

The Works of John Robinson, Book 3

“Of the Exercise of Prophecy”, and the Catechism.

Introduction by Dave Leach: John Robinson, Elder of the Separatists (Pilgrims), turned the 1 Corinthians 14 teaching on “prophecy” into a laboratory of Free Speech and Religion which transformed his world of swordpoint conversions. This chapter, along with a few points in his Catechism, documents where in the Bible he resurrected these fundamental Freedoms which we take for granted today.

One reason Robinson’s writing is hard reading is that some words have changed their meanings in the past four centuries. I have addressed this problem by looking up unusual word choices in Johnson’s Dictionary, published in the century following 1620, and inserted the definition by the obscure words.

Another reason is that Robinson’s Bible references were meant to be looked up in the Geneva translation; looking them up in modern translations, and sometimes even the KJV, can leave the reader puzzled what Robinson’s point was. So I have looked them up in the Geneva translation and inserted them, saving you having to look them up.

A third reason is that Robinson’s grammar is more elaborate than modern popular writing. A fourth reason is that Robinson was responding to some Puritan writer, so that the reader must think backwards to figure out what issues Robinson was addressing, in the same way we must read much of Paul’s letters which were responses to questions lost to us now.

To lessen this difficult, I have added to the beginning of each paragraph my summary, in blue, which is in simpler, hopefully clearer English. With that introduction to each paragraph, the meaning of his writing will hopefully become apparent more quickly.

The other colors added besides blue are basically to help me find again those points most interesting or significant, or that I want to write about later. The comments and explanations that I have added are in brackets. Robinson’s writing contained only Bible references, not the verses themselves; I have added the verses (from the Geneva translation, 1595) in italics.

The text I have so doctored was from *The Works of John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, with a Memoir and Annotations by Robert Ashton*, 3 vols (London: John Snow, 1851). Vol. 3.

Chapter VIII: OF THE EXERCISE OF PROPHECY.

We do not call every Christian a “Prophet”. There are they, whose names I forbear, for their credit’s sake, who have not spared, and that in their public writings, to lay to our charge, **that we will needs have all and every member of the church, a prophet, and to prophesy publicly.** With what minds they let loose their tongues to utter these, and many more most false and absurd vituperies against us, we leave it to God to judge, who knoweth: with what conscience, and desert of credit therein, unto thee, Christian reader, into whose hands this our Apology shall come.

Our churches are so weak that we are lucky if we find even 2 or 3 Prophets per church, as defined in 1 Cor 14:3. But God calls upon not only Prophets to prophesy, but also ministers, teachers, elders, deacons, and in fact even laymen recognized by the ministers. We learn from the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 3, that “he who prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort:” which to perform conveniently, and as becomes the church assembly, we make account **comes within the compass but of a few of the multitude;** happily [**“successfully, prosper”, Johnson’s Dictionary**] **two or three in each of our churches,** considering their weak and depressed state. Touching prophecy then we **think the very same, that the synod held at Embden, 1571,** hath decreed in these words: “1. In in all churches, whether but springing up, or grown to some ripeness, let the order of prophecy be observed, according to Paul’s institution. 2. **Into the fellowship of this work are to be admitted not only the ministers, but the teachers too, as also the elders and deacons, yea, even of the**

multitude, which are willing to confer their gift received of God, to the common utility of the church: but **so as they first be allowed** [“acknowledged, permitted, granted, admitted”, Johnson’s Dictionary] **by the judgment of the ministers**, [“officer of the church”, Johnson’s Dictionary] and others.”* And as the apostle sometimes said, “We believe, and therefore we speak,” 2 Cor. iv. 13, so because **we believe with the Belgic churches, that this exercise is to be observed in all congregations**, therefore we also observe it in ours. Of this our **both faith and practice**, we have these amongst other special foundations.

We invite prophecy from all because the Apostles did, and the Jews before them. The **first** [the precedent in our **faith** for inviting prophecy from all] **we fetch from examples in the Jewish church, where liberty both for teaching and disputing publicly both, in the temple and synagogue, was freely given to all gifted accordingly, without respect had to any office.** Luke ii. 46, 47; iv. 15, 16; Acts viii, 4, 11, 19–21; xiii. 14–16; xviii. 24–26.

