

PART I.

FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

I. It is absolutely necessary that the government of the church be exercised under some definite form. The scriptural form, which is that of presbytery, is comprehended under these five heads of doctrine, viz: 1. Of the church; 2. Of its members; 3. Of its officers; 4. Of its courts; and 5. Of its orders.

II. The Church which the Lord Jesus Christ hath erected in this world, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, is His kingdom, and is one and the same in all ages.

III. The members of this visible church catholic are 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.

IV. The officers of the church, by whom all its powers are administered, according to the Scriptures, are presbyters (or bishops) and deacons, whose offices are ordained, defined and limited by God himself. As ecclesiastical rulers, these presbyters, or elders, are of the same rank, dignity and authority; but they are divided into two classes, viz: those who both teach and rule, and those who rule only.

V. Ecclesiastical jurisdiction is never a several

but always a joint power, and is committed to church-courts, consisting of presbyters of the two classes. These courts may have jurisdiction over one or many congregations; but they sustain such mutual relations as to realize the idea of the unity of the church.

VI. The ordination of officers is ordinarily by a court.

VII. Although the practical adoption of the scriptural doctrine of presbytery is necessary to the completeness of the efficiency and the perfection of the order of the church, yet it is not essential to its existence.

CHAPTER II. OF THE CHURCH.

Section I.—Of its King and Head.

I. Jesus Christ, upon whose shoulders the government is, whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end; who sits upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth, even forever; having all power given to him both in heaven and earth by the Father, who raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand, far above all principalities, 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; and put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all; he, being ascended up far above all heavens, that he might

fill all things, received gifts for his church, and gave all officers necessary for the edification of his church, and perfecting of his saints.

II. Jesus, the Mediator, is the sole Priest, Prophet, King, Saviour, and Head of the church; and contains in himself by way of eminency, all the offices in his church, and hath many of their names attributed to him in the Scriptures. He is Apostle, Teacher, Pastor, Minister and Bishop, and the only Lawgiver in Zion. It belongeth to his Majesty from his throne of glory, to command, rule and teach the church, through his Word and Spirit, by the ministry of men; thus mediately exercising his own authority, and enforcing his own laws unto the edification and establishment of his kingdom.

III. Christ, as King, hath given to his church officers, oracles and laws; and especially hath he ordained therein his own system of doctrine, government, discipline, and worship; all which is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced therefrom; and to which things he commands that nothing be added, nor from them aught be taken away.

IV. Since the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven, he is present with the church by his word and Spirit, and all his offices are sustained in the church by the Holy Ghost.

Section II.—The Church Defined.

I. The visible church, which before the law, under the law, and now under the gospel, is one and the same, consists of all those who make profession of the true religion, together with their children; and under the gospel, it is catholic or universal; not, as before under the law, confined to one nation.

II. From partial illumination and weakness of

faith in Christians, and from the machinations of Satan, deplorable divisions have taken place in the church since the days of the Apostles; impairing the visible unity of the body of Christ, marring its doctrinal purity and scriptural order, and giving rise to particular churches, otherwise called denominations. Nevertheless, those particular churches which maintain the word and sacraments in their integrity are to be recognized as true churches of Jesus Christ.

III. It is according to scriptural example that the church should be divided into many organized congregations. A congregation consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together in one place for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to the Scriptures, and submitting to the lawful government of Christ's kingdom.

Section III.—Of the Nature and Extent of Church Power.

I. The power which Christ hath committed to his church vests in the whole body, the rulers and the ruled, constituting it a spiritual commonwealth; but this power is exercised by his people in the choice of those officers whom he hath appointed in his church. This power is ecclesiastical, which is wholly moral and spiritual, is two-fold; for the officers sometimes exercise it severally, as in preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments, re-proving the erring, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, etc., which is the power of order; and sometimes jointly in church-courts, after the form of judgment, which is the power of jurisdiction.

II. The sole functions of the church, as a king-

dom and government distinct from the civil commonwealth, are to expound and apply, to administer and enforce the law of Christ revealed in the Scriptures, which is the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

III. The church in its organized capacity, with its officers and courts, is the sole agency which Christ hath ordained for its own edification and government, for the propagation of the faith, and for the evangelization of the world.

IV. Every exercise of ecclesiastical power, whether joint or several, hath the divine sanction, when in conformity with the statutes of the kingdom enacted by the great Lawgiver himself, not only because of this conformity, but also because put forth by courts or by officers appointed thereunto in his word.

Section IV.—Of the Congregation.

I. In the organization of a congregation, the first step shall be to receive testimonials on behalf of such of the applicants as had previously been members of the church elsewhere; and in the next place, to admit to a profession of faith in Christ such candidates as on examination may be found qualified; administering baptism to such as need that ordinance. These persons should then be required to rise to their feet, and to enter into covenant by answering the following question affirmatively with the uplifted hand, viz: “Do you, in reliance on God for strength, solemnly promise and covenant that you will walk together as an organized congregation, on the principles of the faith and order of the Presbyterian church, and that you will study the purity and harmony of the whole body?” The presiding minister shall then

say: "I now pronounce and declare that you are constituted a congregation, according to the faith and order of the Presbyterian church in the United States and the word of God: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen" Elders and deacons are then to be elected, ordained and installed.

II. The officers of each congregation are the pastor, who is a teaching elder; the ruling elders; and the deacons.

III. The jurisdiction of the congregation is lodged in the hands of the pastor or pastors and ruling elders thereof, as a joint power; these officers constituting the primary presbytery or court, known as the church-session.

IV. To the deacons is committed the administration of all the temporal goods of the congregation, and the oblations for pious uses.

V. The ordinances established by Christ, the Head, in the congregation, are prayer; singing praises; reading, expounding, and preaching the word of God; administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; public solemn fasting and thanksgiving; catechizing; making oblations for the relief of the poor, and for other pious uses; exercising discipline; and blessing the people.

VI. Every congregation destitute of the ministrations of the word, ought ordinarily to meet together on the Lord's day for the purpose of prayer, singing praises, exhortation and reading the Holy Scriptures, together with the works of such approved divines as it may be able to procure. The whole should be under the direction of the session, which should appoint some one to preside, and should

see that everything is conducted in an orderly and becoming manner. It is also recommended to Christians cast in destitute regions to form associations for the worship of God, after the above general directions.

