders be chosen out of every particular congregation, to concur with the rest of their brethren in the Common Assembly, and to take up the accusations of offences within their own churches and bring them to the Assembly. This we gather from the practice of the Primitive Church, where Elders or Colleges of Seniors were constituted in cities and famous places.

11. The power of these particular Elderships is to use diligent labours in the bounds committed to their charge, that the churches be kept in good order, to inquire diligently of naughty and unruly persons" and to labour to bring them into the way again, either by admonition, or threatening of God's judgements, or by correction.

12. It pertains to the Eldership to take heed that the Word of God be purely preached within their bounds, the Sacraments rightly administered. the discipline rightly maintained, and the ecclesiastical goods (substance) uncorruptedly distributed.

13. It belongs to this kind of Assembly to cause the ordinances made by the Assemblies Provincial, National, and General, to be kept, and put in execution. To make constitutions which concern *τοπρεπον* (that which is becoming, seemingly, fit) in the Church, for the decent order of these particular churches where they govern; providing they alter no rules made by the General or Provincial Assemblies, and that they make the Provisional Assemblies foreseen of these rules that they shall make (that they shall report to the Provincial Assemblies, &c), and abolish them that tend to the hurt of the same.

14. It has power to excommunicate the obstinate.

15. The power of election of them who bear ecclesiastical charges pertains to this kind of Assembly, within their own bounds, being well erected and constituted of many Pastors and Elders of sufficient ability.

16. By the like reason their deposition also pertains to this kind of Assembly, as of them that teach erroneous and corrupt doctrine; that are of scandalous life, and after admonition desist not; that are given to schism or rebellion against the Church, manifest blasphemy, simony, corruption of (by) bribes, falsehood, perjury, whoredom, theft, drunkenness, fighting worthy of punishment by the law, usury, dancing, infamy, and all others that deserve separation from the Church. Those also who are found altogether insufficient to execute their charge should be deposed.

17. Yet they ought not to be deposed, who through age, sickness, or other accidents, become unmeet (unfit) to do their office; in the which case their honour should remain to the Ill, their church should maintain them; and others ought to be provided to do their office.

18. Provisional Assemblies we call lawful conventions of the Pastors, Doctors, and other Elders of a province, gathered for the common affairs of the churches thereof; which also may be called the Conference of the Church and Brethren.

19 These Assemblies are instituted for weighty matters to be treated by mutual consent and assistance of the brethren within that province as needs require.

20. This Assembly has power to handle, order, and redress all things omitted, or done amiss, in the particular Assemblies. It has power to depose the Office-bearers of that Province for good and just causes deserving deprivation. And, generally, these Assemblies have the whole power (all the powers) of the particular Elderships whereof they are collected.

21. The National Assembly, which is general to us, is a lawful convention of all the churches of the realm or nation where it is used and gathered for the common affairs of the Church, and may be called the General Eldership of the Whole Church within the realm. None are subject (bound) to repair this Assembly to vote but ecclesiastical persons, to such a number as shall be thought good by the said Assembly; not excluding other persons that will repair to the said Assembly to propose, hear, and reason.

22. This Assembly is instituted that all things either omitted or done amiss in the Provincial Assemblies may be redressed and handled; and things generally serving for the well-being of the whole body of the Church within the realm may be foreseen (provided for), intreated (dealt with), and set forth to God's glory.

23. It should take care that churches be planted where they are not planted. It should prescribe the rule how the other two kinds of Assemblies should proceed in all things.

24. This Assembly should take heed that the *Spiritual* jurisdiction and the *Civil* be not confounded to the hurt of the Church; that the patrimony of the Church be not diminished or abused; and generally, concerning all weighty affairs that concern the well-being and good order of all the churches of the realm, it ought to interpose authority thereto.

25. There is, besides these, another more general kind of Assembly, which is of all nations and estates of persons within the Church, representing the Universal Church of Christ; which may be called properly the General Assembly, or General Council of the Whole Church of God.

These Assemblies were appointed and called together, specially, when any great schism or controversy in doctrine did arise in the Church, and were convoked at the command of Godly Emperors, being for the time, for avoiding of schisms within the Universal Church of God; which, because they appertain not to the particular estate of one realm, we cease further to speak of them.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Deacons and their Office, the last Ordinary Function in the Church.