Luke 2:46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions 47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

Luke 4:15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. 16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

Acts 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word 11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. ...19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

Acts 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

Acts 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

The Jews didn’t let Jesus and the apostles speak because of their authority. They didn’t recognize their authority! If any object, that the examples of Christ and the apostles in this case, are incompetent, seeing that Christ was furnished with his own, and the apostles with his authority; he allegeth that which is true in itself, but to small purpose, considering **we lay not our foundation in this**, that Christ and his apostles so did; but in that **liberty so to do was always had, in all places granted, and sometimes offered them. This liberty they obtained not by the authority of Christ, which the rulers of the synagogues and temple no more acknowledged than they did Christ himself: but by the order then received, and still continued to this day amongst the Jews,** that they whom, with the Scriptures, they call “wise men,” Jer. xviii. 18; Matt.xxiii. 34; 1 Cor. i. 20, without all regard of public office, having any word of exhortation to the people, should “say on,” as we have it written, Acts xiii. 23. Whereunto I add, that divers of them, in whom we instance, were furnished with no such authority specially from Christ.

Jeremiah 18:18 Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

Mat 23:34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to

city:

1 Cor 1:20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

Paul told the Corinthians they had become disorderly. As he describes the order to which they should be restored, it is the custom of the Jewish synagogues. Don't be confused by God's distinction between the extraordinary "Prophets", 1 Corinthians 12, of whom God provides only a few, and "prophecy", the ordinary activity in which all may participate. The difference is a matter of degree. The second [the precedent in our *practice* for inviting prophecy from all] we take from the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xiv., where **to the full he informeth the church at Corinth of the order of that exercise, which they had formerly violated. Which whole order, according to Beza on 1 Cor. xiv., is apparently taken from the received custom in the Jewish synagogues.** Which custom, saith Peter Martyr on 1 Cor. xiv. 31, [*For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.*] seeing it was of old both good and laudable in the synagogues of the Jews, the apostle disdains not to transfer it to the Church of Christ, of which also he renders this reason, because it was not a legal ceremony, but serves to the edification of the church. [Or, many of the Jewish customs were not transferred to the church because they were legalistic shadows of the Gifts brought by Jesus, but prophesying is transferred because it has a practical benefit: building up the church.] If this be so, then must they needs take their marks amiss, [they miss the point] who imagine that the apostle in this place **speaks of the extraordinary gift and exercise of prophecy.** [1 Corinthians 12 lists "Prophecy", the noun, as a Holy Spirit Gift given to some but not to all, meaning it is not an "ordinary" capacity of everyone but is "extraordinary". But 1 Corinthians 14 says 7 times that "all" should prophesy – the verb – referring to an "ordinary" capacity. It is like the "Gift" of music: only a few are "singers", the noun, but all "sing", the verb.] And although it be not like, [likely] that the Church of Corinth was, in that so plenteous effusion of the gifts of the Spirit, altogether destitute of extraordinary prophets, [Or, "Paul didn't urge everyone to prophesy, in chapter 14, to make up for their shortage of 'Prophets' as described in chapter 12! Just look at the variety of Gifts which chapter 12 says operated in Corinth! Do you imagine in that rich shopping mall of Gifts, they would have sold out of Prophets?"] yet that the apostle did not in that place aim at them, [Or, "the apostle did not, in chapter 14, refer to the Prophets, the noun, of chapter 12] may be proved by many more, and the same, as I think, firm arguments drawn from the selfsame text. [That is, in the rest of chapter 14.] Which that I may do the more commodiously, the prudent reader must call to mind, that **upon the foundation of the extraordinary prophets, as well as of the very apostles, the church is built,** Eph. ii. 20; [*19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*] and that that mystery of Christ, by the Spirit immediately and infallibly enlightening their mind, was **in the same manner, though not in all the same degree,** revealed to them, and the other. Eph. iii. 4, 5. [*Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ*)]

Critics say the Corinthian church had such a shortage of Prophets that they had to persuade everyone to prophesy to make up for it. Then the same critics say the "prophecy" described in 1 Cor 14 is done by the same extraordinary "Prophets" described in 1 Cor 12. How can a congregation with such a shortage of Gifts end up with so many Prophets bubbling out its ears as to equal, in number, the entire congregation?! This so considered, 1. It seems altogether improbable, that so many prophets of this [extraordinary] rank, although inferior in gifts, should have been found in that one small congregation, as the apostle insinuates, ver. 24, 29, 31, that Corinth had. [In other words, these verses talk about "all" prophesying. How could that be, if the "prophesying" was that described in chapter 12 which described the Gift as not for all, but only a few?]

