Act anent Approbation of Confession of Faith.

General Assembly of Church of Scotland, 27th August 1647

A Confession of Faith for the Kirks of God in the three kingdoms, being the chiefest part of that uniformity in religion, which, by the Solemn League and Covenant, we are bound to endeavour; and there being accordingly a Confession of Faith agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines sitting at Westminster, with the assistance of Commissioners from the Kirk of Scotland; which Confession was sent from our Commissioners at London to the Commissioners of the Kirk met at Edinburgh in January last, and hath been in this Assembly twice publicly read over, examined, and considered; copies thereof being also printed, that it might be particularly perused by all the members of this Assembly, unto whom frequent intimation was publicly made to put in their doubts and objections, if they had any; and the said Confession being, upon due examination thereof, found by the Assembly to be most agreeable to the Word of God, and in nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Kirk; and lastly, it being so necessary and so much longed for that the said Confession be, with all possible diligence and expedition, approved and established in both kingdoms, as a principal part of the intended uniformity in religion, and as a special means for the more effectual suppressing of the many dangerous errors and heresies of these times: The General Assembly doth, therefore, after mature deliberation, Agree unto and Approve the said Confession, as to the truth of the matter, (judging it to be most orthodox, and grounded upon the Word of God;) and also as to the point of uniformity, agreeing, for our part, that it be a common Confession of Faith for the three kingdoms. The Assembly doth also bless the Lord, and thankfully acknowledge his great mercy, in that so excellent a Confession of Faith is prepared, and thus far agreed upon in both kingdoms; which we look upon as a great strengthening of the true reformed religion against the common enemies thereof. But lest our intention and meaning be in some particulars misunderstood, it is hereby expressly declared and provided, that the not mentioning in this Confession the several sort of ecclesiastical officers and assemblies shall be no prejudice to the truth of Christ in these particulars to be expressed fully in the Directory of Government. It is further declared, that the Assembly understand some parts of the Second Article of the Thirty-One Chapter only of Kirks not settled or constituted in point of government; and that although in such kirks a synod of ministers and other fit persons may be called by the magistrate's authority and nomination, without any other call, to consult and advise with about matters of religion; and although likewise the ministers of Christ, without delegation from their churches, may of themselves, and by virtue of their office, meet together synodically in such kirks not yet constituted, yet neither of these ought to be done in kirks constituted and settled; it being always free to the magistrate to advise with synods of ministers and ruling elders, meeting upon delegation from their churches, either ordinarily, or being indicted by his authority occasionally and pro re nata, it being also free to assemble together synodically, as well pro re nata as at the ordinary times, upon delegation

from the churches, by the intrinsical power received from Christ, as often as it is necessary for the good of the Church so to assemble, in case the magistrate, to the detriment of the Church, withhold or deny his consent; the necessity of occasional Assemblies being first remonstrate unto him by humble supplication.