CHAPTER III.

OF CHURCH MEMBERS.

I. The infant seed of the faithful are federally holy, and members of the church. Hence, they have an interest in the covenant, and are entitled to baptism, which is the seal thereof, and the outward badge of membership in the visible church. It is the bounden duty of Christian parents to present their children for baptism within a reasonable time, and should they neglect this duty they must be visited with discipline. Notwithstanding this sinful neglect of their parents, these little ones are lambs of Christ's flock, and entitled to the pastoral oversight and religious instruction of the church, with a constant view to their embracing the covenant personally, and on arriving at years of discretion receiving the seals thereof.

II. All baptized persons are in covenant with God, are members of the church, and entitled to its watchful care, instruction and government, even though they are adults, and have made no profession of faith in Christ.

III. Those only who have been admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, on a profession of faith in Christ, are entitled to all the privileges of believers, and are partakers in all the promises made to them. All other members are considered and treated as minors in the house and kingdom of Christ.

CHAPTER IV.

OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

Section I.—Of their General Classification.

I. Under the new dispensation, our blessed Lord at first collected his people out of different nations, and formed them into one body by the mission of extraordinary officers, endued with miraculous gifts, which have long since ceased.

II. As the whole polity of the church consisteth in doctrine, discipline, and distribution, so the ordinary and perpetual officers in the church are teaching elders, who labor in the word and doctrine; ruling elders, who wait on government; and deacons, whose chief function is the distribution of the oblations of the faithful. He that is called to teach is called also to rule, and he that is called to rule, is called also to distribute.

III. No one who exercises office in the church ought to usurp dominion therein, or receive any titles of spiritual eminence or lordship; but only those of minister, disciple, and servant of Christ, and such others as are employed in the word.

Section II.—Of the Teaching Elder, or Minister of the Word.

I. Pastors, teachers, and evangelists, are ascension gifts of the Lord Jesus Christ to his church; and though these titles describe distinct offices or functions, they all belong to the one class of teaching elders, usually styled ministers of the gospel.

II. Besides that competency of human learning which is needful, he that fills this office must be blameless in life, sound in the faith, and apt to teach; he must exhibit a sobriety of behaviour and holiness of conversation becoming the gospel; he

must rule his own house well; and must have a good report of them who are without.

III. This office is the first in the church, both for dignity and usefulness. The person who fills it hath in Scripture different titles expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor. As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is the messenger of God, he is termed the angel of the church. 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. As he bears the glad tidings of salvation to the ignorant and perishing, he is termed evangelist. As he is commissioned and sent forth by the church on his errand of love and mercy, he is termed apostle or missionary. As he stands in the great congregation to proclaim the gospel, he is termed preacher. As he expounds the word, and by sound doctrine both exhorts and convinces the gainsayer, he is termed doctor or teacher. And as he dispenses the manifold grace of God, and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God. These titles do not indicate different grades of office, but all describe one and the same officer.

IV. As the Lord hath given different gifts to the ministers of the word, and hath committed to them various works to execute, the church is authorized to call and appoint them to the respective functions of pastors, doctor and evangelist, according to the

gifts in which they do most excel, or according to its own necessities.

V. The pastor is he whom the church doth place over a congregation. It appertains to his office to pray for and with his flock as the mouth of the people unto God; to read and expound the Scriptures publicly; to feed the flock by preaching the word; to direct the congregation in singing the praises of God; to administer the sacraments; to bless the people from God; to catechize the children and youth; to visit from house to house, devoting especial attention to the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dying; and with the other elders to exercise the joint power of rule.

VI The doctor or teacher is he whom the church doth appoint to teach in schools of divinity, or to give instruction in the doctrines and duties of religion to youth assembled in colleges and universities. It always belongs to his office to take a pastoral oversight of the youth committed to his charge, and to be diligent in sowing the seed of the word and gathering the fruit thereof, as one who watches for souls.

VII. The evangelist is he whom the church doth appoint to labor in its aggressive work. The command, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," is of perpetual obligation, and makes his office permanent. He is sent into foreign countries, frontier settlements, and the destitute parts of the church, to preach the word, and set in order things that are wanting. He carries with him extraordinary powers, when the church shall confer them upon him, to organize congregations and ordain presbyters. Evangelists may also be appointed to use the press in diffusing the truth, and to superintend the work of systematic evangelization.

Section III.—Of the Ruling Elders.

I. As there were in the church, under the law, elders of the people for the government thereof, so in the gospel church, Christ hath furnished some besides the ministers of the word, with gifts and commission to govern when called thereto.

II. These presbyters, as ecclesiastical rulers, are of the same rank, and possess the same authority with the teaching elder. And while the titles of bishop, pastor, and minister, belong to the teaching elder by way of eminency, because he excels by reason of his entire consecration to the work, as well as by the superiority of his functions, they also belong to the office of the ruling elder, seeing that, in order to rule with diligence, he must take the *oversight* of the flock; in order to its protection he must *guard* and *guide* it; and in order to discharge the chief duty of his office, he must *serve* Christ diligently in the exercise of government.

III. Those who fill this office ought to be blameless in life and sound in the faith; they should be men of wisdom and discretion, not novices; and from the holiness of their walk and conversation, should be enamples unto the flock.

IV. Ruling elders, the immediate representatives of the people, are chosen by them, that in conjunction with pastors or ministers they may exercise government and discipline, and take the oversight of the spiritual interests of the congregation, and also of the church generally, when called thereto. It appertains to their office, both severally and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enter therein. Things which they cannot correct by private admonition, they should

bring to the notice of the Session. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick; they should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the church; and all those duties which private Christians are bound to discharge by the law of charity, are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. They should pray with and for the people; they should be careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached word among the flock; and should inform the pastor of cases of sickness, affliction, and awakening, and all others which may need his especial attention.

Section IV.—Of the Office of Deacon.

I. The office of deacon is ordinary and perpetual in the church of Christ.

II. The duties of this office relate to the temporal goods, the collection of oblations, and their distribution to the objects for which they are designed. Moreover, all those helpful and exemplary duties of religion, such as visiting the sick and taking care of the poor, to which all Christians are called, are especially incumbent on the deacon as an officer in Christ's house, as is evident from the eminent manifestations of piety and zeal which the Scriptures require in those who sustain this office.