By the logic of our critics that makes everyone who prophesies a Prophet, Corinthian prophets were not only disorderly because more than one of them talked, but they were so inaccurate that they had to be constantly corrected, according to 1 Cor 14:29, 32! Amazing, that such flawed men could be the "master builders" of the Gospel we know! Can we trust what we have been given by such men?! 2. The prophets in Corinth not only behaved themselves inordinately in the church, but withal, as by interpreters from ver. 29 and

32, is generally delivered, [Or, as verses 29 and 32 are generally interpreted] were subject to error in the very doctrine which they propounded; which to affirm of the extraordinary prophets, those skilful master builders, who together with the apostles laid the foundation, together participated the same holy Spirit, seemeth not a little to shake the foundation of the Christian religion. And if one of these extraordinary prophets might err, why not they all? And if the prophets, why not the apostles? And if they might err, how should it appear, that they have not erred? And so by consequence, what either then was, or now is, the firmness and certainty of the Christian faith? [Actually, I disagree with Robinson here. Although I agree in distinguishing between the few “Prophets” of chapter 12 from the many who “prophesy” of chapter 14, and although I agree Prophets have greater capacity through the Holy Spirit than all those who prophesy, there is no man who is beyond correction. Paul corrected even Peter in Galatians 2:11. Peter said all of us need to be subject to each other, 1 Peter 5:5.]

1 Cor 14:34, 35 tell women to be silent in church. This is not a contradiction if Paul applied this to the ordinary exercise of prophecy by “all”, but not to the Prophets of chapter 12. But if our critics make it apply to the Prophets, then we have a great number of Prophetesses commissioned by God to speak, whom Paul would silence! 3. Seeing that the apostle, ver. 34, 35, enjoins women deep silence in this church exercise, not permitting them at all to speak; it seems most plain that he hath no eye, nor respect at all, to those extraordinary gifts and endowments of prophecy authorising even women furnished with them, to speak publicly, and in men's presence, as appears in Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna, as also even in Jezebel herself in regard of order, and others. Exod. xv. 21; Judges v. 1; 2 Kings xxii. 14; Luke ii. 36; Rev. ii. 20. [Again I disagree with Robinson in interpreting v. 34-35. My interpretation is elsewhere. But I agree that IF those who “prophesy” in chapter 14 and the “Prophets” of chapter 12 are the same group, and IF all the women in that single group are silenced – and these are certainly widely assumed to be fact – then there is a major contradiction of the many passages about prophetesses.]

In verse 36 Paul said these prophesying Corinthians do not speak for God. Yet the extraordinary prophets of chapter 12 *do* speak for God. Therefore, they can't be the same people. Lastly, The apostle, ver. 36, upbraideth those very prophets unto whom he directeth his speech, as such as from whom the Word of God came not: but without cause, yea, not without notable injury, if they were extraordinary prophets, that is, inspired with the Holy Ghost, and his immediate instruments: seeing that from these kind of prophets, as well as from Paul the apostle, the Word of God came, though in a different degree and measure.

The third [Scriptural] foundation of this exercise [the exercise of prophecy] is laid in the manifold [many], and the same **most excellent ends attainable only** by this means. 1. That “**God may be glorified**, whilst **every one doth administer to another the gift which he hath received**, as good dispensers of the manifold grace of God.” 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. 2. That “**the Spirit be not extinguished**,” 1 Thess. v. 19, 20, [*“Quench not the spirit. Despise not prophesyings.”*] that is, the gift of prophecy, or teaching; in which it may so come to pass, that some in the church, though no ministers, may excel the very pastors themselves. 3 That such as are to be taken into the ministry of the church, may both become and appear “apt to teach.” 1 Tim. iii. 2. This seeing, the apostle would have done, he would questionless have some order for the doing of it; which, excepting this of prophecy, we have none of apostolical institution. [Or, how did Paul expect anyone to ever ordain a pastor, if one of the qualifications was skill in teaching, and there was no opportunity for anyone to ever teach? It was the practice of prophesying that was the opportunity for Christians to gain experience teaching not just a handful of toddlers, but the whole church.] 4. That the doctrine of the church may be preserved pure, from the infection of error: which is far more easily corrupted, when some one or two alone in the church speak all, and all the rest have deep and perpetual silence enjoined them. 1 John iv. 1; Rev. ii. 2, 7, with i. 11.* 5. [*1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Revelation 2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: ...7 He that hath an ear; let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the*

