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## CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNION.

"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH—THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS."—*The Creed.*

*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*—JACOB.

It was customary with the patriarchs, before they left the world, to pronounce a benediction on their offspring. The head of the family was the prophet and the priest, as well as the governor of the household. "By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come; and Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph." He also "called unto his own sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." My text is part of his predictions concerning Judah. He was the fourth son of Israel; and unto him, the father, guided by the spirit of prophecy, gave the pre-eminence. His name is Praise; his character, a Lion; his hand is in the neck of his enemies; and even his father's children bow down before him: the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

The *sceptre* is the rod of office, and denotes the authority of him who holds it in his hand, or before whom it is carried in state, by another. *Strong rods*, in the language of another prophet, were used for the *sceptres of them that bare rule*.\* The word † is never employed in scripture without indicating power under some form or another; and it is generally associated with the throne and the kingdom. In this case, it is evidently the symbol of Judah's chieftainship; and being connected with the power of giving law, must certainly be understood as denoting national polity.

The *lawgiver* too, as well as the *sceptre*, is said to continue in the tribe of Judah through successive generations. One of this description shall not depart from between his feet—shall not cease to exist among his offspring until the specified time. The *lawgiver* is not merely a scribe, or a teacher; but one who proclaims the law by his power both to enact and to execute. The phrase indicates the continuance of some legislative power, whether civil or ecclesiastical; and "of Judah he

\* Ezek. xix. 11.

† The Jews have a quibble on the word שֵׁבֶט *shebet*, sceptre, they say it signifies staff, and may be a rod, denoting afflictions, meaning that affliction shall not depart from the Jews until Messiah comes; and as they are still under affliction, that the Messiah is not come. Their own chief Targumist, Onkelos, however, understood the word as we do, and this meaning is adopted by the Jerusalem Targum and the ancient versions.

DRAFT OF A COVENANT AND  
LEAGUE,

*To be submitted to the Synods of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, Ireland, and America; and by them recommended to their connections in every land, whether descended from the British Reformers, or by voluntary consent acceding to their principles.*

GLASGOW, 21st April, 1830.

The synod, convinced of the duty and propriety of immediately taking measures for uniting the different sections of the church in a common bond, resolved that a draught of a covenant be prepared; and appointed the Rev. Archibald Mason, Dr. McLeod, John Fairly, Professor Symington, and David Armstong, a committee, to prepare said draught, and to report—The committee to meet this evening—the Professor Convener.

A member of synod is called to engage in prayer, for Divine direction in this important matter.

23d April, 1830.

The report of the committee, appointed to prepare a draught of a covenant, is read. A member of synod engages in prayer. The draught is read, paragraph by paragraph, and members make observations, approving of the draught in general; and suggesting alterations, to which the committee are requested to attend.

The synod unanimously agrees to return the draught to the committee, with instructions to attend to the passages referred to; to make such alterations as they may judge to be expedient; and to print a few copies for the use of the ministers, and for transmission to the synods in Ireland and America, from which a report is to be requested.

15th June, 1830.

The committee, having made the amendments recommended by synod, authorize the printing of this draught.

A. SYMINGTON, Convener.

D. ARMSTRONG, Clerk.

DRAFT.

We, whose names are underwritten, inheriting, in the providence and by the favor of God, the common faith of the ancient confessors, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and resting our own souls for everlasting salvation on the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ our Lord; have, upon mature deliberation, determined, after the example of the church of God of old, and of several of the best reformed churches, to give ourselves up to God and to one another in a solemn covenant never to be forgotten.

Knowing, that it is becoming both for individuals and communities to vow to the Lord and to pay their vows; persuaded that public covenanting and a mutual league, for support and co-operation among the several parts of the reformed church, may be profitably observed; and believing that the present aspect of the moral world, and the religious prospect before us, invite the people of God to essay this solemn duty, without unnecessary delay.