III. For this office, men of honest repute and approved piety, who are esteemed for their prudence and sound judgment, whose conversation becometh the gospel, and whose lives are exemplary, ought to be chosen.

IV. The jurisdiction of the deacons is not over persons, but only over things; it does not appertain to the government of the church or the cure of

souls, but to the care of ecclesiastical goods and tables, viz: the table of the Lord, providing and serving the sacramental elements; the table of the minister; and the table of the poor.

V. The funds which properly come under their charge are the following, viz: Alms for the support of the poor of the church, the education of their children, and the support of their orphans; the collections required to meet the assessments of the higher courts for ecclesiastical purposes; the contributions of the people to the various objects of evangelization undertaken by the church; and any other funds designed for ecclesiastical purposes, or for objects of general benevolence. The rents or subscriptions for the salary of the minister, and the general management of the temporal affairs of the congregation, ought also to be committed exclusively to the deacons, who are the only guardians of church property known to the Scriptures.

VI. In order to the systematic and efficient discharge of their duties, the deacons ought to meet as often as necessary for the ordering of their affairs, and for mutual consultation and advice. The pastor of the congregation is *ex officio* moderator of the board of deacons, but it is requisite that a clerk and treasurer be appointed by the board. A complete account of all collections and distributions, and a full record of all proceedings, must be kept and submitted to the session for examination at least once a year, at a meeting previous to the stated meeting of the presbytery next preceding the annual meeting of the general assembly.

VII. The deacons ought to divide the congregation into districts, or otherwise into classes, assigning to ever deacon the portion of the congregation within which he is especially to exercise his office.

VIII. In congregations where it is impossible from the paucity of male members to secure the appointment of a sufficient number of deacons, the session may detail as many elders as necessary to act as deacons until the deficiency can be supplied.

IX. The New Testament authorizes the employment of godly women in the diaconal function. Wherefore it is proper, where it shall appear needful, that the church-session select and appoint deaconesses, for the care of the sick, of prisoners, of poor widows and orphans, and in general for the relief of distress.

CHAPTER V.
 OF CHURCH COURTS.

Section I.—Of the Courts in General.

I. It is agreeable to Scripture, and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the Church be governed by various assemblies, in regular subordination; such as congregational, classical, provincial, national, and œcumenical; which are all, nevertheless, presbyteries, inasmuch as they are lawful bodies of presbyters.

II. The courts of this church are, church-sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the general assembly.

III. The courts of the church shall always be opened and closed with prayer.

IV. In all these assemblies there should be a moderator, and one or more clerks.

V. The moderator possesses all authority necessary for the preservation of order, and for convening and adjourning the court, according to its ruling. He may, on any extraordinary emergency, convene the court by his circular letter, before the

ordinary time of meeting. And in case of the failure of the regular meeting he may convene the court at a suitable time and place.

VI. The pastor is *ex officio* moderator of all congregational assemblies. The moderator of the presbytery, the synod, and the general assembly, shall be chosen at each stated meeting of those courts; and the moderator, or in case of his absence, the last moderator present, or, if there be none, then the oldest minister in attendance shall open the meeting with a sermon, unless it be highly inconvenient, and shall hold the chair until a new moderator be chosen.

VII. It is the duty of the clerks, whose continuance in office shall be during pleasure, besides recording the transactions, to preserve the records carefully, and to grant extracts from them whenever properly required. Such extracts under the hand of the clerk shall be authentic vouchers in any ecclesiastical court, and to every part of the church.

VI. The expenses of ministers and elders in their attendance on the courts shall be defrayed by the bodies which they respectively represent.

Section II.—Of the Jurisdiction of Church Courts.

I. These assemblies are altogether distinct from the civil magistracy. They do not possess any civil jurisdiction; they have no coercive authority; nor can they inflict any temporal pains and penalties, but their powers are, in all respects, moral or spiritual.

II. The jurisdiction of church-courts, which is only ministerial and declarative, is three-fold, technically termed the dogmatic, the diatactic and the

diacritic. The first relates to the doctrines and precepts of Christ; the second to the order of the church; the third to the exercise of discipline. *First*, they can make no new laws binding the conscience, but declaratively they may frame symbols of faith to be received by all who enter into church-communion; they may bear testimony against errors in doctrine and immoralities in practice within or without the pale of the church; and ministerially may decide cases of conscience. *Secondly*, they have power, ministerially, to establish canons for the government, discipline, worship and extension of the church, which must be agreeable to the general doctrines relating thereto contained in the Scriptures; only the circumstantial details of these matters being left to be regulated by the Christian prudence and wisdom of church-officers and courts. *Thirdly*, they hold the power of the keys, and therefore the right of requiring obedience to the laws of Christ. Hence, ministerially, they admit those qualified to sealing ordinances and to their respective offices; and they exclude the disobedient and disorderly from their offices, or from sacramental privileges; but the highest censure to which their authority extends, is to cut off the contumacious and impenitent from the congregation of believers. *Moreover*, they possess all the administrative authority necessary to give effect to the other powers.

III. All church-courts are one in nature, constituted of the same elements, and possessed inherently of the same kind of rights and powers; the highest court being a mere expansion of the lowest. Yet it is according to scriptural example, and promotive of the purity and harmony of the whole church, that

disputed matters of doctrine and order arising in the lower courts should be referred to the higher for decision.

IV. For the orderly and efficient dispatch of ecclesiastical business, it is necessary that the sphere of action of each court should be distinctly defined. The session exercises jurisdiction over a single congregation: the presbytery over what is common to a definite class of ministers, sessions, and congregations; the synod over what belongs in common to three or more presbyteries, and their ministers, sessions and congregations; and the general assembly over such matters as concern the whole church; and every one of these courts is limited and bound by the express provisions of the constitution.—Every court has the right to resolve questions of doctrine and discipline seriously and reasonably proposed, and in general to maintain truth and righteousness, condemning erroneous opinions and practices, which tend to the injury of the peace, purity or progress of the church; while each court exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all matters specially belonging to it. But should any inferior court neglect and refuse to perform its prescribed duties, the court next superior may take original cognizance of the matters involved; but not otherwise. Moreover, the lower courts are subject to the review and control of the higher, in regular gradation. Hence, these courts are not separate and independent tribunals; but they have a mutual relation, and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole church, performed by it through the appropriate organ.

