

THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER 1

OF THE CHURCH

SECTION I : Jesus Christ, who is now exalted far above all principality and power,¹ has erected, in this world, a visible body which is his Church.²

SECTION II : The universal church consists of all those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ and of submission to his laws.³

SECTION III : As this immense multitude cannot meet together, in one place, to hold communion, or to worship God, it is reasonable, and warranted by Scripture example, that they should be divided into many particular churches.⁴

1 . Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: Ephesians 1:20-21; Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*. Psalm 68:18

2. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. ⁹(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Ephesians 4:8-14; And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18; And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. Colossians 1:18

3. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:19-20; Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: 1 Corinthians 1:2; Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts 2:38-42; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal distribution unto them, and unto all *men*. 2 Cor 9:13

SECTION IV : A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together for divine worship and godly living, agreeable to the Holy Scriptures;⁵ and submitting to a certain form of government. ⁶

CHAPTER 2

OF THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

SECTION I : The officers which Christ has appointed for the edification of his church and the perfecting of the saints, are, some extraordinary, as apostles, evangelists, and prophets, which are ceased.¹

SECTION II : Others ordinary and perpetual, built upon the foundation of Christ and the apostles, are two classes of presbyters (teaching and ruling elders) and deacons.²

4. And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia...Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: Galatians 1:2,21-22; John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne...The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. Revelation 1:4,20

5. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers...Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:41-42,47; For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 1 Corinthians 7:14

6. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17; Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount. Hebrews 8:5; And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Galatians 6:16

1. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Ephesians 4:11-12; Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. Acts 1:21-22; Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? 1 Corinthians 9:1; Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. 2 Corinthians 12:12

2. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*. Ephesians 2:20; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17

CHAPTER 3

OF BISHOPS OR PASTORS OR TEACHING ELDERS

SECTION I : The pastoral office is first in the Church, both for dignity and usefulness.¹ The person who fills the office has, in scripture, obtained different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop.² As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor.³ As he serves Christ in his Church, he is termed minister.⁴ As he instructs them in the way of the Lord, he is termed teacher.⁵ As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder.⁶ As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador.⁷ And, as he dispenses the manifold

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1. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17; And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
 2. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28
 3. And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. Jeremiah 3:15; Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 1 Peter 5:2-4
 4. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Matthew 20:26-27; Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Corinthians 4:1; If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. 1 Timothy 4:6; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 2 Corinthians 3:6
 5. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach. 1 Timothy 3:2; And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. Ephesians 4:11
 6. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:1-3; This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 1 Timothy 3:1-7
 7. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:19-20; For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:20

grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God,⁸ and in humility he is the servant of Christ, separated unto the gospel of God.⁹

CHAPTER 4

OF RULING ELDERS

SECTION I : Ruling elders are the particular representatives of the people, chosen by them from their own number,¹ for the purpose of joining with the pastors or ministers in the government and discipline of the Church.²

CHAPTER 5

OF DEACONS

SECTION I : The Scriptures clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the Church,¹ whose business it is to take care of the poor and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use. To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the Church.²

8. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

9. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. Romans 1:1; But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Galatians 1:15-16

1. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Acts 14:23; Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. Deuteronomy 17:15

2. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17; And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. Acts 16:4

1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Philippians 1:1; Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. Even so *must their wives be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:8-15

2. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore,

CHAPTER 6

OF ORDINANCES IN A PARTICULAR CHURCH

SECTION I: The ordinances established by Christ, the head, for orderly worship in a particular church which is regularly constituted with its proper officers,¹ are prayer,² singing psalms,³ reading,⁴ expounding, and preaching the word of God;⁵ administering baptism and the Lord's supper;⁶ public

brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them. Acts 6:1-6

1. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: 1 Corinthians 11:23; How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying...For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:26,33,40

2. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. Acts 6:4; I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men. 1 Timothy 2:1; And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. Matthew 21:13

3. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16; Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. Psalm 95:2; And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. Matthew 26:30; Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings. Psalm 9:11

4. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. Acts 15:21; And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written. Luke 4:16-17; And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea. Colossians 4:16-17

5. Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 2 Timothy 4:2-3; And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27; And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. Acts 10:42; For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. Acts 18:28; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. Titus 1:9

6. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:19-20; For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 1 Corinthians 10:16

solemn fasting and thanksgiving,⁷ catechising,⁸ tithing,⁹ making collections for the poor, and other pious purposes;¹⁰ exercising discipline;¹¹ and blessing the people.¹²

7. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. Luke 5:35; Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Matthew 6:16-18; Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Psalm 50:14-15; Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood. Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, and the meat offerings, and the fat. Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt. And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people. Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house, he prosperously effected. 2 Chronicles 7:4-11

8. That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. Luke 1:4

9. To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. Hebrews 7:2-10; Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Malachi 3:8

10. Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:29-30

11. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matthew 18:15-20; It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

12. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee,

CHAPTER 7

OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND THE SEVERAL KINDS OF JUDICATORIES

SECTION I : It is absolutely necessary that the government of the church be exercised under some certain and definite form. And we hold it to be expedient and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the church be governed by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies.¹

SECTION II : These assemblies ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction nor to inflict any civil penalties. Their power is wholly moral or spiritual, and that only ministerial and declarative.² They possess the right of requiring obedience to the laws of Christ and of excluding the disobedient and disorderly from the privileges of the church.³ To give efficiency, however, to this necessary and

and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them. Numbers 6:22-27; The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen. 2 Corinthians 13:14

1. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Matthew 18:15-17; Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. Acts 13:1-4; When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question...And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter...Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:...For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. Acts 15:2,6,22-23,28-29; And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Acts 16:4 -5

2. They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Matthew 22:21; And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? Luke 12:13-14; For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 1 Corinthians 5:12; For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Romans 13:4

3. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Matthew 18:15-17

Scriptural authority, they possess the powers requisite for obtaining evidence and inflicting censure. They can call before them any offender against the order and government of the church; they can require members of their own society to appear and give testimony in the cause;⁴ but the highest punishment to which their authority extends, is to exclude the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of believers.⁵

CHAPTER 8

OF THE CHURCH SESSION

SECTION I : The church session consists of the pastor or pastors, and the ruling elders of a particular congregation.¹

SECTION II : Of this judicatory, two elders, if there be as many in the congregation, with the pastor, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.²

SECTION III : The pastor of the congregation shall always be the moderator of the session, except when, for prudential reasons, it may appear advisable that some other minister should be invited to preside, in which case the pastor may, with the concurrence of the session, invite such other minister as they may see meet, belonging to the same presbytery, to preside in that case. The same expedient may be adopted in case of the sickness or absence of the pastor.³

4. And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Matthew 26:62-64

5. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus...For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5,12-13

1. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 5:4; Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17

2. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17; Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matthew 18:19-20

3. Let all things be done unto edifying...For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:26,33,40

SECTION IV : It is expedient at every meeting of the session, more especially when constituted for judicial business, that there be a presiding minister. When, therefore, a church is without a pastor, the moderator of the session shall be either the minister appointed for that purpose by the presbytery or one invited by the session to preside on a particular occasion. But where it is impracticable, without great inconvenience, to procure the attendance of such a moderator, the session may proceed without it.⁴

SECTION V : The church session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation;⁵ for which purpose, they have power to inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members of the church;⁶ to call before them offenders and witnesses, being members of their own congregation, and to introduce other witnesses, where it may be necessary to bring the process to issue, and when they can be procured to attend;⁷ to receive members into the church;⁸ to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend or exclude from the sacraments those who are found to deserve

4. Same as footnote 3.

5. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17; And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

6. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. Ezekiel 34:4; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:3; Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. Acts 20:28-31

7. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Matthew 18:15-17; One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. Deuteronomy 19:15

8. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:19-20

censure;⁹ to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation;¹⁰ and to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the church.¹¹

SECTION VI : The pastor has power to convene the session when he may judge it requisite, and he shall always convene them when requested to do so by any two of the elders. The session shall also convene when directed to do so by the presbytery.¹²

SECTION VII : Every session shall keep a fair record of its proceedings; which record shall be, at least once in every year, submitted to the inspection of the presbytery.¹³

SECTION VIII : It is important that every church session keep a fair register of marriages, of baptisms with the times of the birth of the individuals baptized, of persons admitted to the Lord's table, and of the deaths and other removals of church members.¹⁴

9. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith...Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. 1 Timothy 5:12,19-20

10. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. Ezekiel 34:4; The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:1-3

11. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question...And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. Acts 15:2,6

12. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. Acts 20:17

13. See Jeremiah 26:16-24; And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Revelation 20:12; So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people. And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, recorder. And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Shavsha was scribe; And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David *were* chief about the king. 1 Chronicles 18:14-17; Let all things be done unto edifying...For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:40

14. And these *were* they which went up from Telmelah, Telharsa, Cherub, Addan, *and* Immer: but they could not show their father's house, and their seed, whether they *were* of Israel...These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. Ezra 2:59,62; And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. Ezra 10:18; All these had taken strange wives: and *some* of them had wives by whom they had children. Ezra 10:44; Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, 1 Timothy 5:9; Let all things be done unto edifying...For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:40

CHAPTER 9

OF THE PRESBYTERY

SECTION I : The church being divided into many separate congregations, these need mutual counsel and assistance in order to preserve the soundness of doctrine and regularity of discipline, and to enter into common measures for promoting knowledge and religion, and for preventing infidelity,

error, and immorality.¹ Hence arise the importance and usefulness of presbyterial and synodical assemblies.²

1. *The church of Jerusalem consisted of more than one church as is manifested both before and after the dispersion from the following texts.* Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls...And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:41,46-47; Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. Acts 4:4; And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Acts 6:1; Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. Acts 9:31; And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: Acts 21:20. *These congregations were under one presbyterial government as is proved from the following texts.* And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. Acts 15:4; Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch...Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:22,30; And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. Acts 21:17-18; Acts 6. *That the church of Ephesus had more congregations than one under a presbyterial government appears from the following texts.* And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all *men*: and they counted the price of them, and found *it* fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Acts 19:18-20; But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries...The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9,19; *compared with,* And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews...And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus...And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. Acts 18:19,24,26; And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons...And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more...Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood...Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears...And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him. Acts 20:17-18,25,28,30-31,36-37; Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. Revelation 2:1-6

2. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 1 Timothy 4:14; When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them...And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter...Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: Acts 15:2-4,6,22

SECTION II : A presbytery consists of all the teaching and ruling elders from each congregation within a certain district.³ Each congregation is permitted to be represented in presbytery by at least one ruling elder. Congregations having from eleven to twenty families are permitted to be represented by two, and larger congregations in the same ratio thereafter.⁴

SECTION III : Every ruling elder who shall represent a congregation for the first time shall produce a certificate from that congregation.⁵

SECTION IV : Any two teaching elders and at least one ruling elder belonging to the presbytery, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business.⁶

SECTION V : The presbytery has power to receive and issue appeals from church sessions,⁷ and references brought before them in an orderly manner;⁸ to examine and license candidates for the

3. Or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:7-8; And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 1 Corinthians 12:28; See Section I, Footnote 1.

4. Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them, *to be* rulers of thousands, *and* rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: Exodus 18:21

5. And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. Acts 15:1-6; Let all things be done unto edifying...For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:26,33,40

6. And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. Acts 14:26-27; And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God...When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Acts 11:1,18

7. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter...Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. Acts 15:5-6,19-20

8. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus...And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: Acts 18:24,27; And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Acts 9:26-27

holy ministry;⁹ to ordain, install, remove, and judge ministers; to examine and approve or censure the records of church sessions; to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline seriously and reasonably proposed;¹⁰ to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the church;¹¹ to visit particular churches for the purpose of inquiring into their state and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them;¹² to unite and divide congregations at the request of the people or to form or receive new congregations; and in general to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care.¹³

SECTION VI : It shall be the duty of the presbytery to keep a full and fair record of their proceedings and to report to the synod, every year, licensures, ordinations, the receiving or dismissing of members, the removal of members by death, the union or division of congregations or the formation of new ones, and, in general, all the important changes which may have taken place within their bounds in the course of the year.¹⁴

SECTION VII : The presbytery shall meet on its own adjournment, and, when any emergency shall require a meeting sooner than the time to which it stands adjourned, the moderator, or, in case of his absence, death, or inability to act, the stated clerk shall with the concurrence or at the request of two teaching and two ruling elders, the elders being of different congregations, call a special meeting. For this purpose he shall send a circular letter, specifying the particular business of the

9. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 1 Timothy 4:14; As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away. Acts 13:2-3

10. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. Acts 15:39-40; And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. Acts 15:1-2

11. Acts 15:22-32

12. And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do...And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. Acts 15:36,41; And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. Acts 6:1-3; And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. Acts 20:17

13. The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying...Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, *and bring us not over Jordan*...But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out. Numbers 32:2,5,23; For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. Titus 1:5

14. Let all things be done unto edifying...For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:26,33,40; See proof-texts for Chapter 8, Section VIII.

intended meeting, to every teaching elder belonging to the presbytery and to the session of every vacant congregation, in due time previous to the meeting, which shall not be less than ten days. And nothing shall be transacted at such a special meeting besides the particular business for which the judicatory has been thus convened.¹⁵

SECTION VIII : At every meeting of presbytery a sermon shall be delivered, if convenient, and every particular session shall be opened and closed with prayer.¹⁶

SECTION IX : Teaching and ruling elders in good standing in other presbyteries or in any sister churches, who may happen to be present, may be invited to sit with the presbytery as corresponding members. Such members shall be entitled to deliberate and advise but not to vote in any decisions of the presbytery.¹⁷

CHAPTER 10

OF THE SYNOD*

SECTION I : As a presbytery is a convention of the teaching and ruling elders within a certain district, so a synod is a convention of teaching and ruling elders within a larger district, including two or more presbyteries. The ratio of the representation of ruling elders in the synod is the same as in the presbytery.

15. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 5:4; And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Matthew 18:17; And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. Acts 15:6

16. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away. Acts 13:2-3; But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. Acts 6:4; Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood...And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. Acts 20:28,36

17. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. Titus 1:5; Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17; And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God...So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. Exodus 18:12,24; All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss. 1 Corinthians 16:20

* As the proofs already adduced in favor of a presbyterial assembly in the government of the church are equally valid in support of a synodical assembly it is unnecessary to repeat the scriptures to which reference has been made under Chapter 9, or to add any others, except to say that the following proof-texts prove a graded court system. Exodus 18:13-27; Numbers 31:48.

SECTION II : Any five teaching elders, belonging to the synod, who shall convene at the time and place of meeting, with as many ruling elders as may be present, shall be a quorum to transact synodical business, provided not more than three of the said teaching elders belong to one presbytery.

SECTION III : The same rule as to corresponding members, which was laid down with respect to the presbytery, shall apply to the synod.

SECTION IV : The synod has power to receive and issue all appeals regularly brought up from the presbyteries; to decide on all references made to them; to review the records of presbyteries and approve or censure them; to redress whatever has been done by presbyteries contrary to order; to take effectual care that presbyteries observe the constitution of the church; to erect new presbyteries and unite and divide at their request those which were before erected; generally to take such order with respect to the presbyteries, sessions, and people under their care, as is in conformity with the word of God and the constitution of the church and which tend to promote the edification of the church; and, finally, to propose to the general assembly, for their adoption, such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole church.

SECTION V : The synod shall convene at least once in each year; at the opening of which a sermon shall be delivered by the moderator or, in case of his absence, by some other member; and every particular session shall be opened and closed with prayer.