1. The word Διᾱκονοσ sometimes is largely taken, comprehending all them that bear office in the Ministry and spiritual function in the Church. But now, as we speak, it is taken only for them unto whom the collection and distribution of the alms of the faithful and ecclesiastical goods (property) do belong.

2. The office of the Deacons so taken is an ordinary and perpetual ecclesiastical function in the Church of Christ. Of what properties (qualities) and duties he ought to be that is called to this function, we remit it to the manifest Scriptures. The Deacon ought to be called and elected as the rest of the spiritual officers, of the which election (it) was spoken of before.

3. Their office and power is to receive and to distribute all the ecclesiastical goods unto them to whom they are appointed. This they ought to do according to the judgement and appointment of the Presbyteries or Elderships (of the which they deacons are not), that the patrimony of the Church and poor be not converted to private men's uses, nor wrongfully distributed.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Patrimony of the Church, and the Distribution thereof

1. By the Patrimony of the Church, we mean whatsoever thing hath been at any time before, or shall be in times coming, given, or by consent or universal custom of countries professing the Christian Religion, applied, to the public use, and utility of the Church; so that under the Patrimony we comprehend all things given, or to be given, to the Church and service of God, as lands, building, possessions, annual rents, and all such like wherewith the Church is endowed either by donations, foundations, mortification, or any other lawful title of kings, princes, or any persons inferior to them; together with the continual oblations of the faithful. We comprehend also, all such things as by law, or custom, or use of countries, have been applied to the use and utility of the Church; of the which sort are teinds, manses, glebes, and such like, which by common and municipal law and universal custom are possessed by the Church.

2. To take any of this patrimony by unlawful means, and convert it to the particular and profane use of any person, we hold it a detestable sacrilege before God.

3. The goods ecclesiastical ought to be collected and distributed by the Deacons as the Word of God appoints, that they who bear office in the Church be provided for without care or solicitude. In the Apostolic Church the Deacons were appointed to collect and distribute whatsoever was collected of the *faithful* to distribute unto the necessity of the saints: so that none lacked among the *faithful*. These collections were not only of that which was collected in manner of alms, as some suppose, but of other goods, movable, and unmovable, of lands and possessions the price of whereof was brought to the feet of the Apostles. This office continued in the Deacons' hands who intromitted with all the goods of the Church ever until the estate thereof was corrupted by Antichrist, as the ancient canons bear witness.

4. The same canons make mention of a fourfold distribution of the Patrimony of the Church, whereof one part was applied to the Pastor or Bishop for his sustenance and hospitality, another to the Elders and Deacons and all the Clergy; the third to the poor, sick persons, and strangers; the fourth to the uphold (maintenance) and other affairs of the Church, specially extraordinary (affairs). We add hereunto the Schools and Schoolmasters also, who ought, and may be, well sustained from the same goods, and are comprehended under the Clergy. To whom we join also Clerks of Assemblies, as well particular as general, Syndics or Procurators of the Church's Affairs, takers up of Psalms (leaders of Psalmody, Precentors), and such like other ordinary office of the Church, so far as they are necessary.

CHAPTER X.

Of the Office of a Christian Magistrate in the Church.

1. Although all the members of the Church are held (bound), every one in his vocation, and according thereto, to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ so far as lies in their power; yet, chiefly, Christian Princes and other Magistrates are held (bound) to do the same; for they are called in the Scriptures nourishers of the Church, for so much as by them it is, or at least, ought to be maintained, fostered, upheld, and defended against all that would produce the hurt thereof.

2. So it pertains to the office of a Christian Magistrate to assist and fortify the godly proceedings of the Church in all behalfs; and namely (especially) to see that the public estate and ministry thereof be maintained and sustained as it appertains, according to God's Word.

3. To see that the Church be not invaded or hurt by false teachers or hirelings, nor the places thereof be occupied by dumb dogs or idle bellies.

4. To assist and maintain the discipline of the Church, and punish them civilly that will not obey the censure of the same; always without confounding the one jurisdiction with the other.

5. To see that sufficient provision is made for the ministry, the schools, and the poor, and, if they have not sufficient to await upon their charges, to supply their indigence with their own rents (revenues) if need require. To hold hand (extend hand) as well to the saving of their persons from violence, as to their rents and possessions, that they be not defrauded, robbed, nor spoiled thereof.