Section III.—Of the Church-Session.

I. The church-session consists of the pastor or

pastors, if there be any, and the ruling elders of a congregation. Two elders, if there be so many, with the pastor, if there be one, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum.

II. When the session is small, owing to the paucity of suitable male members, at the request of the existing eldership, the presbytery may, from contiguous congregations, appoint additional elders to meet and act with the session whenever it may be necessary. The same expedient may be adopted where the eldership has become extinct in any congregation.

III. In case of the sickness or absence of the pastor, or when from prudential reasons it may appear advisable that some other minister should be invited to preside, such minister as the session may designate, belonging to the same presbytery, and not unacceptable to the pastor, may be invited to preside in his place. The same rule shall be observed in the meetings of the congregation.

IV. When a congregation 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 highly inconvenient to procure the attendance of such a moderator, the session may proceed without it. In judicial cases, this moderator shall always be a member of the same presbytery with the congregation.

V. In congregations where there are two or more pastors, they shall when present alternately preside.

VI. When the congregation is large, the session ought to divide it into districts or into classes, assigning to every elder a definite portion of the members for official visitation and special oversight;

for which purpose the name of every family, and of every member, whether communicating or non-communicating, ought to be placed on the list of an elder.

VII. The church-session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation; for which purpose it has power to inquire into the principles and conduct of the church-members under its care; to censure those found delinquent; to see that parents do not neglect to present their children for baptism; to receive members into the church; to grant letters of dismission to other congregations, which shall always include the names of any baptized children; to ordain and install additional elders and deacons on their election by the congregation; to examine and approve or censure the records of the board of deacons; to appoint deaconesses where it shall appear needful, and to direct them in the discharge of their duties; to establish and control sabbath-schools and bible classes, with especial reference to the children of the church; to order collections for pious uses; to appoint the precentor, and take the oversight of the singing of the congregation; to assemble the congregation for worship when there is no minister; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; to observe and carry out the injunctions of the higher courts; and to appoint delegates to the presbytery and the synod, who are on their return to make report of their diligence.

VIII. The session shall hold stated meetings at least quarterly. Moreover, the pastor has power to convene the session, when he may judge it requisite; and he shall always convene it when requested

to do so by any two of the elders. The session shall, also, convene when directed so to do by the presbytery.

IX. 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.

X. Every session should keep a fair register of marriages; of baptisms, with the dates of the birth of the individuals baptized; of persons admitted to the Lord's table; of non-communicating members; and of the deaths, and other removals of church-members.

XI. Ministers or ruling elders of this church, known to be in good standing, may be invited to sit in the session as corresponding members, with the right to advise and deliberate, but not to vote.

Section IV.—Of the Presbytery.

I. The presbytery consists of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each congregation within a certain district.

II. Ministers who are not engaged in an authorized ministerial calling, under the authority of the presbytery, unless they are discharged from such duties by the presbytery, on account of age, or such other infirmity as unfits them for secular pursuits, are under the jurisdiction of the presbytery; but can have no voice in ruling the church unless regularly called thereto, as ruling elders in some congregation, or until they enter on some lawful ministerial work.

III. Every elder shall produce a certificate of his regular appointment from the session of the congregation which he represents.

IV. Any three ministers belonging to the pres-

bytery and engaged in a lawful ministerial calling, together with at least one elder, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business.

V. All applicants for admission to membership are to be examined at least on experimental religion, didactic and polemic theology and church government. When any minister shall thus apply and be rejected, it becomes the duty of the rejecting presbytery to report the case to the presbytery which dismissed him; and the rejected minister, if he feels aggrieved, may appeal to the synod. If applicants come from other denominations, the presbytery must not only receive satisfaction as to their general qualifications, but must require them to answer in the affirmative the questions put to candidates at their ordination. If they come from churches in foreign lands, they shall not be received without the advice and consent of the general assembly.

VI. The presbytery shall cause to be transcribed in some convenient part of the book of records, the obligations required of ministers at their ordination, which shall be subscribed by all admitted to membership in the following form, viz: "I, A. B., do *ex animo* receive and subscribe the above obligations, as a just and true exhibition of my faith and principles, and do resolve and promise to exercise my ministry in conformity thereunto."

VII. The presbytery has power to receive and issue appeals from church-sessions and references brought before it in an orderly manner; to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to receive, ordain, install, remove, dismiss, and judge ministers; to review the records of church-sessions;

to redress whatever they may have done contrary to order, and to take effectual care that they observe the constitution of the church; to establish the pastoral relation; and to dissolve it at the request of one or both of the parties, or where the interests of religion imperatively demand it; to appoint and set apart doctors and evangelists to their proper places; to require ministers to devote themselves diligently to their sacred calling, and to censure the delinquent; to see that the injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed among the congregations; to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the church; to visit congregations, for the purpose of inquiring into their state, and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them; to unite or divide congregations, at the request of the members thereof; to form and receive new congregations; to take special oversight of vacant congregations; in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the congregations under its care; to appoint commissioners to the general assembly; and, finally, to propose to the synod or the assembly for its adoption such measures as may be of common advantage to the church at large.

VIII. It shall be lawful for any presbytery, or for any congregation with the leave of the presbytery, to apply to any other presbytery, to any synod, or to the general assembly or its commission, for assistance to supply its vacancies. And when any presbytery shall send any minister or probationer to distant vacancies, it must furnish him with proper testimonials.

IX. The presbytery shall keep a full and fair record of its proceedings, and shall send up the

same to the synod annually for inspection and review. It shall also report to the synod and the general assembly every year the condition and progress of religion within its bounds during the year, and all the important changes which may have taken place, such as the licensures, the ordinations, the receiving or dismissing of members, the removal of members by death, the union and the division of congregations, and the formation of new ones.

X. The presbytery shall meet at least twice a year 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 ministers and two elders of different congregations, call a special meeting. For this purpose he shall give notice, specifying the particular business of the intended meeting, to every minister 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 special meeting besides the particular business for which the court has been thus convened.