SECTION VI : It shall be the duty of the synod to keep full and fair records of its proceedings, to submit them annually to the inspection of the general assembly, and to report to the assembly the number of its presbyteries and of the members and alterations of the presbyteries.

CHAPTER 11

OF ELECTING AND ORDAINING RULING ELDERS AND DEACONS

SECTION I : Having defined the officers of the church and the judicatories by which it shall be governed, it is proper here to prescribe the mode in which ecclesiastical rulers should be ordained to

their respective offices, as well as some of the principles by which they shall be regulated in discharging their several duties.¹

SECTION II : The Holy Scriptures require that officers of the church be called of God² and that the call be confirmed by the people directly by an examination of their qualifications, that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men;³ and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be governed and served, according to 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. We deem it beneficial and proper that a list of sessionally approved candidates be posted, and that there be a period of time of four to six weeks for the members of the congregation to observe and evaluate the candidates before their voting. The persons are to be selected by the popular suffrage of the heads of families.⁴

SECTION III : When any person shall have been elected to either of these offices and shall have declared his willingness to accept thereof, he shall be set apart in the following manner:

SECTION IV : After the sermon, the teaching elder shall state, in a concise manner, the warrant and nature of the office of ruling elder or deacon, together with the character proper to be sustained

1. Let all things be done decently and in order. 1 Corinthians 14:40

2. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. Matthew 9:38; Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28; As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Acts 13:2; And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron. Hebrews 5:4; How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! Romans 10:14-15

3. I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 1 Timothy 5:21-22; And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. 1 Kings 12:31

4. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. Genesis 3:16; Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them, *to be* rulers of thousands, *and* rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. Exodus 18:21; In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, *that* the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families *thereof*; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. Joshua 7:14; And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Acts 14:23; Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. ⁴But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch. Acts 6:3-5

and the duties to be fulfilled by the officer elect;⁵ having done this, he shall propose to the candidate in the presence of the congregation the following questions:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice ?⁶
2. Do you sincerely subscribe the confession of faith of this church as scriptural in all its doctrines ?⁷
3. Do you approve the government, discipline, and worship of this church ?⁸
4. Do you accept the office of ruling elder (or deacon, as the case may be) in this congregation, and promise faithfully to perform all the duties thereof ?⁹
5. Do you promise to study the peace, unity, and purity of the church ?¹⁰

5. 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 1 Timothy 5:17; Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them. Acts 6:3-6

6. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:15-17; But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Matthew 4:4

7. Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1; These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Acts 17:11; Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation. Hebrews 13:7

8. For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. 1 Timothy 1:10; If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness. 1 Timothy 6:3

9. This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 1 Timothy 3:1; Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. 2 Samuel 5:1-3; And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. Leviticus 8:24; See Chapter 22 in the Confession of Faith on oaths.

10. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. James 3:17-18; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3; And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. 1 Timothy 3:10; Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. 1 Timothy 4:12-15; Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 1 Timothy 5:22

The elder or deacon elect having answered the questions in the affirmative, the teaching elder shall address to the heads of families of the church the following questions:

Do you, the heads of families of this church, acknowledge and receive this brother as a ruling elder (or deacon), and do you promise to yield him all that honor, encouragement, and obedience, in the Lord, to which his office, according to the word of God and the constitution of this church, entitles him ?¹¹

The heads of families of the church having answered this question in the affirmative by holding up their right hands, the teaching elder shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer to the office of ruling elder (or deacon, as the case may be) and shall give to him and to the congregation an exhortation suited to the occasion.¹²

SECTION V : Where there is an existing session, it is proper that the members of that body, at the close of the service and in the face of the congregation, take the newly ordained elder by the hand, saying in words to this purpose, " We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this office with us. "¹³

SECTION VI : The offices of ruling elder and deacon are both perpetual and cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of either office but by deposition on account of either heresy, immorality, or lack of scriptural gifts necessary to the office.¹⁴ Yet an elder or deacon may become,

11. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17; And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

12. Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken *is good for us* to do. So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. Deuteronomy 1:13-15; But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God. 1 Corinthians 11:3; And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Acts 14:23; Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away. Acts 13:1-3

13. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Galatians 2:9; And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. Acts 1:26; For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. 1 Timothy 4:4

14. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Titus 3:10-11; I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators...For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them

by age or infirmity, incapable of performing the duties of his office, or he may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable in his official character to a majority of the congregation to which he belongs. In either of these cases, he may, as often happens with respect to a teaching elder, cease to be an acting elder or deacon.¹⁵

SECTION VII : Whenever a ruling elder or deacon, from either of these causes or from any other not inferring crime, shall be incapable of serving the church to edification, the session shall take order on the subject and state the fact, together with the reasons of it, on their records. Provided always, that nothing of this kind shall be done without the concurrence of the individual in question, unless by the advice of presbytery.¹⁶

CHAPTER 12

OF LICENSING CANDIDATES OR PROBATIONERS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

SECTION I : The Holy Scriptures require that some trial be previously had of them who are to be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, that this sacred office may not be degraded by being committed to weak or unworthy men and that the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed.¹ For this purpose presbyteries shall license probationers to preach the gospel, that, after a competent trial of

that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person. 1 Corinthians 5:9,12-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9.