paradise of God.] That things doubtful arising in teaching may be cleared, things obscure opened, things erroneous convinced; and lastly, that as by the beating together of two stones fire appeareth, so may the light of the truth more clearly shine by disputations, questions, and answers modestly had and made, and as becomes the church of saints, and work of God.† Luke ii. 40; iv. 21, 22; Acts xvii. 2; xviii. 24, 26, 28. [Luke 2:46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. Luke 4:21 XXXXXXXX Acts 17:2 and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Acts 18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. ...26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.... 28 for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.]

6. For the edification of the church, and conversion of them that believe not: and this the rather because it appertaineth not properly to the pastors, as pastors, to turn goats or wolves into sheep, but rather to feed the flock and sheep of Christ, in which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. 1 Cor. xiv. 4, 24, 25; Acts xx. 28.† *[1 Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. ...24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: 25 and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.]*

7. And lastly, Lest by excluding the commonalty and multitude from church affairs, the people of God be divided, and charity lessened, and familiarity and good-will be extinguished between the order of ministers and people.§

NOTICE BY THE EDITOR.

No trace of this Catechism has been found earlier than 1642—seventeen years after the death of its Author. It does not appear, however, to have been a posthumous publication. The edition of 1655, the title of which is given in the next page, contains a preface, omitted in earlier copies, written unquestionably by Mr. Robinson, and must have been taken from an edition published during the Author's lifetime, and at Leyden itself, as he evidently intended it for, the use of the adult portion of his church and congregation.

The sentiments taught in this Catechism are identically those taught by Mr. Robinson throughout his works, and furnish the most conclusive, internal evidence, that the work is both genuine and authentic.

TITLES

to

THREE DIFFERENT EDITIONS.

I.

An Appendix to Mr. Perkins' Six Principles of the Christian Religion. By John Robinson. 1642.

II.

A Briefe Catechism concerning Church Government, by that Revered Divine, Mr. John Robinson, and may be fitly adjoynd to Mr. Perkins' Six Principles, as appendix thereto. 1 Timothy iii. 15, IS. London: printed in the year 1642.

III.

An Appendix to Mr. Perkins, his Six Principles of the Christian Religion; touching the more solemn fellowship of Christians (the Church of God), as being a Divine Institution. Very fit and necessary to be learned by all sorts of people in these perilous times. Acts ii. 47. Printed by J. L., for N. Bourne, and are to be sold at his shop, at the South Entrance of the Royal Exchange, in Cornhill, 1655.

THE TITLE

of

REV. W. PERKINS' CATECHISM.

“The Foundation of the Christian Religion, gathered into Six Principles.

“And it is to be learned of ignorant people, that they may be fit to hear sermons with profit, and to receive the Lord's Supper with comfort. Psal. cxix. 130: ‘The entrance into thy words sheweth light, and giveth understanding to the simple.’ London: printed by John Legatt. 1606.”

Mr. Perkins was a distinguished Puritan minister during the reign of Elizabeth. He was born in 1558, and was educated in Christ's College, Cambridge. He was elected Fellow of his College at the age of 24, and officiated at St. Andrew's Church with great success for nearly 20 years. He was deprived by Archbishop Whitgift. He died in 1603. His writings are numerous, and are comprised in three folio volumes. Job Orton says, respecting Mr. Perkins, “I think him an excellent writer. His style is the best of any of that age or the next; and many passages in his writings are equal to those of the best writers of modern times. He is judicious, clear, full of matter and deep Christian experience.”