XI. Ministers in good standing in other presbyteries, or in any church with which the general assembly holds correspondence, being present at any meeting of the presbytery, may be invited to sit and deliberate as corresponding members. Ministers of other Christian churches may be invited to sit within the bar of the presbytery, and to speak if specially invited to do so. It is proper for the moderator to invite such corresponding or attending ministers to come forward, and to offer to them the right hand of fellowship.

XII. When evangelists are sent to preach the gospel and plant congregations beyond the boundaries of the organized church, as soon as three of them can regularly meet together, they should organize as a presbytery, even in anticipation of the organization of congregations, and report to the most convenient synod.

Section V.—Of the Synod.

I. A synod consists of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each congregation in a district comprising at least three presbyteries. The qualifications for membership in the synod are the same as those for the presbytery.

II. The synod shall meet at least once in each year; and any seven ministers belonging to it who shall convene at the time and place of meeting, with at least three elders, shall be a quorum; provided, not more than three of the said ministers belong to one presbytery.

III. The same rule as to corresponding members and other attending ministers, which was laid down with respect to the presbytery, shall apply to the synod.

IV. The synod has power to receive and issue all appeals regularly brought up from the presbyteries; to decide on all references made to it; to review the records of the presbyteries, and redress whatever may have been done by them contrary to order; to take effectual care that they observe the constitution of the church, and that they obey the injunctions of the higher courts; to erect new presbyteries, and unite or divide those which were before erected; to appoint doctors and evangelists to such work, proper to their office, as may not fall under the particular jurisdiction of a presbytery;

generally to take such order with respect to the presbyteries, sessions, and congregations under its care as may be in conformity with the word of God and the established rules, and which tend to promote the edification of the church; to concert measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement of the church within its bounds; and, finally, to propose to the general assembly for its adoption such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole church.

V. 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 same the number of its presbyteries and of the members thereof, and in general all important changes which may have occurred within its bounds during the year.

Section VI.—Of the General Assembly.

I. The General Assembly is the highest court of this church, and represents in one body all the congregations thereof. It bears the title of THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES, and constitutes the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence among all its congregations.

II. The general assembly shall meet at least annually, and shall consist of commissioners from the presbyteries in the following proportion, viz: Every presbytery shall be entitled to send one minister and one ruling elder; but if it consists of more than twenty-four ministerial members, it shall send an additional minister and elder.

III. The presbytery shall always elect its commissioners to the general assembly and their alternates, at the stated meeting next preceding the meeting of the general assembly.

IV. Each commissioner before his name shall be enrolled as a member of the assembly, shall produce from his presbytery or synod a commission under the hand of the moderator and clerk in the following or like form, viz:

“The Presbytery of _____
 being met at _____ on the _____ day
 of _____, doth hereby appoint A. B., bishop
 of the congregation of _____ [or doctor, or
 evangelist, or ruling elder of the congregation of _____
 as the case may be;] and in case of
 his absence, then C. D., bishop of the congregation
 of _____ [or doctor, or evangelist, or ruling
 elder of the congregation of _____ as the case
 may be,] to be a commissioner on behalf of this
 presbytery, to the next general assembly of the
 Presbyterian church in the United States, to meet
 at _____, on the _____ day of _____,
 A.D. _____ or wherever and whenever the
 said assembly may happen to sit; to consult, vote,
 and determine on all things that may come before
 that body, according to the principles and constitu-
 tion of this church and the word of God. And of
 his diligence herein, he is to render an account at
 his return.

Signed by order of the Presbytery,

(A. B.,) *Moderator.*

(C. D.,) *Clerk.*

V. Any eighteen of these commissioners, of whom one-half shall be ministers, and at least five shall be ruling elders, being met on the day, and at the place appointed, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.

VI. The general assembly shall have power to receive and issue all appeals, references and com-

plaints regularly brought before it from the inferior courts; to reprove, warn, and bear testimony against error in doctrine and immorality in practice, injuriously affecting the church; to give its advice and instruction in conformity with the constitution in all cases submitted to it; to review the records of the synods; to take care that the inferior courts observe the constitution; to redress whatever they may have done contrary to order; to take such order in general with respect to them as may be in conformity with the word of God and the constitutional rules; to concert measures for promoting the prosperity and enlargement of the church; to erect new synods; to institute the agencies, and superintend the whole work of systematic evangelization; to appoint doctors and evangelists to such labours as fall under its jurisdiction; to suppress schismatical contentions and disputations according to the canons provided **therefor**; to receive under its jurisdiction other ecclesiastical bodies, whose organization is conformed to the doctrine and order of this church, in doing which the provisions of the constitution must be carefully observed; to authorize synods and presbyteries to exercise similar power in receiving bodies suited to become constituents of those courts, and lying within their geographical bounds respectively; to correspond with other churches; and in general to recommend and attempt the promotion of charity, truth and holiness through all the congregations under its care.

VII. The chairmen of all continued committees, and the assembly's "secretaries," may be admitted to advise and deliberate, but not to vote, on all questions pertaining to the interests intrusted to them, and on no others.

VII. The whole business of the assembly being finished, and the vote taken for dissolving the present assembly, the moderator shall say from the chair—"By virtue of the authority delegated to me by the church, let this general assembly be dissolved, and I do hereby dissolve it, and require another general assembly chosen in the same manner, to meet at _____, on the _____ day of _____, A. D. _____;" after which, he shall pray and return thanks, and pronounce on those present the apostolic benediction.

Section VII.—Of Ecclesiastical Commissions.

I. Commissions differ from ordinary committees in this, that while the committee is appointed simply to examine, consider, and report, the commission is authorized to deliberate upon and conclude the business submitted to it, subject to the review of the court appointing it. For this purpose it must always keep full records of its proceedings, to be submitted to the court appointing it, which, if approved, may be entered on the minutes of that court.

II. Any court above the session may execute by its commission such business as can be done as properly and safely by a part as by the whole of the members; such as the taking of testimony in judicial cases, the ordination of ministers, the installation of ministers, the visitation of portions of the church affected with disorder, the organization of new congregations. The commission for the ordination of a minister shall always consist of a quorum of the court, but the presbytery itself must conduct the previous examinations.

