

CONCORDAT 1784 between the Scottish Bishops and Dr. Samuel Seabury

Francis L. Hawks and William Stevens Perry, eds., *Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America: Connecticut*. Vol. II (New York: James Pott, Publisher, 1864), 249-251.

In the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, Blessed forever Amen.

The wise and gracious providence of this merciful God having put it into the hearts of the Christians of the Episcopal persuasion in Connecticut, in North America, to desire that the blessings of a free, valid, and purely ecclesiastical Episcopacy might be communicated to them, and a Church regularly formed in that part of the western world, on the most ancient and primitive model; and application having been made for this purpose by the Rev. Doctor Samuel Seabury, Presbyter in Connecticut, to the Right Rev. the Bishops of the Church in Scotland, the said Bishops having taken this proposal into their serious consideration, most heartily concurred to promote and encourage the same as far as lay in their power, and, accordingly, began the pious and good work recommended to them, by complying with the request of the clergy in Connecticut, and advancing the same Dr. Samuel Seabury to the high order of the Episcopate, at the same time earnestly praying that this work of the Lord, thus happily begun, might prosper in his hand, till it should please the great and glorious Head of the Church to increase the number of Bishops in America, and send forth more such laborers into that part of His harvest. Animated with this pious hope, and earnestly desirous to establish a bond of peace and holy communion between the two Churches, the Bishops of the Church in Scotland, whose names are underwritten having had full and free conference with Bishop Seabury, after his consecration and advancement as aforesaid, agreed with him on the following Articles which are to serve as a Concordat, or bond of union, between the Catholic remainder of the ancient Church of Scotland, and the now rising Church in Connecticut.

ARTICLE I.

They agree in thankful receiving, and humbly and heartily embracing the whole doctrine of the Gospel as revealed and set forth in the Holy Scriptures, and it is their earnest and united desire to maintain the analogy of the common faith once delivered to the saints, and happily preserved in the Church of Christ through His Divine power and protection, Who promised that the gates of hell should never prevail against it.

ARTICLE II.

They agree in believing this Church to be the mystical body of Christ, and of which He alone is the head and supreme Governor, and that under Him the chief ministers or managers of the affairs of this spiritual society are those called Bishops, whose exercise of their sacred office being independent of all lay powers, it follows, of consequence, that their spiritual authority and jurisdiction cannot be affected by any lay deprivation.

ARTICLE III.

They agree in declaring that the Episcopal Church in Connecticut is to be in full communion with the Episcopal Church in Scotland, it being their sincere resolution to put matters on such a footing as that the members of both Churches may with freedom and safety communicate with either, when their occasions call them from the one country to the other. Only taking care, when in Scotland, not to hold communion in sacred offices with those persons who, under the pretense of ordination by an English or Irish Bishop, do, or shall take upon them to officiate as clergymen in any part of the National Church of Scotland, and whom the Scottish Bishops cannot help looking upon as schismatical intruders, designed only to answer worldly purposes, and uncommissioned disturbers of the poor remains of that once flourishing Church, which both their predecessors and they have, under many difficulties, labored to preserve pure and uncorrupted to future ages.

ARTICLE IV.

With a view to this salutary purpose mentioned in the preceding article, they agree in desiring that there may be as near a conformity in worship and discipline established between the two churches, as is consistent with the different circumstances and customs of nations; and in order to avoid any bad effects that might otherwise arise from political differences, they hereby express their earnest wish and firm intention to observe such prudent generality in their public prayers, with respect to these points, as shall appear most agreeable to apostolic rules, and the practice of the Primitive Church.

ARTICLE V.

As the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, or the administration of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, is the principal bond of union among Christians, as well as the most solemn act of worship in the Christian Church, the Bishops aforesaid agree in desiring that there may be as little variance here as possible. And though the Scottish Bishops are very far from prescribing to their brethren in this matter, they cannot help ardently wishing that Bishop Seabury would endeavor all he can, consistently with peace and prudence, to make the celebration of this venerable mystery conformable to the most primitive doctrine and practice in that respect, which is the pattern the Church of Scotland has copied after in her Communion Office, and which it has been the wish of some of the most eminent divines of the Church of England, that she also had more closely followed than she seems to have done since she gave up her first reformed liturgy, used in the reign of King Edward VI., between which and the form used in the Church of Scotland, there is no difference in any point, which the Primitive Church reckoned essential to the right ministration of the Holy Eucharist. In this capital article, therefore, the Eucharistic service, in which the Scottish Bishops so earnestly wish for as much unity as possible, Bishop Seabury also agrees to take a serious view of the Communion Office recommended by them and if found agreeable to the genuine standard of antiquity, to give his sanction to it, and by gentle methods of argument and persuasion, to endeavor, as they have done, to introduce it by degrees into practice, without the compulsion of authority on the one side or the prejudice of former custom on the other.

ARTICLE VI.

It is also hereby agreed and resolved upon, for the better answering the purposes of this Concordat, that a brotherly fellowship be henceforth maintained between the Episcopal Churches in Scotland and Connecticut, and such a mutual intercourse of ecclesiastical correspondence carried on, when opportunity offers or necessity requires, as may tend to the support and edification of both Churches.

ARTICLE VII.

The Bishops aforesaid do hereby jointly declare, in the most solemn manner, that in the whole of this transaction they have nothing else in view but the glory of God, and the good of His church; and being thus pure and upright in their intentions, they cannot but hope that all whom it may concern will put the most fair and candid construction on their conduct, and take no offence at their feeble but sincere endeavors to promote what they believe to be the cause of truth and the common salvation. In testimony of their love to which, and in mutual good faith and confidence they have, for themselves and their successors in office, cheerfully put their names and seals to these presents,

At Aberdeen, this 15th day of November, in the year of our Lord 1784.

ROBERT KILGOUR, Bishop and Primus, L.S.

JOHN SKINNER, Bishop, L.S.

ARTHUR PETRIE, Bishop, L.S.

SAMUEL SEABURY, Bishop, L.S.

ARTHUR PETRIE, Clerk.

http://bishop.jmstanton.com/smu/smu_docs_Concordat.htm referenced 8 January 2013