

Special Note:

**The following
pagination shown as
per original.**



FIVE *13.2.27*
DISPUTATIONS
OF
Church-Government,
AND
WORSHIP.

I. *Whether it be Necessary or Profitable to the right Order or Peace of the Churches of England, that we Restore the extruded Episcopacy? Neg.*

II. *Affert. Those who Nullifie our present Ministry and Churches, which have not the Prelatical Ordination, and teach the People to do the like, do incur the guilt of grievous Sin.*

III. *An Episcopacy desirable for the Reformation, Preservation and Peace of the Churches.*

IV. *Whether a stinted Liturgie or Form of Worship be a desirable means for the Peace of these Churches?*

V. *Whether Humane Ceremonies be Necessary or Profitable to the Church?*

By Richard Baxter.

L O N D O N,

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To his Highness
RICHARD
Lord Protector
OF THE
Common-wealth of *England, Scot-*
land and Ireland.

SIR,



These Papers are ambitious of accompanying those against Popery into your Highness presence, for the tender of their service, and that upon the same account. The Controversies here decided, are those that have had a hand in most of the great transactions that of late years have here past, and that still have a hand in the differences that hinder our desired peace. I

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observe

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observe that the Nation generally rejoyceth in your peaceable entrance upon the Government. And are affected with indignation, if they hear but any rumors that troublesom persons would disturb their hopes. And many are perswaded that you have been strangely kept, from participating in any of our late bloody contentions, that God might make you an Healer of our breaches, and imploy you in that Temple-work, which *David* himself might not be honoured with, though *it was in his mind*, because he had *shed blood abundantly, and made great wars*, 1 Chron. 22. 7, 8. I perceive also that some *settlement* of Church-affairs will be expected from you by the most. And therefore it concerneth all our welfare that you be well acquainted with the state of those differences, about which all will expect your judgement. For my own part I think not that matters are half so far out of order in the Churches, as most discontented men imagine: But yet I know there is much to be mended, wherein both God and most good men expect you should contribute a considerable part. Some think there is no *settlement* in the Church, till *they* are in the saddle, and all their Brethren are become their servants, and do them obeysance. And alas, we have those that take it for no *settlement*, till they have the sword in their own hands, or have engaged you to use it at their discretion, and may again fill the Prisons or other Lands, with their Brethren that are far better then themselves: Those I mean that in their writings so glory that their predecessors hang'd the Puritans, and lament that of late they were *but silenced*, as being a less effectuall means. Some would have no other *settlement* then we have, or else would have *Licentiousness* settled by a Law, and have *unlimited Liberty* in Religion. Doubtless these are conscious what it is that they have need

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need of : If Heathens, Infidels and Papists be but excepted out of the Toleration, it displeaseth them : And we can easily conjecture why. If we grant them all the Liberty of their consciences (that is, of their mis-belief, because, alas, we cannot cure it) it satisfieth them not, unless they may have also Liberty of tongue and Practice. When I have heard and read the Reasonings of some of them against the Immortality of the soul, and the Christian Religion it self, I have wondered why they should take it for such a point of Liberty, to have leave to draw others to their opinion, when they seem to think that mens Happiness or Misery is no more concerned in it. These are the men that tell the world that Magistrates have nothing to do with Religion, but only with our Peace and Bodily welfare, contrary to the fullest Testimony of the Scriptures : Which is but to perswade men to esteem you as the dirt of the earth, and to value the Ministry above the Magistracy, as much as the Soul is better then the Body, and as Heaven is better then this dunghill-world. And for this odious doctrine, they have no stronger reason, then because that Heathen Princes are incapable of deciding matters about Religion. As if mens wilfull and wicked indisposition would change the office, and disoblige both them and those that are guilty of no such unfitness, from the obligations laid upon them by the Lord : They may as wisely say that a sober Physitian is obliged to no more then a drunken one can perform ; or that a *seeing* man may do no more then the *blind* can do : Or that a Learned Prince may not meddle with Learning, because an unlearned Prince is unfit for it. But any man that hath read *Bellarmino*, *Parsons*, *Greser*, or such like Jesuites, may know the Fathers of this doctrine : Nothing more familiar with them, then that

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Princes have nothing to do but for our Bodies, and the Common Peace: but forsooth it is the Pope that must Rule all about our Souls. The *Libertines* know whose cause they plead. But verily men that regard the Interest of Christ and their salvation, would see light by Princes, if they believed them to be such *terrestrial animals* as Papists and *Libertines* would make them.