THE PREFACE

to the

EDITION OF THE CATECHISM PUBLISHED IN 1665.

unto the former principles published by that reverend man, Mr. Will. Perkins, fully containing what every Christian is to believe touching God and himself, I have thought it fit, for the good of those especially over whom I am set (the younger sort of whom I have formerly catechised in private, according to the same principles), to annex a few others, touching the more Solemn Fellowship of Christians; the Church of God as being a Divine Institution, Rev. ii. 7; the Spiritual Paradise and Temple of the living God, 2 Cor. vi. 16; Rom. ix. 4; in which his most solemn services are to be performed; and to which he addeth daily such as be saved, promising to dwell in the midst of them by his most powerful and gracious presence.

John Robinson.

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AN APPENDIX

to

MR. PERKINS' SIX PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Q. 1. What is the church?

A. A company of faithful and holy people, with their seed, called by the Word of God into public covenant with Christ and amongst themselves, for mutual fellowship in the use of all the means of God's glory and their salvation.

Q. 2. Of what sort or number of people must this company consist?

A. It is all one whether they be high or low, few or many; so as they exceed not such a number as may ordinarily meet together in one place for the worshipping of God and sanctification of the Lord's-day. Gal. iii. 28; Matt. xxviii. 17, 19; 1 Cor. xi. 17, 18, 20, xiv. 23; Acts xx. 7.

Q. 3. What are the reasons why the church must consist of faithful and holy people?

A. 1. The Scriptures everywhere so teach. Levit. xx. 26; Rom. i. 7, 8; 1 Cor. i. 2; Phil. i. 1—9.

2. The church is the body of Christ, all whose members, therefore, should be conformable in some measure to Him their Head. Eph. i. 22; Col. i. 18.

3. Only such worshippers please God, are accepted of him, and have right to the covenant of grace and seals thereof. John iv. 23; Heb. viii. 8—10, &c.; Jude, ver. 1; Ezek. xlv. 7.

Q. 4. But are not hypocrites mingled with the faithful in the church?

A. None ought to be by the Word of God, and where such are, they are not truly added by the Lord to the church, but do creep in through their own hypocrisy, and not without the church's sin also, if they may be discerned to be such.

Q. 5. By what means is the church gathered?

A. By the Word preached, and by faith received by them that hear it. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Acts ii. 14, &c., xi. 19, xx. 21; Rom. i. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2.

Q. 6. Is every believer a member of the visible church?

A. No; but he must also, by his personal and public profession, adjoin himself to some particular fellowship and society of saints. Acts ii. 41, 47, viii. 37, ix. 18.

Q. 7. How prove you the seed of the faithful to be of the church with them?

A. By the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed, which was the covenant of the gospel, and confirmed in Christ; the seal thereof, circumcision, being the seal of the righteousness of faith. Gen. xvii. 7, &c.

Q. 8. What are the essential marks of the church?

A. Faith and order, as the church in them may be seen, and be held to walk in Christ Jesus, whom she hath received. Faith professed in word and deed, showing the matter to be true; and order in the holy things of God,

showing the forms to be true; which are the two essential parts of the church. * Gal. iii. 8, 16, 17; Rom. iv. 11; Col. ii. 5, 6.

Q. 9. Are not the preaching of the Word and administering of the sacraments certain marks of the true church?

A. No, for the Word may, and that rightly, be preached to assemblies of unbelievers for their conversion, as may the sacraments also (though unjustly) be administered unto them, and so be made lying signs. Besides, the true church may for a time want the use of divers ordinances of God, but hath always right unto them; as may also the false church usurp and abuse them, but without right. Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts xiv. 7, 14, xvii. 22, &c.; Gen. xxxiv. 24, Shechemites; 2 Kings xvii. 25, &c.; Hos. i. 9.

Q. 10. What are the means in and by which Christ and the church have fellowship together?

A.

- 1. In the gifts of the Spirit of Christ.
- 2. In the offices of ministry given to the church.
- 3. In the works done in and by those gifts and offices. 2 Cor. xii. 3—6.

Q. 11. Wherein standeth this communion of the Spirit?

A. In the in-dwelling and operation of the gifts and graces thereof conveyed from Christ, as the head, unto the church as his body, and members one of another. Whence ariseth that most strait and divine conjunction, by which, as by the civil bond of marriage the man and wife are one flesh, so they who are thus joined to Christ are one spirit. Eph. ii. 22, iv. 15, 19; 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Q. 12. How many are the offices of ministry in the church?

A. Five, besides the extraordinary offices of apostles, prophets, and evangelists, for the first planting of the churches, which are ceased, with their extraordinary gifts.