III. The synods and the general assembly may commit all cases of trial coming before them on

appeal, except the cases of ministers on trial for error or heresy, to the judgment of its commission. The commission of a synod shall consist of not less than fifteen, of whom five must be ruling elders; the commission of the assembly, of not less than twenty-seven, of whom nine must be ruling elders. In each case two-thirds of the commissioners shall be a quorum to attend to business. The commission shall try the cause in the manner prescribed in the canons of discipline; and in rendering judgment, shall make a clear but concise statement of the whole case, together with their findings. This paper shall be submitted by the commission to the court for its adoption, as its judgment in the case. It may be amended in any of its principles, but not in its statements of facts. Should the court have reason to believe that the facts are not correctly stated, it may order a new trial before the same or another commission.

IV. The general assembly shall have power to commit the various interests pertaining to the work of systematic evangelization, to one or more commissions for each object, as that court may elect. These commissions shall be charged with carrying out the instructions of the assembly, and with executing any work which may be assigned to them. Of their diligence therein they must give account, subject to the review and control, in all respects, of the assembly, by whose authority they act. The number of members constituting these commissions shall be at the discretion of the assembly; but they shall consist of ministers and ruling elders, though the treasurers and auditing **committees** may be deacons.

CHAPTER VI. OF CHURCH-ORDERS.

Section I.—Of the Doctrine of Vocation.

I. Vocation is of two sorts, extraordinary and ordinary. It is extraordinary, when it is by God himself, as was the calling of the prophets and apostles, which kind of vocation has ceased. It is ordinary, when besides the calling of God by the Spirit, and the inward testimony of a good conscience, there is the manifest approbation of God's people, and the concurrent judgment of the lawful court of Christ's house, according to his word.

II. Ordinary outward vocation consists in election, examination, and admission.

III. Since all the power which Christ hath committed to the church and vested in his people, is exercised by them in the choice of their officers; and since the government of the church is representative; the right of the election of officers by God's people, either immediately by their own suffrages, or mediately through church courts composed of their chosen representatives, is indefeasible. Nor can any man be placed over any congregation in any office, without the election or at least the consent of that congregation thereto.

IV. Those whom God calls to bear office in his church, he furnishes with suitable gifts for the discharge of their various duties. Wherefore, every candidate for office is to be examined and approved by the court by which he is to be ordained. And it is indispensable that, besides the natural and acquired gifts and abilities which are needful, every one admitted to an office should be sound in the faith, and his life and conversation be according to godliness.

V. Every candidate, in order to his admission to the office which he seeks, must be required to enter into public covenant to discharge its duties; and besides the approval of the court, he must be formally received or accepted by the people in his official character, whenever placed over a congregation.

Section II.—Of the Doctrine of Ordination.

I. All ordinary officers in the organized church are to be invested with their respective offices by the ordination of a court, according to scriptural authority and example.

II. No man ought to be ordained to any office in the church, unless he is lawfully called thereto. And since every ecclesiastical office, according to the Scriptures, is a special charge, no man ought to be ordained, unless it be to the performance of a definite work lawfully belonging to some office in the church.

III. When the proper court has become fully satisfied that any man has been called of God to bear office in the church, it must proceed to his ordination.

IV. Ordination is the solemn setting apart of a candidate to an office in the church of God, by a prayer of consecration and the imposition of hands; to which it is proper to add the giving of the right hand of fellowship.

V. Evangelists sent to the regions beyond the organized church, when they gather a congregation are authorized to ordain officers in it; but they ought, if possible to be sent forth, after the apostolic example, two by two, and to exercise all their extraordinary powers jointly.

Section III.—Of the Election of Church-Officers.

I. Every congregation shall elect persons to the offices of pastor, ruling elder, and deacon, in the following manner, viz: Public notice shall previously be given by the session that the congregation is to convene at the usual place of public worship for such 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 petition request that a meeting be called. This notice should, if possible, be given from the pulpit on the Lord's day, at a sufficient time before the meeting to admit of its general circulation throughout the congregation.

II. It is important that in all these elections a minister should preside; but if the session find it impracticable, without hurtful delay, to procure the attendance of a minister, the meeting may proceed without it.

III. The congregation being convened, the moderator shall put the vote to the electors whether they are ready to proceed to the election of a pastor or of additional ruling elders or deacons, as the case may be. If they declare themselves ready, the moderator shall call for nominees; after which the election shall immediately proceed, unless the meeting prefer to postpone it to a subsequent day. Or the election may proceed by ballot without nominations. But in every case a majority of all the voters cast shall be required to elect. If no one is elected on the first ballot, the balloting must proceed, unless otherwise ordered by the meeting.

IV. All communicating members of the church, in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote in the election of church officers in the

congregations to which they are respectively attached. In the election of a pastor, when a majority of the electors cast their votes for a candidate, he shall be considered elected; but a separate vote shall also be taken of the non-communicating adult members of the church, who are regular in their attendance on the common ordinances in that congregation, and of all other persons who regularly contribute to the support of the pastor, in order to be laid before the presbytery as a representation of their desire in the premises.

V. On the election of a pastor, if it appear that a large minority of the congregation are averse from the candidate who has a majority of votes, and cannot be induced to concur in the call, the presiding minister shall endeavor to dissuade the congregation from prosecuting it further. But if the congregation be nearly or entirely unanimous; or if the majority shall insist upon their right to call a pastor, the presiding minister, 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 of which proceedings, along with the result of the vote of the non-communicating members and contributors, shall be laid before the presbytery, together with the call.

VI. The call shall be in the following or like form, viz:

The Congregation of _____ being, on sufficient grounds, well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you _____ and _____ having good hopes from our past experience [or knowledge] of

your labours, 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 to you the sum of _____, in regular monthly [or quarterly, or half yearly, or yearly] 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 A. B., Moderator of the Meeting.

VII. But if any congregation shall choose to subscribe its call by the elders and deacons, or by a select committee, it shall be at liberty to do so. But it shall, in such case, be fully certified to the presbytery by the minister or other person who presided, 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.

VIII. Commissioners shall be appointed to lay the call before the presbytery for its approval, and to prosecute it to its final issue.