6. Not to suffer the Patrimony of the Church to be applied to profane and unlawful uses, or to be devoured by idle bellies, and such as have no lawful function in the Church, to the hurt of the Ministry, Schools, Poor, and other godly uses upon which the same ought to be bestowed.

7. To make the laws and constitutions agreeable to God's Word for advancement of the Church, and polity thereof; without usurping anything that pertains not to the Civil Sword, but belongs to the offices that are merely ecclesiastical, as is the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, using of Ecclesiastical discipline and the Spiritual execution thereof, or any part of the power of the Spiritual Keys, which our Master gave the Apostles and their Successors. And, although Kings and Princes that are godly, sometimes by their own authority, when the Church is corrupt, and all things out of order, place Ministers and restore the true service of the lord, after the example of some godly Kings of Judah, and divers godly Emperors and Kings also in the light of the New Testament; yet where the Ministry of the Church is once lawfully constituted, and they that are placed do their office faithfully, all godly Princes and Magistrates ought to hear and obey their voice, and reverence the Majesty of the Son of God speaking by them.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Present Abuses remaining in the Church which we Desire to be Reformed.

1. As it is the duty of the godly magistrate to maintain the present liberty which God of His mercy has granted to the preaching of His Word, and the true administration of the Sacraments within the realm; so it is (his duty) to provide that all abuses which as yet remain in the Church, be removed and utterly taken away.

2. Therefore, first, the admission of men to Papistical titles of benefices, such as serve not, nor have a function in the reformed Church of Christ, as Abbots, Commendators, Priors, Prioresses, and other titles of Abbeys, whose places are now, for the most part, by the just judgement of God demolished and purged of idolatry, is plain abuse, and is not to receive the kingdom of Christ among us, but rather to refuse it.

3. In the same manner, they that of old were called the Chapters and Convents of Abbeys, Cathedral Churches, and the like places, serve for nothing now but to set fees and tacks (leases), if anything be left of the Church lands and **teinds**, in hurt and prejudice thereof, as daily experience teaches; and therefore ought to be utterly abrogated and abolished. Of the like nature are the deans, chantors, sub-chantors, treasurers, chancellors, and others having the like titles flowing from the Pope and Canon law only, who have no place in the Reformed Church.

4. The churches also, which are united together and joined by annexation to these benefices, ought to be separated and divided, and given to qualified ministers, as God's Word craves.

5. Neither ought such abusers of the Church's patrimony to have Vote in Parliament, nor sit in council under the name of the Church and Churchmen, to the hurt and prejudice of the liberty thereof, and laws of the realm made in favour of the Reformed Church.

6. Much less is it lawful that any person among these men should have five, six, ten, or twenty churches, or more all having the charge of souls, and use the patrimony thereof, either by admission of the prince or of the Church, in this light of the Gospel; for it is but mockery to crave reformation where such like have place.

7. And albeit it was thought good, for avoiding of greater inconveniences, that the old possessors of such benefices who had embraced the true religion should enjoy by permission the two parts (two-thirds) of the rent which they possessed before, during their life-time; yet it is not tolerable to continue in the like abuse, to give these places, and other benefices of new, to men as unmeet, or rather, more unmeet, who are not minded to serve in the Church, but live an idle life as others did who enjoyed them in the time of blindness.

8. And in so far as in the order taken at Leith in the year of our Lord 1571, it appears that such may be admitted, being found qualified; either that pretended order is against all good order, or else it must be understood not of them that are qualified in worldly affairs, or to serve in Court, but of such as are qualified to teach God's Word, having their lawful admission of the Church.

9. As to Bishops, if the name *Επισκοπος* be properly taken, they are all one with the ministers, as before was declared. For, it is not a name of superiority and lordship, but of office and watching. Yet, because in the corruption of the Church, this name, as others, has been abused, and is still likely to be; we cannot allow the fashion of these new chosen Bishops, nor of the Chapters that are electors of them to such offices as they are chosen to.

10. True Bishops should addict (devote) themselves to one particular flock, which sundry of them refuse; neither should they usurp lordship over their brethren, and over the inheritance of Christ, as these men do.