Q. 13. How is that proved?

A. Partly, by the Scriptures, which both mention them expressly, and describe them by their principal gifts and works; and partly, by reason agreeable to the Scriptures.

Q. 14. Show me which those offices be, with their answerable gifts and works?

A. 1. The pastor (exhorter), to whom is given the gift of wisdom for exhortation. 2. The teacher, to whom is given the gift of knowledge for doctrine. 3. The governing elder, who is to rule with diligence. Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 8; Rom. xii. 8; 1 Tim. v. 17. 4. The deacon, who is to administer the holy treasure with simplicity. 5. The widow or deaconess, who is to attend the sick and impotent with compassion and cheerfulness. Acts vi. 2—7; 1 Tim. iii. 8, 10, &c., v. 9, 10; Rom. xvi. 1.

Q. 15. What is the reason for the proving of these ministries?

A. Because these are necessary and these alone sufficient for the church, as being the most perfect society and body of Christ, which neither faileth in that which is necessary, nor exceedeth in anything superfluous. 1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. ii. 12, *πολίτεια*; ver. 19, *συμπολῖται*; rom xii. 7, 8.

Q. 16. Whence ariseth the necessity and sufficiency of these ministries in the church?

A. From the condition, partly of the souls, and partly of the bodies of the members.

Q. 17. How doth that appear?

A. 1. In the soul is the faculty of understanding, about which the teacher is to be exercised for information by doctrine. 2. The will and affections upon which the pastor (exhorter) is especially to work by exhortation and comfort. 3. For that doctrine and exhortation without obedience are unprofitable, the diligence of the ruling elder is requisite for that purpose.

Q. 18. How are the other two ministries to be exercised?

A. As the church consisteth of men, and they of souls and bodies, so are the deacons, out of the church's treasure and contribution, to provide for the common uses of the church, relief of the poor, and maintenance of the officers, Acts vi. 1–3, iv. 35; Gal. vi. 6, *κοινωνεῖτω*; 1 Tim. v. 18; as are the widows to afford unto the sick and impotent in body, not able otherwise to help themselves, their cheerful and comfortable service. 1 Tim. v. 3, 9.

Q. 19. Wherefore call you those offices by the name of ministries or service?

A. For two causes;—1. For that they are no lordship, but mere services of Christ and of the church. Matt. xx. 25—27. 2. Because they consist in administering only of those things which are Christ's, and the church's under him. 1 Cor iii. 21—23, iv. 1; 2 Cor. iv. 5.

Q. 20. By whom are these officers to have their outward calling?

A. By the church, whereof they are members for the present, and to which they are to administer.

Q. 21. How doth that appear?

A. 1. The apostles, who taught only Christ's commandments, so directed the churches. Acts i. 15—23, vi. 1, 2, 3, 5.

2. The people, amongst whom they have been conversant, can best judge of their fitness, both in respect of their persons and families. Acts vi. 1—5; 1 Tim. iii. 2—5.

A. 3. It furthereth much the diligence and faithfulness of the minister, that they whose minister he is have freely chosen him, as unto whom under Christ they commit the most precious treasure of their souls; as also it binds the people to greater love and conscience of obedience of him and his ministry, whom themselves have made choice of. 1 Tim. v. 8.

4. The church being a most free corporation spiritual under Christ, the Lord, is in all reason and equity to choose her ministers and servants under him, unto whom, also, she is to give wages for their service and labour. Acts xiv. 23; 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

Q. 22. Is this outward calling, of simple necessity, for a true church officer?

A. Yea, as for the magistrate in the city and commonwealth, or steward in the family, without which they usurp their places, how excellent soever, whether in their gifts or works. Heb. v. 4, 5.

Q. 23. What if the officer be found unfaithful in his place?

A. He is by the church to be warned to take heed to his ministry he hath received, to fulfil it; which, if he

neglect to do, by the same power which set him up, he is to be put down and deposed, being dealt with as a brother. Col. iv. 17.

Q. 24. What are the outward works of the church's communion with Christ?

A. These six:—1. Prayer. 2. The reading and opening of the Word. 3. The sacraments. 4. Singing of Psalms. 5. Censures. 6. Contribution to the necessities of the saints.