15. And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. 1 Kings 1:32-35

16. 1 Kings 1:32-35; And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel. And he said unto them, I *am* an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, *and* he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: *and* Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said. And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed. And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the LORD, he *it is* that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel. Deuteronomy 31:1-9

1. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

their talents and receiving from the churches a good report, they may in due time ordain them to the sacred office.²

SECTION II : Every candidate for licensure shall be taken on trials by that presbytery to which he most naturally belongs, and he shall be considered as most naturally belonging to that presbytery within the bounds of which he has ordinarily resided. But in case any candidate should find it more convenient to put himself under the care of a presbytery at a distance from that to which he most naturally belongs, he may be received by the said presbytery, on his producing testimonials, either from the presbytery within the bounds of which he has commonly resided or from any two ministers of that presbytery in good standing, of his exemplary piety and other requisite qualifications.

SECTION III : It is proper and requisite that candidates applying to the presbytery to be licensed to preach the gospel produce satisfactory testimonials of their good moral character and of their being regular members of some particular church. And it is the duty of the presbytery, for their satisfaction with regard to the real piety of such candidates, to examine them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion and the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office.³ This examination shall be close and particular and, in most cases, may best be conducted in the presence of the presbytery only. The candidate is required to produce evidence of his having gone through a regular course of learning.⁴

SECTION IV : Because it is highly reproachful to religion and dangerous to the church to entrust the holy ministry to weak and ignorant men, the presbytery shall examine each candidate in order to make trial of his talents to explain and vindicate and practically to enforce the doctrines of the gospel and require of him.⁵

2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2; Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true. 3 John 1:12

3. This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 1 Timothy 3:1; Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Romans 2:21

4. Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 1 Timothy 3:6; And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2

5. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. 2 Timothy 4:2-3; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. Titus 1:9; Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for

1. An experimental knowledge of religion.
2. A thorough knowledge of the scriptures.
3. A thorough knowledge of the constitution.
4. A thorough knowledge of ecclesiastical history.
5. A working knowledge of the original languages.
6. An exegesis of a critical or difficult text.
7. A lecture, or exposition of several verses of scripture.
8. A popular sermon.

SECTION V : These or other similar exercises, at the discretion of the presbytery, shall be exhibited until they shall have obtained satisfaction as to the candidate's piety, literature, and aptness to teach in the churches. The lecture and popular sermon, if the presbytery think proper, may be delivered in the presence of a congregation.

SECTION VI : If the presbytery be satisfied with his trials, they shall then proceed to license him in the following manner: The moderator shall propose to him the following questions:

1. Do you believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice ?⁶
2. Do you sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord declare by this, your subscription, that you heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the confession and catechisms of this church do fully agree with the word of God ?⁷
3. Do you promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same, by your public teaching or writing ?⁸

in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. 1 Timothy 4:12-16; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 1 Timothy 1:7

6. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

7. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 1:13; But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:15

8. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. Philippians 1:7

4. Do you declare, moreover, that you not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, but that you are disposed to refute and contradict these and to exert yourself in keeping the church free from such errors ?⁹
5. And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the doctrine, worship, discipline, or government of this church should arise in your mind, do you promise that you will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until you have first revealed such sentiments to the presbytery and synod, that the same may be there examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the presbytery and synod, under penalty in case of refusal to be, by that very fact, suspended from the office ?¹⁰
6. And further, if at any time the presbytery or synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion, and to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, may deem it proper to require of you a further explanation of your sentiments respecting any particular article of the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, the Directory of Worship, the Book of Discipline, or the Form of Government, do you hereby promise to be always willing and ready to comply with such requisition, under the penalty above mentioned, reserving for yourself, however, the right of appeal, whenever you shall believe yourself aggrieved by the judgment of the presbytery or synod, and until a decision is made upon such an appeal, you will acquiesce in the determination and judgment already passed ?¹¹
7. Do you promise to study the peace, unity, and purity of the church ?¹²
8. Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this presbytery or of any other presbytery in the bounds of which you may be called ?¹³

9. Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. Titus 1:9-11; As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine. 1 Timothy 1:3

10. For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints...If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 14:33,37; But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. 1 Corinthians 11:16

11. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5

12. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:13; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. Ephesians 4:3-4; But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 6:11-14

13. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5; And as they went through the

SECTION VII : The candidate having answered the questions in the affirmative and the moderator having offered up a prayer suitable to the occasion, he shall address himself to the candidate to the following purpose: " In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by that authority which he has given to the church for its edification, we do license you to preach the gospel, wherever God in his providence may call you, and for this purpose may the blessing of God rest upon you and the Spirit of Christ fill your heart. Amen! " and record shall be made of the licensure in the following or like form:

At _____ the _____ day of _____ the Presbytery of _____ having received testimonials in favor of _____ of his having gone through a regular course of literature, of his good moral character, and of his being in the communion of the church, proceeded to take the usual parts of trial for his licensure, and he, having given satisfaction as to his accomplishments in literature, as to his experimental acquaintance with religion and as to his proficiency in divinity and other studies, the presbytery did and hereby do express their approbation of all these parts of trial, and he, having adopted the Confession of Faith of this church and satisfactorily answered the questions appointed to be put to candidates to be licensed, the presbytery did and hereby do license him, the said _____ to preach the Gospel of Christ, as a probationer for the holy ministry, within the bounds of this presbytery or wherever else he may be orderly called.

