

souls of men. And in reference to those foreign and distant colonies, where, in many instances, we have been called, in the purpose and providence of God, to enter into your labours,* we deem it of the utmost consequence that there should exist between us a good understanding and happy agreement, the fullest sympathy in all good things, sentiments, in fine, of the fullest mutual confidence. Moved by such considerations, as well as by a just and strong regard for the universal communion of the body of Christ, we have resolved to address to you this letter, for the purpose of opening up a friendly, pious, and brotherly communication between us; and our hearts desire and prayer is, that grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, may be with you.

We most gladly extend to you the right hand of fellowship as to a Church holding in its standards a form of sound words, admirably agreeing with our own, in respect of doctrine, discipline, worship, and government. We hold it to be indispensably necessary, if we would secure the favor and blessing of the Great Head of the Church on our measures and our councils, that we witness a good confession before all men; that we maintain pure and uncompromised the truth as it is in Jesus; that we continue steadfastly and strictly in all things that are laid down in his infallible word, for the regulation of all our affairs in life. At the same time, we are not less thoroughly persuaded, that the soundness of our faith, however accurately set forth in our public confessions, will in itself be of little avail, unless all our pastors and teachers individually adopt both its letter and its spirit, and live and act always under its divine influence. The doctrine of the Gospel—the supreme divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—his existence from all eternity as the Son of God—his manifestation and advent in the flesh—the pure, sinless, and immaculate holiness of his human nature, in and from his very birth—his perfect obedience and fulfilment of the law in the room of sinners—his death, as a propitiation for the sins of the world—his ministry and intercession, as our High Priest in the Heavens—and his second coming in great glory to judge the world;—the grace of God the Father, altogether free and sovereign—electing, in his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, unto everlasting life, such as shall be saved—and according to his good pleasure also, when and how it seemeth good unto him, calling them, justifying them, glorifying them;—the work of the Holy Ghost, the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity—convincing those elected by the Father, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement—converting, renewing, sanctifying them;—the original guilt and entire depravity of man's nature since the fall of Adam;—the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the sight of God;—the way of sinners finding acceptance with the most righteous God, not by any works of their own, but solely by His free gratuitous mercy, through the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them and received by faith alone;—the necessity of regeneration,

and the obligation upon all to follow holiness, even as God is holy. This glorious and gracious doctrine we hold it by no means enough that any Church has recognized and professed in its public standards: what we ever desire and seek is, that every one of its ministers, individually shall receive it for himself, with his whole heart and mind, cherish and embrace it as one who believes, and therefore speaks. Our constant prayer, therefore, at the throne of God, for you, for ourselves, for all the churches, is that every leaven of infidelity and unsoundness may be purged away; that whatsoever is dark may be enlightened, and whatsoever is dead or dying may be revived; and that the ancient and unsullied purity of the Reformed faith may more and more everywhere prevail.

We maintain it to be a most sacred duty of all rulers as ministers of God for good, to respect and recognize, in all their acts and councils, the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice; and to make provision for supplying the external means of grace to all the people under their rule and authority. And we consider that the Church of Christ is bound, without sacrifice of its own independent rights and liberties, to accept of whatever countenance and support the State may give; and to employ most conscientiously the increased facilities thus afforded, for the temporal and eternal benefit of the community. But while we thus endeavour always strenuously to testify that allegiance and obedience are due to Christ, on the part of all states, and that every body politic, as well as every individual man, is bound to be on his side, to honour his name and advance his cause; on the other hand, we feel persuaded that we are commanded and required, by the same authority, to protest with all constancy and perseverance, and to contend against any usurpation, whether by civil or by ecclesiastical power, of authority over the consciences of men. When any state receives into union with itself any branch of the true Church of Christ, and bestows upon it protection and assistance, we are so far from regarding that compact as likely to diminish or endanger the liberty of those who differ from it, that we consider such an alliance, if it be based on right principles, to be the very best security of that liberty; inasmuch as by it, the rights of conscience are most surely and effectually preserved to all, when to all the equal privilege is left of worshipping God after their own fashion, each under his own vine and his own fig-tree. We protest, therefore, most solemnly, as our fathers often at the utmost hazard of their lives protested, against intolerance and persecution of every kind on account of religion—against all proceedings and plans, whose object is to impose restraints, or pains, or penalties, on men, for conscience sake, or in any other way, to coerce or constrain their sentiments concerning the truth of God. And deep indeed would be our regret, if we were compelled to believe that any Church of Christ, in these our days, especially one which once itself contended nobly against the cruelty of those who sought to vex the Church of God, by the yoke of an

*The Dutch Establishment in the Colony at the Cape of Good Hope, now supplied with ministers from the Church of Scotland. Edit. Exam.