11. Pastors, in so far as they are Pastors, have not the office of visitation of a plurality of churches joined to the pastorship, except it be given them. It is a corruption that Bishops should have farther bounds to visit than they may lawfully. No man ought to have the office of visitation, but he that is lawfully chosen by the Presbytery thereunto. The Elderships being well-established, have power to send out visitors, one or more, with commission to visit the bounds within their Eldership; and in like manner, after account taken of them, either to continue them, or remove them from time to time, to the which Elderships they shall be always subject.

12. The criminal jurisdiction in the person of a Pastor is a corruption.

13. It agrees not with the Word of God that Bishops should be Pastors of Pastors, Pastors of many flocks, and yet without one certain (particular) flock, and without ordinary teaching. It agrees not with the Scriptures that they should be exempt from the correction of their brethren, and discipline of the Particular Eldership of the Church where they shall serve; neither that they usurp the office of visitation of other churches, nor any other function beyond other Ministers, but so far as shall be committed to them by the Church.

14. Wherefore we desire the Bishops that now are to agree to that order that God's word requires in them, as the general Church will prescribe to them, not passing those bounds either in ecclesiastical or civil affairs, or else to be deposed from all function in the Church.

15. We deny not in the mean time that Ministers may, and should assist their Princes, when they are required, in all things agreeable to the Word, whether it be in Council or in Parliament, or otherwise, providing always they neither neglect their own charge, nor through flattery of Princes, hurt the public estate of the Church. But generally we say no person, under what title so ever of the Church, and specially the abused titles in Papistry of Prelates, Convents, and Chapters, ought to attempt any act in the Church's name, either in Council, or Parliament, or out of Council having no commission of the Reformed Church within this realm.

16. And by Act of Parliament it is provided that the Papistical Church and jurisdiction should have no place within the same, and no Bishop nor other Prelate in times coming should use any jurisdiction following from his authority. And again, that no other ecclesiastical jurisdiction should be acknowledged within this realm, but that which is, and shall be in the Reformed Church, and flowing therefrom. So we esteem holding of Chapters in Papistical manner, either in Cathedral Churches, Abbeys, Colleges, or other conventual places, usurping the name and authority of the Church, to hurt the patrimony thereof, or use any other act to prejudice of the same, since the year of our Lord 1560, to be abuse and corruption, contrary to the liberty of the true Church and laws of the realm, and therefore ought to be annulled, reduced, and wholly prohibited.

17. The dependencies also of the Papistical jurisdiction are to be abolished, of the which sort is the mingled jurisdiction of the Commissioners, in so far as they meddle with ecclesiastical matter, and have no commission of the Church thereto but were instituted in the time of our Sovereign's mother, when things were out of order. It is an absurd thing that sundry of them having no function of (from) the Church, should be judges to Ministers, and depose them from their places. Therefore they either should be prohibited from meddling with ecclesiastical matters, or it should be limited to them in what matters they might be judges, and not hurt the liberty of the Church.

18. They also that were of the ecclesiastical estate of the Pope's Church, or that have recently been admitted to the Papistical titles, and now are tolerated by the laws of the realm to possess the two (third) parts of their ecclesiastical rents, ought not to have further liberty, but to intromit with the portion assigned and granted to them for their lifetime. And not under the abused titles which they had, to make over to others the rents of the Church, set leases and fees thereof at their pleasure, to the great hurt of the Church, and the poor labourers that dwell upon the Church lands, contrary to all good conscience and order.

CHAPTER XII.

Certain Special Heads of Reformation which we crave.

1. All that has been spoken of the offices of the Church, the several (separate, distinct) power of the Office-bearers, their conjunct power also, and last, of the Patrimony of the Church, we understand it to be the right reformation which God craves at our hands, that the Church be ordered according thereto, as with that order which is most agreeable to the Word. But because something should be touched in particular concerning the state of the country, and that which we principally seek to be reformed in the same, we have collected them under these heads following:

2. Seeing the whole country is divided into Provinces, and these Provinces again are divided into Parishes, as well in landward as in towns; in every parish and reasonable congregation there should be placed one or more Pastors to feed the flock, and no Pastor or Minister to be always burdened with the particular charge of more churches or flocks than one only.