SECTION VIII : When any candidate for licensure shall have occasion, while his trials are going on, to remove from the bounds of his own presbytery into those of another, it shall be considered as regular for the latter presbytery, on his producing proper testimonials from the former, to take up his trials at the point at which they were left, and conduct them to a conclusion, in the same manner as if they had been commenced by themselves.

SECTION IX : In like manner, when any candidate, after licensure, shall, by the permission of his presbytery, remove without its limits, an extract of the record of his licensure, accompanied with a presbyterial recommendation signed by the clerk, shall be his testimonials to the presbytery under whose care he shall come.

SECTION X : When a licentiate shall have been preaching for a considerable time and his services do not appear to be edifying to the churches, the presbytery may, if they think proper, recall his license.

CHAPTER 13

OF THE ELECTION AND ORDINATION OF TEACHING ELDERS OR PASTORS

SECTION I : When any probationer shall have preached so much to the satisfaction of any congregation as that the people appear prepared to elect a pastor, the session shall take measures to convene them for this purpose, and it shall always be the duty of the session to convene them, when a majority of the persons entitled to vote in the case, shall, by a petition, request that a meeting may be called.

SECTION II : When such a meeting is intended, the session shall proceed under the direction of the moderator appointed by the presbytery.

SECTION III : On a Lord's day, immediately after public worship, it shall be intimated from the pulpit that all the members of that congregation are requested to meet, on _____ ensuing at the church or usual place for holding public worship, then and there, if it be agreeable to them, to proceed to the election of a pastor for that congregation.

SECTION IV : On the day appointed, the moderator invited to preside, if he be present, shall, if it be deemed expedient, preach a sermon; and after the sermon he shall announce to the people that he will immediately proceed to take the votes of the electors of that congregation, for a pastor, if such be their desire, and when this desire shall be expressed by a majority of voices, he shall then proceed to take votes accordingly. In this election, no person shall be entitled to vote who refuses to submit to the censures of the church, regularly administered, or who does not contribute his just proportion, according to his own engagements or the rules of that congregation, to all its necessary expenses.

SECTION V : When the votes are taken, if it appears that a large minority of the people are averse from the candidate who has a majority of the votes, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the presiding moderator shall endeavor to dissuade the congregation from prosecuting it further. But if the people be nearly or entirely unanimous, or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a pastor, the moderator, in that case, after using his utmost endeavors to persuade the congregation to unanimity, shall proceed to draw a call, in due form, and to have it subscribed by the electors, certifying at the same time, in writing, the number and circumstances of those who do not concur in the call; all which proceedings shall be laid before the presbytery, together with the call.

SECTION VI : The call shall be in the following or like form:

The congregation of _____ being, on sufficient ground, well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you _____ and having good hopes, from our past experience of your labors, that your ministrations in the gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call and desire you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord. And that you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of _____ in regular weekly (or bi-weekly or monthly) payments, during the time of your being and continuing the regular pastor of this church. In testimony whereof, we have respectively subscribed our names, this day of _____ A.D.

Attested By: _____

(Moderator of the Meeting)

SECTION VII : But if any congregation shall choose to subscribe their call by their elders, they shall be at liberty to do so. But it shall, in such case, be fully certified to the presbytery by the moderator that the persons signing have been appointed for that purpose, by a public vote of the congregation, and that the call has been, in all other respects, prepared as above directed.

SECTION VIII : When a call shall be presented to any teaching elder or candidate, it shall always be viewed as a sufficient petition from the people for his installation. The acceptance of a call, by a teaching elder or candidate, shall always be considered as a request, on his part, to be installed at the same time. And when a candidate shall be ordained in consequence of a call from any congregation, the presbytery shall, at the same time, if practical, install him pastor of that congregation.

SECTION IX : The call, thus prepared, shall be presented to the presbytery under whose care the person called shall be, that, if the presbytery think it expedient to present the call to him, it may be accordingly presented, and no teaching elder or candidate shall receive a call but through the hands of the presbytery.

SECTION X : If the call be to the licentiate of another presbytery, in that case the commissioners deputed from the congregation to prosecute the call shall produce, to that judicatory, a certificate from their own presbytery, regularly attested by the moderator and clerk, that the call has been laid before them and that it is in order. If that presbytery present the call to their licentiate and he be disposed to accept it, they shall then dismiss him from their jurisdiction and require him to repair to

that presbytery into the bounds of which he is called and there to submit himself to the usual trials preparatory to ordination.

SECTION XI : Trials for ordination, especially in a different presbytery from that in which the candidate was licensed, shall consist of a careful examination. The presbytery, being fully satisfied with his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought to be, if convenient, in that church of which he is to be the minister. It is also recommended that a fast day be observed in the congregation previous to the day of ordination.¹

SECTION XII : The day appointed for ordination being come, and the presbytery convened, a member of presbytery, previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. The same, or another member appointed to preside, shall afterward briefly recite from the pulpit, in the audience of the people, the proceedings of the presbytery preparatory to this transaction; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance and endeavor to impress the audience with a proper sense of the solemnity of the transaction. Then addressing himself to the candidate, he shall propose to him the following questions:

1. Do you believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice ?²
2. Do you sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord declare by this, your subscription, that you heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Confession and Catechisms of this church do fully agree with the word of God ?³
3. Do you promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same, by your public preaching or writing ?⁴

1. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away. Acts 13:2-3

2. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

3. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 1:13; But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 1 Timothy 3:15

4. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,²⁵In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. Philippians 1:7

4. Do you declare, moreover, that you not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, but that you are disposed to refute and contradict these and to exert yourself in keeping the church free from such errors ?⁵
5. And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the doctrine, worship, discipline, or government (of this church) should arise in (your mind), do you promise that you will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until you have first revealed such sentiments to the presbytery and synod, that the same may be there examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the presbytery and synod, under penalty in case of refusal to be, by that very fact, suspended from the office ?
6. And further, if at any time the presbytery or synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government may deem it proper to require of you a further explanation of your sentiments respecting any particular article of the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, the Directory of Worship, the Book of Discipline, or the Form of Government, do you hereby promise to be always willing and ready to comply with such requisition, under the penalty above mentioned, reserving for yourself, however, the right of an appeal, whenever you shall believe yourself aggrieved by the judgment of the presbytery or synod, and until a decision is made upon such an appeal, you will acquiesce in the determination and judgment already passed ?⁶
7. Do you approve of the worship, government, and discipline of the American Presbyterian Church ?⁷
8. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord ?⁸
9. Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son ?⁹

5. Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. Titus 1:9-11; As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine. 1 Timothy 1:3

6. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5

7. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 1:13

8. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5

9. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:2; For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 2 Corinthians 4:5

10. Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and peace of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account ?¹⁰

11. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all relative duties and the public duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your conversation and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer ?¹¹

12. Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call ? And do you promise to discharge the duties of a pastor to them, as God shall give you strength ?¹²

SECTION XIII : The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the moderator shall propose to the electors the following questions:

1. Do you, the electors of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive _____ whom you have called to be your minister ?

2. Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline ?¹³

3. Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification ?¹⁴

10. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. Acts 20:17-31

11. See the Epistles to Timothy and Titus throughout.

12. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. 1 Peter 5:2

13. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21; Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17

4. And do you engage to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that competent worldly maintenance which you have promised and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you ?¹⁵

SECTION XIV : The electors having answered these questions in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel down in the most convenient part of the church. Then the moderator shall, by prayer¹⁶ and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,¹⁷ according to the apostolic example, solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise from his knees, and the moderator shall first, and afterwards all the members of the presbytery in their order, take him by the right hand, saying, in words to this purpose, " We give you the right hand of fellowship, to take part of this ministry with us."¹⁸ After which the moderator or some other appointed for the purpose shall give a solemn charge in the name of God to the newly ordained bishop¹⁹ and to the people,²⁰ to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties, and shall then, by prayer, recommend them both to the grace of God and his holy keeping, and finally, after singing a psalm, shall dismiss the congregation with the usual blessing. And the presbytery shall duly record the transaction.

14. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

15. Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. 1 Corinthians 9:7-15

16. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away. Acts 13:2-3

17. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 1 Timothy 4:14

18. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Galatians 2:9; That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. Acts 1:25

19. I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 2 Timothy 4:1-2

20. And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. Mark 4:24; Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. Hebrews 2:1; See also footnotes 12,13, and 14 above.

CHAPTER 14

OF TRANSLATION, OR REMOVING A TEACHING ELDER FROM ONE CHARGE TO ANOTHER

SECTION I : No teaching elder shall be translated from one church to another, nor shall he receive any call for that purpose, but by the permission of the presbytery.

SECTION II : Any church, desiring to call a settled teaching elder from his present charge, shall, by commissioners properly authorized, represent to the presbytery the ground on which they plead his removal. The presbytery, having maturely considered their plea, may, according as it appears more or less reasonable, either recommend to them to desist from prosecuting the call or may order it to be delivered to the minister to whom it is directed. If the parties be not prepared to have the matter issued at that presbytery, a written citation shall be given to the minister and his congregation, to appear before the presbytery at their next meeting. This citation shall be read from the pulpit in that church by a member of the presbytery appointed for that purpose, immediately after public worship, so that at least two sabbaths shall intervene between the citation and the meeting of the presbytery at which the cause of translation is to be considered. The presbytery being met and having heard the parties shall, upon the whole view of the case, either continue him in his former charge or translate him, as they shall deem to be most for the peace and edification of the church, or refer the whole affair to the synod at their next meeting, for their advice and direction.

SECTION III : When the congregation calling any settled teaching elder is within the limits of another presbytery, that congregation shall obtain leave from the presbytery to which they belong to apply to the presbytery of which he is a member, and that presbytery, having cited him and his congregation as before directed, shall proceed to hear and issue the cause. If they agree to the translation, they shall release him from his present charge and, having given him proper testimonials, shall require to repair to that presbytery within the bounds of which the congregation calling him lies, that the proper steps may be taken for his regular settlement in that congregation; and the presbytery to which the congregation belongs, having received an authenticated certificate of his release, under the hand of the clerk of that presbytery, shall proceed to install him in the congregation as soon as convenient. Provided always, that no teaching elder or pastor shall be translated, without his own consent having been previously obtained.

SECTION IV : When any teaching elder is to be settled in a congregation, the installment, which consists in constituting a pastoral relation between him and the people of that particular church, may be performed either by the presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient, and the following order shall be observed therein:

SECTION V : A day shall be appointed for the installment at such a time as may appear most convenient, and due notice thereof shall be given to the congregation.