Q. 25. Wherefore put you prayer in the first place?

A. Because by it all the rest are sanctified to the faithful. 1 Tim. ii. 1, iv. 5; Jule, ver. 20; Zech. xii. 10; Rom. viii. 15, 16. For prayer, see the end of the fifth principle, with the exposition; * only add this, that in the act of our speaking unto God by prayer, we are not to use the help of any book, beads, crucifixes, or the like, to teach or provoke us, but only the help of the Spirit of adoption and prayer, working in our hearts effectually, and teaching us both what and how to pray as we ought.

Q. 26. What believe you, touching the Word?

A. Besides the things observed in the fifth principle and exposition, that the whole written Word, and it alone, is to be read and opened in the church.

Q. 27. Wherefore are the whole Scriptures to be read and opened?

A. Because the whole Word of God is pure, written for our learning and comfort, given by Divine inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction, and from which nothing may be diminished. Prov. xxx. 5, 6; Rom. xv. 4; Deut. iv. 2; 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

Q. 28. How prove you that the Scriptures only are to be read, and opened in the church?

A. Because they alone are sufficient for faith, and the obedience which is of faith, and able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works; and unto which nothing may be added. John xx. 31; Heb. xi. 6; Rom. xvi. 17; Rev. xxi. 19.

Q. 29. Who are to open and apply the Scriptures in the church?

A. 1. Principally the bishops or elders, who, by the Word of Life, are to feed the flock, both by teaching and government. Acts xx. 28. 2. Such as are out of office, in the exercise of prophecy.

Q. 30. How is that exercise proved in the Scriptures?

A. 1, By the examples in the Jewish Church, where men, though in no office, either in temple or synagogue, had liberty publicly to use their gifts. Luke ii. 42, 46, 47; iv. 16—18; Acts viii. 4, xi. 19—21, xiii. 14—16, xviii. 24—26.

2. By the commandments of Christ and his apostles. Luke ix. 1, x. 1; Rom. xii. 6—8; 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11; 1 Cor. xiv. 1.

3. By the prohibiting of women, not extraordinarily inspired, to teach in the church: herein liberty being given unto men (their husbands or others). 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

4. By the excellent ends which, by this means, are to be obtained: as 1. The glory of God in the manifestation of

his manifold graces, 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. 2. That the gifts of the Spirit in men be not quenched, 1 Thess. v. 19. 3. For the fitting and trial of men for the ministry, 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4. For the preserving pure of the doctrine of the church, which is more endangered if some one or two alone may only be heard and speak, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. 5. For debating and satisfying of doubts, if any do arise. 6. For the edifying of the church, and conversion of others, Acts ii. 42; Luke iv. 22, 23.

Q. 31. Who is a prophet in this sense?

A. He that hath a gift of the Spirit to speak unto edification, exhortation, and comfort. 1 Cor. xiv. 4, 24, 25.

Q. 32. What is the order of this exercise?

A. That it be performed after the public ministry by the teachers, and under their direction and moderation, whose duty it is, if anything be obscure, to open it; if doubtful, to clear it; if unsound, to refuse it; if unprofitable to supply what is wanting as they are able. 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 37; Acts xiii. 15.

Q. 33. What believe you touching the sacraments, further than is observed in the former principles?

A. That they are to be dispensed according to the tenure of the covenant of grace, whereof they are seals, in respect both of the persons to whom, and of the ends for which they are to be administered.

Q- 34. Which are those persons?

A. The faithful and their seed. Gen. xvii. 7; 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Q. 35. May all the faithful partake in the sacraments?

A. No, except they be added also to some particular congregation, unto which the public ordinances and ministry doth appertain. Acts ii. 41, 42, 47.

Q. 36. Which are the ends and uses of the sacraments?

A. The first, is from God to the church, opened in the exposition of the fifth principle, where it is shown what a sacrament is. The second, is from the church to God, in which it testifieth the acceptance of the covenant, and bindeth itself to the performance of the conditions. The third, is in respect of the members themselves, mutually, as being badges of their association. The fourth, in respect of all other assemblies, between whom and the churches they are notes of distinction. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Q. 37. What is required touching singing of psalms in the church?

A. That they be such as are parts of the Word of God, formed by the Holy Ghost into psalms or songs, which many may conveniently sing together, exhorting and admonishing themselves mutually, with grace in their hearts. Matt. xxvi. 30; Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16.