3. And because it will be thought hard to find out Pastors or Ministers to all the parish churches of the realm, as well in landward as in towns, we think that by the advice of such as commission may be given to by the Church and Prince parishes in landward or small villages may be joined in some places, two, or three, or more together, and the principal and most commodious churches to stand, and be repaired sufficiently, and qualified Ministers placed thereat; and the other churches which are not found necessary may be suffered to decay, their church-yards always being kept burial places; and in some places where need requires, a single parish, where the congregation is too great for one church, may be divided into two or more.

4. Doctors should be appointed in Universities, Colleges, and in other places needful, and sufficiently provided for; to open up the meaning of the Scriptures, and to have the charge of Schools, and teach the rudiments of religion.

5. As for Elders, there should be some to be censurers of the manners of the people, one or more in every congregation; but not an Assembly of Elders in every particular church, but only in towns and famous places, where resort of men of judgement and ability to that effect may be had, where the Elders of the particular churches round about may convene together, and have a common Eldership and Assembly-place among them, to treat of all things that concern the congregations of which they have the common oversight.

6. And as there ought to be men appointed to unite and divide the parishes as necessity and commodity (convenience) require, so should there be appointed by the general Church, with the advice of the Prince, such men as fear God and know the state of the country, who are able to nominate and design (mark out) the places where the particular Elderships should convene, taking consideration of the dioceses as they were divided of old, and of the state of the country and provinces of the realm.

7. Likewise concerning Provincial and Synodal Assemblies, consideration were easy to be taken; (it would be easy to take consideration); how many and in what places they should be held, and how often they should convene, ought to be referred to the liberty of the general Church and order to be appointed therein.

8. The National Assemblies of this country, called commonly the General Assemblies, ought always to be retained on their own liberty, and have their own place; with power to the Church to appoint times and places convenient for the same, and all men, magistrates, as well as inferiors, to be subject to the judgement of the same in ecclesiastical causes, without any reclamation or appellation to any judge, civil or ecclesiastical, within the realm.

9. . The liberty of the election of persons called to the ecclesiastical functions, and observed without interruption so long as the Church was not corrupted by Antichrist, we desire to be restored and retained within this realm, so that none be intruded upon any congregation, either by the Prince of any inferior person, without lawful election and the assent of the people over whom the person is placed, as the practice of the Apostolical and Primitive Church and good order crave.

10. And because this order which God's Word craves, cannot stand with patronages and presentation to benefices used in the Popish Church: We desire all them that truly fear God earnestly to consider that for so much as the names of patronages and benefices, together with the effect thereof, have flowed from the Pope and corruption of the Canon law only, in so far as any person was intruded or placed over churches having *curam animarum*: and for so much as that manner of proceeding has no ground in the Word of God, but is contrary to the same, and to the said liberty of election, they ought not now to have place in this light of reformation. And therefore, whosoever will embrace God's Word, and desire the kingdom of His Son Christ Jesus to be advanced, they will also embrace and receive that policy and order which the Word of God and upright estate of this Church crave, otherwise it is in vain that they have professed the same.

11. Notwithstanding as concerning other patronages of benefices that have not *curam animarum*, as they speak; such as chaplaincies, prebendaries founded upon temporal lands, annuals, and such like, may be reserved to the ancient patrons, to dispose of them, when they become vacant, to Schools and bursars, as they are required by Act of Parliament.

12. As for the Church rents in general, we desire that order be admitted and maintained among us that may stand with the sincerity of God's Word and practice of the purity of the Church of Christ: To wit, that as was before spoken, the whole rent and patrimony of the Church, except the small patronages before mentioned, may be divided into four portions: One thereof to be assigned to the Pastor for his entertainment and hospitality: Another to the Elders, Deacons, and other Officers of the Church, such as Clerks of Assemblies, takers up of the Psalms, beadles and keepers of the church (caretakers), so far as is necessary; joining therewith also the Doctors of Schools, to help the ancient foundations where need requires: The Third portion to be bestowed upon the poor members of the faithful, and on hospitals: The Fourth for reparation of the churches and other extraordinary charges as are profitable for the Church: and also for the Common benefit, if need require.

