

ACT
Of the
Reformed Presbytery;
Containing
Causes of Humiliation with Fasting.

At Pentland, the 30th of January, 1765.

WHICH place and day, the Presbytery being met, and taking into consideration, the many awful evidences of the Lord's controversy, he continues to plead against these nations, and all ranks therein, visible in the giving up of many to wander in counsels of their own wicked hearts, under the conduct of the destroyer of souls, and in the great restraint of the Spirit of God from the means of grace, and the spirits of the godly: and further considering our multiplied and aggravated iniquities, which for quality and quantity, number and circumstances are increased, even above what our fathers groaned under; and although we generally want that measure of grace, spiritual illumination, and heart contrition, necessary to a searching out and mourning over our ways, yet seeing our God still graciously calls, *Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning – and turn ye at my reproof, and behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you*; it is our duty, with an eye to him with whom is the residue of the Spirit, to essay this duty of humiliation, for all our sins, both national and personal. More particularly,

1. The sad and long eclipse of the bright and glorious sun-shine of Reformation, in our covenanting and espousing days, and the continued gross apostacy and defection of the nations therefrom, whereby they have involved themselves in the guilt of perjury, in breaking the most solemn oaths to God, by which all ranks had bound themselves to maintain said beautiful Reformation, in all its parts and attainments; and other conscience-debauching, and soul-ensnaring oaths are introduced in their place, whereby all true regard to reformation principles is sworn out of the nations. The purity of the divine institutions is forsaken, the scriptural foundation of God's ordinances is changed, and the constitution of our church taken off that foundation God has laid in *Zion*, and placed on the inclinations of men; our land has been soaked with the precious blood of the Lord's dear saints, shed for their faithfulness to their covenanted God, against the nation's apostate and treacherous dealing with the Lord; and is yet burdened with the guilt of that blood, which is crying from under the altar, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.*
2. The incommunicable supremacy and headship of Christ over his church, has been sacrilegiously taken from him, and impiously vested in the civil magistrate; and never yet is he restored to his throne, crown, and kingdom in these lands, by a national acknowledgment

of him as God's King in *Zion*; but, as a certain evidence of a continued opposition to the interest of Jesus Christ, his church is robbed of that freedom and liberty wherewith her glorious Head hath made her free, and still lies under the hard bondage of Erastian encroachments.

3. A great and universal deadness, judicial stupidity and unconcernedness under all our increasing sins; little zeal in any to search out the causes of God's wrath against the nations, in such defections and sins as we are chargeable with, in order to a national repentance and reformation, as the commanded and ordinary way to have the Lord's departed glory returned to his sanctuary; a deep forgetfulness of what the Lord has wrought for his church; nay, a general contempt and ridicule of a work of reformation, and of all contendings of the Lord's witnesses for the reviving of that blessed work; and this not only by a profane, but a professing generation.
4. The great abounding of damnable heresies, particularly Deistical errors, in an avowed opposition to the whole of revealed religion, and turning religion into a mere natural, rational thing; gross errors about the person and mediation of Christ, while some reject his supreme Deity, others oppose the efficacy of his death, and imputation of his righteousness in justification, and others obscure the glory of the free grace of God in the salvation of sinners, by fixing gospel hearers, at first instant, under a preceptive dispensation, by which means the grace of the new covenant is much darkened; with many other dangerous errors, that seem fast increasing.
5. Our forgetting and not improving our baptism, seldom or never laying to heart these engagements Christians then come under to be the Lord's, to live with him, and walk after the directions of his word and Spirit, and to draw strength from the death and resurrection of Christ into whom we are baptised, for mortifying of corruption and quickening of grace; together with other sacramental engagements, and personal vows to the Lord: All which omissions have no small tendency to the decay of religion. To which may be subjoined, the unfaithfulness of parents towards their children, in not fulfilling their solemn engagements at baptism, whereby they have vowed to train up their children, yea and command them to walk in the way of the Lord, and keep his statutes and testimonies.
6. Great ignorance of God, of his truths, and the way of salvation through Christ, in the midst of the means of knowledge; little panting and thirsting after the purity and power of gospel ordinances; small preparation before coming to the sanctuary; little dependance on a God in Christ for spiritual benefit by them; not receiving the word in faith and love, not practising it in life, to a glorifying of God before men, but rather turning more neutral, unstable and hardened under the means; estrangedness from a life of faith on the Son of God, not being exercised in a constant dependance on him for the quickening, enlightening, sanctifying, strengthening, comforting and confirming influences of his grace in his service. So,
7. A prevailing formality in religion among the professors of it, without seeking after the power of godliness; too much contentedness with the outward performance of duties, under a sensible witheredness and discernible restraint of the Spirit, not labouring to attain and maintain a life of fellowship and communion with a God in Christ, wherein it is that the power and pleasure of religion lies; a forsaking of first love, little study of heart-holiness and

personal reformation, which hath issued in much untenderness in practice, and decay of zeal in the cause of God and work of reformation.

8. Crying immoralities and God-provoking and land defiling abominations are arrived at an amazing height; God's laws are openly trampled upon, his ordinances contemned, his name blasphemed, his holy sabbaths prophaned , and his sacred word jested upon; lying, backbiting, uncleanness, neglect of relative and family duties, the sinful diversions of the stage, balls, assemblies, cards, dice, and horse-races greatly abound; oppression by excessive racking of rents, forestalling of markets, injustice in commerce, coveting and then defrauding one another of what is theirs, meet with general applause.
9. Little concernedness in days of public humiliation with the causes professed to be mourned over, and the dishonours done to a holy God; not duly affected with our own sins, nor humbled for these of our fathers; not stirring up ourselves to a searching out what particular grounds of controversy the Lord hath with every one of us, nor earnestly seeking to have them done away and pardoned in the blood of the Lamb.
10. That the fire of division has so long burned amongst the Lord's people, who are professing to witness for the same reformation cause, is ground of deep humiliation; and religious differences carried on with such heat of spirit, as alienates the affections, and tends to destroy that love which is the genuine mark of Christ's disciples.

For these, with other causes, the Presbytery appoint the 21st day of *February* first, to be observed as a day of public humiliation with fasting, by all the people under their inspection, and that they may, with the united cry of faith, supplicate the removal of these, and all causes of the Lord's wrath; and acknowledging all his great goodness in midst of deserved judgment, to pray that the Lord may prosper his work in the hands of this Presbytery; be gracious to his servants in the dispensation of the gospel; may revive his work, heal the breaches among his people, and unite them all in the truth. And the Presbytery appoint that these causes be read by the ministers the Sabbath preceding , with suitable exhortations to the people.

Extracted by

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