WE, therefore, each one for himself, with his hand lifted up to the MOST HIGH GOD, do swear.—

1. That we shall really, sincerely, and constantly endeavor, through the grace of God, in our several places, ranks, and callings, to understand, embrace, preserve, and promote *the true religion*, as it is taught in the Holy Scriptures of

the Old and the New Testament ; and that we shall, with the blessing of God, well and truly transmit the same to posterity :

Assured, ourselves, that this religion, is, in agreeableness to the word of God, summarily, set forth in the confessions and catechisms of the churches of the reformation, and more especially and comprehensively, in the standards compiled by the assembly of divines at Westminster, England, with the aid of Commissioners from the church of Scotland, for the furtherance of uniformity in doctrine, worship, church government, and discipline among Christians, in the British empire, and in all the nations : we, accordingly, recognize the faithful contendings of our predecessors for civil and religious freedom, and the binding obligation of their covenants, both the national and the solemn league, as originally framed and sworn, and at several times renewed in their true spirit and designs ; and, abjuring, with all our heart, whatsoever is known to us to be contrary to the sacred scriptures, we shall strive to perpetuate the principles of the covenanted reformation ; as they respect the ecclesiastical and the civil state of our fellowmen, in whatever country under heaven.

2. That we come, with this oath, into the presence of the Lord God, with a deep conviction of his awful greatness and glory, of his omniscience, his purity, his justice, and his grace ; with a sense of our FALL, and consequent ruin, in Adam our first natural head and public representative ; of our guilt, and total depravity by nature, and our utter inability to

save ourselves from deserved condemnation to everlasting punishment ; with confession that we are sinners, both by nature and practice, and that we fall short of the perfection which the law requires in every attempt to do good, we renounce all dependence, in whole or in part, on our own righteousness for either pardon or acceptance with God, and, repenting of all our sins, we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as he is offered to us in the gospel, in the entire extent of his mediatorial perfection, to be our Savior ; we take the Holy Ghost as our all sufficient Guide, and God the Father to be our Portion forever and ever ; solemnly, and sincerely, approving and choosing the covenant of grace as all our salvation and all our desire.

3. That, as the servants of the Lord, devoted to his fear, and bewailing the low state of religion in our hearts, and lives, and among our connections, we shall yield ourselves, soul and body and property, to be the Lord's, and his only, now and for ever ; and we shall endeavor to obey the moral law in all its precepts and prohibitions ; we shall strive through the Spirit to mortify sin, resist all temptations, submit to the allotments of Divine Providence, and cultivate brotherly love and universal benevolence.

Living to the glory of God, as our chief end, we will diligently attend to searching the scriptures, religious conversation, and to the devotions of the closet, the family, and the church ; especially the public ordinances of the Lord's day dispensed according to the good order of the church of God, earnestly striving, by all means

competent to us, for the restoration of the Hebrews to the city of the Lord, and for the conversion of the heathen over all the earth: Yet diligently persisting in abstaining from all manner of inconsistency with the designs of this covenant.

4. That, persuaded of the sovereignty of the Lord our God over all the earth, and believing that the Father has appointed the Messiah to be King of kings and Lord of lords, and assured that all nations shall serve the Redeemer, we shall endeavor, with faith and with hope, to maintain the doctrine of Christ's headship over the civil commonwealth, whatever the form of its polity and government; we shall strive, by our doctrines and example, to make every tongue confess that Jesus is the Lord; we shall, with our prayers and our lives, endeavor the extension and the maintenance of all political institutions, favorable to knowledge, liberty, and righteousness, and consistent with the rights of God and man, thus promoting the very end of civil government, as the ordinance of God, and using means for its complete reformation, by rendering its constitution, its administration, and its laws correspondent with the laws of the Lord: in whatever land we live as visitants, as native or naturalized subjects or citizens; and in whatever rank or capacity, our allegiance to Christ, the Lord, shall regulate all our civil relations, our attachments, professions, and deportment; and by this our oath, before God, we are pledged to support whatsoever is for the good of the commonwealth in which we dwell, and which gives us protection, and pursue this object in all things, not forbidden by the law of

God, nor implying a confederacy with any immorality of the constitution or the existing power. We shall truly defend in every lawful form, according to our station and ability, the rights of our country against all disorder, usurpation, and foreign hostility or aggression; and we shall continue in prayer to God for the coming of his kingdom, in the overthrow of all systems of iniquity, and, in turning wars into peace, by the universal pacification of all the nations of the world.

