

## **XI. LICENSING OF PROBATIONERS ACT (ACT XI 1932)**

*Edinburgh, 26th May 1932, Session 5*

The General Assembly with consent of a majority of Presbyteries enact and ordain that the Preamble, Questions, and Formula for use at the Licensing of Probationers shall be as follows:-

### **PREAMBLE**

*The Candidates for Licence having taken their place before the Presbytery, the Moderator shall declare as follows:-*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, Who, being ascended on high, hath given gifts unto men<sup>1</sup> for the edifying of the body of Christ, we are met here as a Presbytery to license M. (*and N.*) as preachers of the Gospel and probationers for the Holy Ministry.

In this act the Church of Scotland, as part of the Holy Catholic or Universal Church worshipping One God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – affirms anew its belief in the Gospel of the sovereign grace and love of God, wherein through Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen, He freely offers to all men,<sup>2</sup> upon repentance and faith, the forgiveness of sins, renewal by the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, and calls them to labour in the fellowship of faith for the advancement of the Kingdom of God throughout the world.

The Church of Scotland acknowledges the Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the supreme rule of faith and life.

The Church of Scotland holds as its subordinate standard the Westminster Confession of Faith, recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the substance of the Faith, and claiming the right, in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, interpret, or modify its subordinate standards: always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith contained in the said Confession – of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

*Then the Moderator, addressing the Candidate or Candidates, who are to stand and make answer to the questions put to them, shall say:-*

In view of this Declaration you are now required to answer these questions:-

1. Do you believe in One God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you confess anew the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?
2. Do you believe the Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the supreme rule of faith and life?
3. Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church?
4. Do you acknowledge the Presbyterian government of this Church to be agreeable to the Word of God; and do you promise to be subject in the Lord to this Presbytery, or any Presbytery within whose bounds you may reside, and to the superior Courts of the Church?
5. Do you promise to seek the unity and peace of this Church; to uphold the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline thereof; and to cherish a spirit of brotherhood towards all the followers of the Lord?<sup>3</sup>
6. Are not zeal for the glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of men,<sup>4</sup> so far as you know your own heart, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the office of the Holy Ministry?

7. Do you engage in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ to live a godly and circumspect life; and faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge the duties of your ministry, seeking in all things the advancement of the Kingdom of God?

*The questions having been answered to the satisfaction of the Presbytery, and the Formula having been signed, the Moderator shall engage in prayer.*

*Thereafter the Moderator shall say:-*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, and by the authority of this Presbytery, we do now license you to preach the Gospel of the grace of God and to exercise your gifts as a Probationer (or Probationers) for the Holy Ministry.

#### **FORMULA**

I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church.

I acknowledge the Presbyterian government of this Church to be agreeable to the Word of God, and promise that I will submit thereto and concur therewith.

I promise to observe the order of worship and the administration of all public ordinances as the same are or may be allowed in this Church.

*Note.* – The following alternative wording has been approved by the General Assembly (1991,1):-

1. substitute “has given gifts to God’s people”
2. substitute “He freely offers to all people”
3. substitute “to cherish a spirit of love towards all your brothers and sisters in the Lord”
4. substitute “a desire for the salvation of all people”