IX. If the call be to a minister or probationer of another presbytery, the commissioners of the congregation appointed to prosecute the call must be prepared to produce an attested certificate from their own presbytery that it had been laid before that body and found in order, and that permission had been granted them to prosecute it before the proper presbytery.

Section IV.—Of the Ordination and Installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons, and of the Dissolution of their Official Relations.

I. When any person has been elected to either of these offices, the session shall hold free conference with him respecting his religious habits, doctrinal soundness, and views with reference to his divine vocation and obligation to accept the office. If the way be clear, and he declare his purpose to accept, the session shall appoint a day for his ordination.

II. The day having arrived, and the session being convened in the presence of the congregation, a sermon shall be preached, after which the moderating minister 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, and the duties to be fulfilled by the officer elect; having done this, he shall propose to the candidate, in the presence of the congregation, the following questions, viz:

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. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

3. Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States?

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?

5. Do you promise to study the peace, unity, edification and purity of the church?

The elder or deacon elect having answered in the affirmative, the minister shall address to the members of the congregation the following question, viz:

Do you, the members of this congregation, 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?

The members of the congregation having answered this question in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the minister shall proceed to set apart the candidate by prayer, with the laying on of the hands of the session, or congregational presbytery, to the office of ruling elder, (or deacon, as the case may be). Prayer being ended, the members of the session shall take the newly ordained officer by the hand, saying, in words to this purpose, "We give you the right hand of fellowship to take part in this ministry with us." The minister shall then say, "I now declare that A. B. has been regularly elected, ordained, and installed a ruling elder (or deacon) in this congregation, and that as such he is entitled to all honor, encouragement, and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." After which he shall give to the elder (or deacon) and to the congregation an exhortation suited to the occasion.

III. The offices of ruling elder and deacon are not temporary; nor can they be laid aside at pleasure; nor can any person be degraded from either office but by disposition after regular trial. Yet an elder or deacon may, though chargeable with neither

heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable, in his official character, to a majority of the congregation which he serves. In such a case, it is competent for the session, upon application either from the officer or from the congregation, to dissolve the relation. But no such application from either party shall be granted, without full opportunity for stating objections being afforded to the other party.

IV. When a ruling elder or deacon removes beyond the proper bounds of the congregation which he serves, his official relation shall be *ipso facto* dissolved, and the session shall record the fact.

V. When an elder or deacon, who has been released from his official relation, is again elected to his office in the same or another congregation, he shall be installed after the above form, with the omission of the ceremony of ordination.

Section V.—Of the Ordination of Ministers and the Formation and Dissolution of the Pastoral Relation.

I. No minister or probationer shall receive a call from a congregation but by the permission of his presbytery. When a call has been presented to the presbytery, if found in order, and the presbytery deem it for the good of the church, they shall place it in the hands of the person to whom it is addressed.

II. When a call for the pastoral services of a probationer has been accepted by him, the presbytery shall take immediate steps for his ordination.

III. Trials for ordination, especially in a different presbytery from that in which the candidate was licensed, shall consist of a careful examination as to his acquaintance with experimental religion; as to his knowledge of philosophy, theology, ecclesiastical

history, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and such other branches of learning as to the presbytery may appear requisite; and as to his knowledge of the rules and principles of the government and discipline of the church. He shall be further required, in the presence of the presbytery, to deliver a sermon which has been carefully prepared and written, and also to give *ex tempore*, upon not more than six hours' notice, an exegesis or critical exposition of two passages taken from those portions of the Old and New Testaments, which he has especially studied. The presbytery being fully satisfied with his qualifications for the sacred office, shall appoint a day for his ordination, which ought always to be in that congregation of which he is to be the pastor. It is also recommended that a fast day be observed in the congregation previous to the day of ordination.

IV. The day appointed for the ordination being come, and the presbytery convened, a member of the presbytery, previously appointed to that duty, shall preach a sermon adapted to the occasion. The same, or another member appointed to preside, shall afterwards briefly recite from the pulpit, in the audience of the congregation, the proceedings of the presbytery preparatory to the ordination; he shall point out the nature and importance of the ordinance, and endeavour 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, viz:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Con-

fession of Faith and Catechisms of this church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

3. Do you approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States?

4. Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

5. 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?

6. 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?

7. Do you engage to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, whether personal or relative, private or public; and to endeavour by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your conversation, and to walk with exemplary piety before the flock of which God shall make you overseer?

8. Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation, agreeably to your declaration at accepting their call? And do you, relying upon God for strength, promise to discharge to it the duties of a pastor?

V. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, the presiding minister shall propose to the congregation the following questions:

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

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?

3. Do you promise to encourage him in his labours, and to assist his endeavours for your instruction and spiritual edification?

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

VI. The people having answered these questions in the affirmative, by holding up their right hands, the candidate shall kneel down in the most convenient place. Then the presiding minister shall, by prayer, and with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, according to the apostolic example, solemnly ordain him to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall arise from his knees; and the minister who presides shall first, and afterward 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 in this ministry with us." The moderator shall then say, "I now pronounce and declare A. B. regularly elected, ordained, and installed pastor of this congregation, according to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and agreeably to the word of God; and that as such he is entitled to all support, encouragement, honor and obedience in the Lord: In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." After which the minister presiding, or some other appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God to the pastor and

to the congregation, to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties; and 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.

VII. It is highly becoming that, after the solemnity of the **instalment**, the heads of families of that congregation then present, or at least the elders and deacons, should come forward to their pastor and give him their right hand, in token of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

VIII. When it becomes necessary to ordain probationers to the work of the gospel ministry, as evangelists or doctors, the last of the preceding questions shall be omitted, and the following substituted for it, viz: Do you now accept the office and undertake the work of an evangelist, (or of a doctor of the Holy Scriptures), and do you promise, in reliance on God for strength, to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties which may be incumbent on you as a minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?

IX. No Presbytery shall ordain any probationer to the work of the gospel ministry, with reference to his labouring within the bounds of another presbytery, but shall furnish him with the necessary testimonials, and require him to repair to the presbytery within whose bounds he expects to labour, that he may submit himself to its authority, according to the constitution of the church.