5. Seeing that the church, purchased by the blood of the Son of God, sanctified by the Spirit, and elected of God the Father, is **ONE**, and that all the saints have communion with God and with one another in one and the same covenant; believing, moreover, that the churches of God in every land should be **ONE** in doctrine and order, that all schism is sin, and all sectarian practice is scandal, and firmly trusting that divisions shall cease, and the people of God become, according to the promise, one catholic church over all the earth, we shall not guaranty the continuance of ecclesiastical distinctions, but shall sincerely and constantly employ our best exertions to prevent additional schisms, to heal existing divisions and wounds, and to promote the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem; we shall endeavor to maintain Christian friendship with pious men of every name, co-operate with them consistently with God's law, in the extension of religious knowledge, pray for every part of the household of faith, inquire diligently what part conforms most to the Holy Scriptures, take our own stand in that communion

which is found most pure, and strive with patience and with perseverance to introduce uniformity in doctrine and in practice among all the ministers of Christ; and we shall accordingly in our several places and stations, encourage all such consistent correspondence, with the several ecclesiastical denominations around us, as may seem calculated to bring up the several churches together into **ONE** holy and faithful fellowship, maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

6. Persuaded, by the word of God, the everlasting rule of righteousness to man, that we are all accountable for the improvement we make of our light, and opportunities; and that it is sinful to recede from a more definite system of religious truth and ecclesiastical order for a system more evasive and indistinct, while in true faith and sincere affection we extend to all the hand of union and of cordial friendship, who are striving to advance in the path of truth and order, we shall ourselves "whereunto we have already attained walk by the same rule and mind the same thing," without sectarian prejudice, partiality, or hypocrisy.

Trusting our strength and life, our worldly substance, and personal safety, and influence, and honor, to Him whom we have believed, we shall, in faithfulness to our fathers and our children, in love to all mankind, especially to them who are of the household of faith, and in obedience to the **GREAT GOD** the only Lord of the conscience, bear true testimony to every part of divine truth, and to every moral duty, especially to all

the ordinances of the New Testament; we shall tenderly, charitably, plainly, and decidedly oppose all and every heresy, vice, and neglect or perversion of divine institutions, as witnesses for God, and in maintaining the faith once delivered to the saints; following the cloud of glory which advances to the land beyond the Jordan, and compassed by so great a cloud of witnesses, who sealed, with their blood, the testimony which they held.

Finally, we take this our oath *before* the Omniscient God, and *unto* him as our own God in covenant, commending our cause to the Christian consideration of the intelligent, the candid, and the good of whatever rank or name; confiding in our God, and in one another by the will of God, on the true and sure basis of the common Christianity, and uninfluenced by considerations of any private worldly interest whatsoever, we make these declarations, and this league and covenant between dear brethren situated in different states and kingdoms, with a view to preserve love and union among ourselves, and to promote the glory of the Godhead in the creation and sustentation of this world, and in the redemption and eternal salvation of men, as the chief end of our being and our life.\*

\* This bond is designed to show more explicitly the union which has always been confessedly existing between the several churches of Europe and America, in the maintenance of the whole system of the covenanted reformation. It is not intended, either as an additional term of Christian and ministerial fellowship, or as a substitute for those already existing. No pain or censure should be inflicted for withholding assent from it: but recommended by the several judicatories, it may certainly and safely exemplify the *duty of covenanting*, by all who voluntarily observe this once honored, but long neglected ordinance of God.—*Ed. Am. Chr. Fr.*