13. We desire therefore the ecclesiastical goods to be uplifted (collected) and distributed faithfully to whom they appertain, and that by the Ministry of the Deacons, to whose office properly the collection and distribution thereof belong, that the poor may be answered of (assured, paid) their portion thereof, and they of the Ministry live without care and solicitude: As also the rest of the treasury of the Church may be reserved, and bestowed to their right uses. If these Deacons be elected with such qualifies as God's Word craves to be in them, there is no fear that they shall abuse themselves in their office, as the profane collectors did before.

14. Yet because this vocation appears to many to be dangerous, let them be obliged as they were of old to a yearly count to the Pastors and Eldership; and if the Church and Prince think expedient let cautioners (sureties) be bound for their fidelity, that the Church rents be in no way dilapidated.

15. And to the effect this order may take place, it is to be provided that all other intromitters with the Church rents, collectors general or special, whether it be by appointment of the Prince or otherwise, may be denuded of further intromission therewith; and suffer the Church rents in time coming to be wholly intromitted with by the ministry of the Deacons, and distributed to the use before mentioned.

16. And also to the effect that the ecclesiastical rents may suffice to these uses before the which they are to be appointed, we think it necessary to be desired that all alienations, setting of files or leases, of the rents of the Church, as well lands as tiends, in hurt and diminution of the old rentals, be reduced and annulled, and the patrimony of the Church restored to the former old liberty. And likewise that in times coming, the tiends be set to none but to the labourers of the ground, or else not set at all, as was agreed upon and subscribed by the nobility of before.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Utility that shall flow from this Reformation to all Estates.

1. Seeing the end of this Spiritual government and polity whereof we speak, is that God may be glorified, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ advanced. and all who are of His mystical body may live peaceable in conscience: Therefore we dare boldly affirm that all those who have true respect to these ends, will, even for conscience cause gladly agree and conform themselves to this order, and advance the same, so far as in them lies, that their conscience being set at test, they may be replenished with spiritual gladness in giving full obedience to that which God's Word and the testimony of their own conscience do crave, and in refusing all corruption contrary to the same.

2. Next we shall become an example and pattern of good and godly order to other nations, countries, and churches professing the same religion with us, that as they have glorified God in our continuing in the sincerity of the Word hitherto, without any errors, praise be to His Name, so they may have the like occasion in our conversation, when as we conform ourselves to that discipline, polity, and good order which the same Word and purity of reformation crave at our hands, otherwise that fearful sentence may be said to us, "the servant knowing the will of his master, and not doing it," &c.

3. Moreover, if we have any pity or respect to the poor members of Jesus Christ, who so greatly increase and multiply among us, we shall not suffer them to be longer defrauded of that part of the patrimony of the Church which justly belong to them: And by this order, if it be duly put to execution, the burden of them shall be taken off us to our great comfort, the streets shall be cleansed of their cryings and murmurings, so as we shall not more be a scandal to other nations as we have hitherto been for not taking order with the poor among us, and causing the Word which we profess to be evil spoken of, giving occasion of slander to the enemies, and offending the consciences of the simple and godly.

4. Besides this, it shall be a great ease and commodity (convenience) to the whole common-people, in relieving them of the building and upholding of their churches, in building of bridges, and other like public works; it shall be a relief to the labourers of the ground in payment of their teinds; and, shortly, in all those things wherein they have been hitherto rigorously handled by them that were falsely called churchmen, their tracks men (lessees), factors (agents, bailiffs), chamberlains and extortioners.

Finally, to the King's Majesty and Commonweal of the Country this profit shall redound, - that the other affairs of the Church being provided according to the distribution of which we have spoken, the surplus being collected in the treasury of the Church may be profitably employed, and liberally bestowed upon the extraordinary support of the affairs of the Prince and Commonweal, and specially of that part which is appointed for the reparation of churches.

So to conclude, all being willing to apply themselves to this order, the people suffering themselves to be ruled according thereto; the Princes and Magistrates not being exempt, and those that are placed in the ecclesiastical estate rightly ruling and governing, God shall be glorified, the Church edified and the bounds thereof enlarged, Christ Jesus and His Kingdom set up, Satan and his Kingdom subverted, and God shall dwell in the midst of us, to our comfort, through Jesus Christ, Who, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, abides blessed in all eternity. Amen.