

what was the constitution which this act re-established. This brings us to the reformation.

The highest reformation-documents to which we can appeal for the true constitution of our church are the Scottish confession and the two books of discipline. The Confession was superseded by the legal sanction of the "Westminster," in 1690, and is thus of no interest now, except as a historical memorial—so valuable, however, that many consider it superior to its successor, and doubt the wisdom of our fathers in having received a confession from England, and set aside our own national confession of faith. As most persons are aware there are two Books of Discipline. The *first* was prepared in 1560 by a committee of ministers commissioned by the Privy Council; it was approved by the General Assembly, finally agreed on in 1581, and registered in the acts of the Kirk. It was subscribed by a great number of the members of Council, but not *formally* ratified, because many of the nobility who hungered after church property were opposed to its distribution of the ecclesiastical revenues. The names of 33 *subscribing* noblemen are given by Knox, Spottiswood and Calderwood. There is no other document which so fully represents the views of the Scottish reformers on the constitution of the church, and no document of the period of which we, as their remote descendants, have more reason to be proud. It is truly a marvelous production—the work of men who were far ahead of their age—a sublime monument of christian genius. They must have felt their hearts swelling with a noble enthusiasm when they composed a church-frame so noble, so patriotic and so pious. No wonder the more sordid and ignorant of the nobility sneered at it as "a devout imagination." We feel proud to be the followers of men who, at such a time, rose to such elevation of sentiment. We recognise them as the true founders of Scottish piety and prosperity, and far surpassing all other reformers of their age. We have not yet attained to their *beau ideal* of church and school, but we are rising slowly, and the more we break loose from the limitations of subsequent times, the faster will be our progress. It must be borne

in mind, however, that, though the most perfect representation of the views of the founders of our Scottish Zion, it has only an imperfect civil sanction. It was *virtually* not formally sanctioned by the State. It was a fully valid *church* document and passed into an Act of Assembly, and was signed by the majority of nobles, but not formally passed by the State.

The death of Knox in 1572 was followed by attempts to alter the original constitution of the Church. Therefore, after many conferences, "The *Second Book of Discipline*" was approved and adopted by the Assembly in 1578. It was chiefly directed to the subject of church government, and the definition of the respective powers of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Its principal provisions were ratified by parliament in 1592. While it appears that the two books of discipline are valid documents in our Church, the amount of their validity has formed the subject of much discussion—especially in connection with patronage. The theme would be ample enough for a separate treatment. Neither book has ever received the *formal* sanction of the state. That sanction was refused to the *first*, because of its proposed distribution of ecclesiastical property. It was refused to the second because of the determination of the monarch to invade the constitution and rights of the church. Both have received the *virtual* sanction of the state in 1580, and especially in 1592, because when the state established the church by these acts, it established it *as it was*, and, as to form and constitution, it was a creation of the books of discipline. The confession did not impart its presbyterian model and form of worship. The truth is, that the Act of 1592 sanctioned and confirmed all contained in the books of discipline, with *exceptions*. These very exceptions ought to confirm the general validity of the whole document. It is strange how a partisan spirit corrupts truth. In the Free Church controversy, one party has exalted the authority of the books of discipline at the expense of the Act of 1592, because they appear to give the election of ministers to the people, while it appears to take it away. Another party exalts the Act of 1592 at the ex-