SECTION VI : When the presbytery or committee shall be convened and constituted on the day appointed, a sermon shall be delivered by some one of the members previously appointed thereto; immediately after which, the teaching elder who is to preside shall state to the congregation the design of their meeting and briefly recite the proceedings of the presbytery relative thereto. And then, addressing himself to the teaching elder to be installed, shall propose to him the following or similar questions:

1. Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation, as their pastor, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call ?
2. Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge, you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church ?
3. Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the gospel of Christ, agreeably to your ordination engagements ?

To all these having received satisfactory answers, he shall propose to the people the same or like questions as those directed under the head of ordination, which, having been also satisfactorily answered by holding up the right hand in testimony of assent, he shall solemnly pronounce and declare the said minister to be regularly constituted the pastor of that congregation. A charge shall then be given to both parties, as directed in the case of ordination, and, after prayer and singing a psalm adapted to the transaction, the congregation shall be dismissed with the usual benediction.

SECTION VII : It is highly becoming that, after the solemnity of the installment, the heads of families of that congregation who are then present, or at least the elders and those appointed to take care of the temporal concerns of that church, should come forward to their pastor and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

CHAPTER 15

OF RESIGNING A PASTORAL CHARGE

SECTION I: When any teaching elder shall labor under such grievances in his congregation as that he shall desire leave to resign his pastoral charge, the presbytery shall cite the congregation to appear, by their commissioners, at their next meeting to show cause, if any they have, why the presbytery should not accept the resignation. If the congregation fail to appear or if their reasons for retaining their pastor be deemed by the presbytery insufficient, he shall have leave granted to resign his pastoral charge, of which due record shall be made; and that church shall be held to be vacant till supplied again, in an orderly manner, with another teaching elder, and if any congregation shall desire to be released from their pastor, a similar process, mutatis mutandis, shall be observed.

CHAPTER 16

OF VACANCIES AND NEW CHURCHES

SECTION I: When vacancies become so numerous in any presbytery that they cannot be supplied with the frequent administration of the word and ordinances, it shall be proper for such (a) presbytery or any vacant congregation within their bounds with the leave of the presbytery, to apply to any other presbytery or to the synod, for such assistance as they can afford. And, when any presbytery shall send any of their pastors or probationers to distant vacancies, they shall be ready to produce their credentials to the presbytery or presbyteries through the bounds of which they may pass, or at least to a committee thereof, and obtain their approbation. And the synod may, of their own knowledge, send such to any part to plant churches or to supply vacancies and, for this purpose, may direct any presbytery to ordain pastors without relation to particular churches, provided always that such appointments be made with the consent of the parties appointed, and that the judicatory sending them makes the necessary provision for their support and reward in the performance of this service.

CHAPTER 17

OF MODERATORS

SECTION I : It is equally necessary in the judicatories of the church, as in other assemblies, that there should be a moderator or president, that the business may be conducted with order and despatch.

SECTION II : The moderator is to be considered as possessing, by delegation from the whole body, all authority necessary for the preservation of order, for convening and adjourning the court, and directing its operations according to the rules of the church. If the court be equally divided on any question he shall possess the casting vote. If he be not willing to decide, he shall put the question a second time, and if the court be again equally divided and he decline to give his vote, the question shall be lost.

SECTION III : The moderator of the presbytery shall be chosen from year to year or at every meeting of the presbytery, as the presbytery may think best. The moderator of the synod shall be chosen at each meeting of those judicatories, and the moderator or, in case of his absence, another member appointed for the purpose shall open the next meeting with a sermon and shall hold the chair till a new moderator be chosen.

CHAPTER 18

OF CLERKS

SECTION I : Every judicatory shall choose a clerk to record their transactions, whose continuance shall be during pleasure. It shall be the duty of the clerk, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully and to grant extracts from them, whenever properly required.

CHAPTER 19

OF VACANT CONGREGATIONS ASSEMBLING FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP

SECTION I : Considering the great importance of weekly assembling the people for the public worship of God, in order thereby to improve their knowledge, to confirm their habits of worship and their desire of the public ordinances, to augment their reverence for the most high God, and to promote the charitable affections which unite men most firmly in society, it is recommended that every vacant congregation meet together on the Lord's day, at one or more places, for the purpose of

prayer, singing psalms, and reading the holy Scriptures, together with the works of such approved divines as the presbytery within whose bounds they are may recommend and they may be able to procure; and that the elders be the persons who shall preside and select the portions of Scripture and of the other books to be read, and to see that the whole be conducted in a becoming and orderly manner.

CHAPTER 20

OF AMMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

SECTION I : This constitution can only be ammended by a four-fifths vote of two successive annual meetings of the highest court of the American Presbyterian Church and a ratification by four-fifths of the of the presbyteries within that year.

SECTION II: This constitution shall not be ammended so as to remove or delete any existing portion of the Confession of Faith, Shorter or Larger Catechisms, or to set aside any doctrine or principle clearly taught therein.

SECTION III: The scope of any ammendments to this constitution will be limited to the following:

- A. To revise organizational and procedural matters in the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Directory of Worship.
- B. To develop, elucidate, clarify, and amplify the doctrines already set forth in the Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms.
- C. To add to the constitution in the appropriate areas new principles and doctrines which can be harmoniously fitted into the system as a whole.

THE END