X. When an ordained minister has accepted a call to the pastoral charge of a congregation, he shall be installed by the presbytery, or by its commission appointed for the purpose, according to the

above directions, except that everything relating to ordination is to be omitted, and the following questions are to be substituted for those addressed to the candidate, viz:

1. Are you now willing to take charge of this congregation as their pastor, agreeably to your declaration at accepting its 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 the 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?

XI. When any minister is about to enter upon the office of doctor or evangelist, he shall be installed in a manner similar to that prescribed for the installation of the pastor, under the order of the court having jurisdiction of his work.

XII. A congregation desiring to call a settled pastor from his present charge, shall, by its commissioners, represent to the presbytery the ground on which it pleads his removal. The presbytery, having heard all the parties, may, upon the view of the whole case, either recommend them to desist from prosecuting the call, or may order it to be delivered to the minister to whom it is addressed, with or without advice; or may decline to place the call in his hands, as it shall appear most for the peace and edification of the church at large; or it may refer

the whole affair to the next synod for advice and direction; but no pastor shall be translated without his own consent. If the parties are not ready to have the matter issued at the meeting then in progress, a written citation shall be given the minister and his congregation to appear before the presbytery at its next meeting, which citation shall be read from the pulpit on the Sabbath, after sermon, at least two Sabbaths before the intended meeting.

XIII. If the congregation, or other field of labour, to which a minister or probationer is called, be under the jurisdiction of a different presbytery, on his acceptance of the call he shall be furnished with the proper testimonials, and required to repair immediately to that presbytery, in order that he may be regularly inducted into his office, according to the preceding directions.

XIV. When any minister shall tender the resignation of his pastoral charge, if the congregation is not then ready for the issue of the case, the presbytery shall cite it, as in the preceding directions, to appear by its commissioners at the next meeting, to show cause, if any it has, why the presbytery should not accept the resignation. If the congregation fail to appear, or if its reasons for retaining its pastor be deemed insufficient, his resignation shall be accepted, and the pastoral relation dissolved. If any congregation desire to be relieved of their pastor, a similar process shall be observed. But whether the minister or the congregation initiate proceedings for a dissolution of the relation, there must always be a meeting of the congregation, called and conducted precisely in the same manner as when the call of a pastor is to be made out.

Section VI.—Of the Licensure of Probationers for the Gospel Ministry.

I. Presbyteries shall license probationers to preach the gospel, in order that after sufficiently trying their talents, and receiving from the church a good report, they may, in due time, ordain them to the sacred office.

II. The trial of every candidate for licensure shall be had by that presbytery having jurisdiction of the congregation of which he is a member. But if the candidate has removed from that congregation to one within the bounds of a different presbytery, he shall not be taken under the care of this presbytery within one year after his reception by the latter congregation, except in extraordinary cases, of which the presbytery shall be the judge, and the reasons for which shall be put on record.

III. Candidates applying to the presbytery, to be licensed to preach the gospel, must produce satisfactory testimonials of their good moral character, and of their being communicating members of the church in regular standing. And the presbytery shall examine them respecting their experimental acquaintance with religion, and the motives which influence them to desire the sacred office. This examination shall be close and particular, and shall ordinarily be conducted in the presence of the presbytery only. And it is recommended that the candidate be also required to produce a diploma of bachelor or master of arts from some college or university; or, at least, authentic testimonials of his having gone through a regular course of learning.

IV. The presbytery shall try each candidate as to his knowledge of the Latin language and the original languages of the Holy Scriptures. It shall

also examine him on philosophy, including logic; on ethics; on the natural and exact sciences; on theology, natural and revealed; and on ecclesiastical history, the sacraments, and church-government. Moreover, the presbytery shall require of him,

1. A Latin *thesis* on some common head in divinity.

2. A *critical exercise*; in which the candidate shall give a specimen of his taste and judgment in sacred criticism; presenting an explication of the original text, stating its connexion, illustrating its force and beauties, removing its difficulties, and solving any important questions which it may present.

3. A *popular lecture* in exposition of several verses of Scripture. And,

4. A *doctrinal sermon*.

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

VI. No candidate, except in extraordinary cases, shall be licensed, unless he shall have completed the usual course of academical studies, and shall also have studied divinity at least two years, under some approved teacher of theology. But whenever any presbytery shall see reason to depart from this rule, it must always make a record of the fact upon its minutes, with the reasons **therefor**.

VII. If the presbytery be satisfied with his trials, it shall then proceed to license him in the following manner: The moderator shall propose to him the following questions, viz:

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. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

3. Do you promise to study the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

4. Do you promise to submit yourself, in the Lord, to the government of this presbytery, or of any other into the bounds of which you may be called?

VIII. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, and the moderator having offered up a prayer suitable to the occasion, he shall address the candidate to the following purpose: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by that authority which He hath given to the church for its edification, we do license you to preach the gospel as a probationer for the holy ministry, 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 license in the following or like form, viz:

At _____, the _____ day of _____ the presbytery of _____ having received testimonials in favour 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 does, express its 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 does, 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 shall be orderly called.

IX. 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 itself.

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

XI. Presbyteries should require probationers to devote themselves diligently to the trial of their gifts; and in ordinary cases no one should be ordained to the work of the gospel-ministry in any office until he has given evidence of his ability to edify the church by spending at least one year in itinerant missionary, or other suitable labours.

XII. When a probationer shall have been preaching for a considerable time, and his services do not

appear to be edifying to the church, the presbytery may, if it thinks proper, recall his license; and it shall be its duty to do so, whenever the probationer shall devote himself to such pursuits as interfere with a full trial of his gifts, according to his license.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THIS CHURCH.

I. The constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States consists of its Doctrinal Symbols, embraced in the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, together with the Book of Church Order, which comprises the Form of Government, the Canons of Discipline, the Directory of Worship, and the Rules of Parliamentary Order.

II. The Doctrinal Symbols may be amended on the recommendation of one general assembly, when three-fourths of the presbyteries and synods advise and consent thereto, and a succeeding general assembly shall ordain the same. But in every instance the proposed amendment must be carried in these respective courts by a vote of three-fourths of the members.

I. The Book of Church Order may be amended on the recommendation of one general assembly, when a majority of the presbyteries advise and consent thereunto, and a succeeding general assembly shall ordain the same, except that the Rules of Parliamentary Order may be amended by a majority of two successive general assemblies.