Q. 38. What believe you touching the censure of excommunication?

A. That it is to be used by every particular church, according to the rules of Christ.

Q. 39. How prove you this power to be in every particular congregation?

A. 1. By donation and gift of Christ the Lord. Matt. xviii. 17—19. 2. The particular church of Corinth had this

power, for the neglect whereof it is reproved by the apostle. 1 Cor. v. 13. 3. Every particular church hath right to the Word, sacraments, and prayer, within itself, which are greater, and therefore to this, which is lesser than they.

Q. 40. What are the rules of Christ for excommunication?

A. 1. The sin thus to be censured must be scandalous, and the person obstinate, after due conviction and patience used. 2. The church excommunicating must be that particular congregation gathered together in the name of Christ, whereof the sinner is a member. Matt xviii 15—17, 19; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5, 11.

Q. 41. How prove you that by the church, Matt. xviii. 17, is not meant the bishop or presbytery representing the body?

A. 1. One man cannot be a church, which, as Christ teacheth Matt. xviii. 19, 20, must be a company, how small soever, gathered together in his name.

2. The word there used never signifieth in the Scriptures an officer or officers, excluding the people.

3. The apostle, 1 Cor. v. 4, expounds Christ's meaning to be of the whole body come together.

4. The elders, being public officers, are to exercise the solemn works of their office; and particularly the work of rebuking them that sin openly and before the church, both that others may fear, and the church, of faith, consent to the excommunication; and, therefore, cannot represent the church, it being actually present. 1 Tim. v. 20.

5. A representative church, in a case of faith and conscience, without the consent of the represented in the particular decree, established the popish doctrine of implicit faith.

Q. 42. What is the order of proceeding in this censure?

A. That the brother offending be admonished privately and after (without his repentance) with a witness or two who may give testimony both of the offence and admonition; and lastly, that by the brother admonishing with his witnesses (the sinner remaining obstinate), complaint be made to the church, which last complaint alone is sufficient in public offences.

Q. 43. What order is to be observed after complaint thus made?

A. The officers and the governors of the church are by the Scriptures clearly to convince and seriously to admonish and exhort the offender, and upon his impenitence, with due conviction and patience, to decree against him the sentence of excommunication; and lastly, with the people's free consent, to pronounce and execute the same.

Q. 44. How appeareth the necessity of this ordinance?

A. Many ways: 1. By the commandment of Christ, and practice of the apostolical churches. Matt. xviii. 15; 1 Cor. v. 4.

2. For the glory of Christ, which is much impeached by the profaneness of those who profess his service. Rom. ii. 24.

3. For the humbling of the sinner, and the salvation of his soul. 1. Cor. v. 4—8.

4. To prevent the infection of others. Heb. xii. 15.

5. That by the zeal and holiness of the church, they without may be gained by the gospel.

Q. 45. How is the church to walk towards a person excommunicated?

A. So as they may make him ashamed, by withdrawing from him all spiritual communion, and civil familiarity also, so far as may be without the violation of any natural or civil bond. 2 Thess. iii. 6—11; 1 Cor. v. 11.

Q. 46. What is to be observed for the church's contribution?

A. That in their public meeting [every first day of the week]* they contribute as God hath prospered them to the public treasury, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, by the deacons to be received and distributed as there is need, to the relief of the poor maintenance of the ministry, and other necessary uses of the church first, and after, of others also, as need requireth. Acts vi. 1—4; Gal. vi. 10; Rom. xv. 26. And whosoever will walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Gal. vi. 16.

Amen. John Robinson.

Out of order? From in the middle of 31:

Q. What things must a Christian man's heart desire?

A. Six things especially.

Q. What are they?

A. 1. That he may glorify God. 2. That God may reign in his heart, and not sin. That he may do God's will, and not the lusts of the flesh. 4. That he may rely himself on God's providence for all the means of his temporal life, 5. That he may be justified, and be at peace with God. 6. That, by the power of God, he may be strengthened against all temptations.

Q. What is faith?

A. A persuasion (Amen) that those things which we truly desire, God will grant them for Christ's sake.—“The fifth principle expounded,” in Rev. W. Perkins’ “Foundation of Christian Religion.”