Some also there be, that would have a *settlement* upon too rigorous terms, though they would not have it executed with cruelty. Most men would fain have their *own opinions* prevail, and too many place too much of their Religion in censuring as Heterodox 'all that differ from them, and think it an evidence of their Godliness that they are Uncharitable; and seeing many minds and waies, they think that punishment must heal them all: Not that they would be driven to their Brethren, but all their Brethren must be driven unto them.

In the midst of all these cross expectations, if you will consult with, and obey the Lord, I dare boldly tell you, it is past all doubt, that you must avoid extreames, and keep as tenderly the golden mean, in this point, as in any that concerns you. If you give Liberty to All that is called Religion, you will soon be judged of no Religion, and loved accordingly. If you so far close with any Party of them that walk in the faith of Christ, and the fear of God, as to deal rigorously with the rest, you will be hated by them as a Persecutor. And if men be oppressed in that which they value above their lives, it will tempt them to neglect their lives for their relief. If you joyn with no Church in the Lords Supper and other holy Communion, lest you seem to espouse the party that you joyn with, you will by most be judged to be

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be carnally wise, self-seeking and irreligious, or one that is yet to seek for your Religion. If you *restrain all* that are against the *great undoubted Truths* of Christ, from *infecting others*, and *own all* that hold the *Necessary Truths in Godliness and Charity*, you will please both God, and most good men. And if you hold your personall Communion with those that are of your own judgement in lesser differences, this will not lose you the affections of the godly (though of a few factious persons it may) as long as you are a tender Father to them all, though you Communicate but with some. The Godly Emperours that suppress the *Arrians* and many Heresies, maintained the *Novatians* in the Liberty of their Churches, and were beloved both by the *Novatians* and the *Orthodox*. But if you *could* be the happy instrument of *taking away* the *Divisions* of the *Godly*, that there might be no such thing as *Parties* or *Separations* known among them (though diversity of opinions there will be) (and if you *could* give all the Ministers of the Nation a pattern of such union of the tolerable dissenting parties in your own Pastors, with whom you shall Communicate) this would be the way to lift you highest in the Esteem and Love of all your people, and make them see that you were appointed of God to be a Healer and Restorer; and to glory in you, and bless God for you as the instrument of our chiefest peace. And O what a precedent and preparative it would be, for the Healing of all the Protestant Churches through the world! And certainly your Highness hath a fair opportunity for this happy work: You enter in a season when we are tired with contention, and sensible of our loss and danger, and tenderer then formerly of one another, and the most angry parties are much asswaged, and there is not so much reproach and bitter-

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ness among the Godly, as lately there hath been. A Spirit of Peace and Healing is lately risen in the hearts of many thousands in the Land, and Ministers that differed, do lovingly associate, and most do feel the smart of our Divisions, and are so prepared for a perfecter closure, that they wait but for some Leading hand. I am certain that there are Healing Principles before us, and a temperament is obvious to judicious charitable men, upon which we might accord. And, though some are too rough to lie in any building, yet moderate men are to be found of every party, that deserveth your encouragement, whom you may use as a precedent to the rest, and instruments to promote this work. It is you that have those great advantages that can facilitate that which to others were impossible: and from you it is expected. In this Book, and one of Confirmation, which I lately published, I confidently affirm, is contained much of that Reforming, Reconciling Truth which must heal us if ever we be healed. And though the study of such matters require much time, yet seeing God commandeth Princes that *the Book of his Law depart not out of their mouthes, but that they meditate in it day and night, that they may do according to it, Josh. 1. 8.* I may suppose that they will be willing also to meditate on such Books as help them to understand it. I should have been as ready as another to censure such an address as this, as guilty of presumptuous boldness, but that I consider what is the work of my Calling, and what it is to be faithfull to the Eternall God, and am conscious of fidelity to your Highness in my boldness, and know that these are necessary Truths, and that *to the Counsellors of Peace is joy, Prov. 12. 20.* and have no interest in this world that I regard, in comparison of the Churches happiness. My earnest Prayers for your
Highness

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Highness shall be, that your own soul being first subjected and devoted wholly unto God, you may Rule us as one that is Ruled by him, and never know any Interest but his, and that which is subservient to him, and may escape that stumbling stone, on which the Princes of the earth do commonly dash themselves in pieces, even by espousing an Interest contrary to Christs, and so growing jealous of his holy waies, and falling out with them: and that God would endue your Highness with that heavenly Wisdom, that is first *Pure*, and then *Peaceable*, Jam. 3. 17. and you may escape the flattering suggestions of the *Wisdom of the flesh*, and serious *Piety* may be the first part of your *Policy*, that so the Eternall God may be engaged in the Protection of your Dominions and You: That you may alwaies remember, that you are Christs and your Peoples, and not your Own: and that the diligent promoting of GODLYNESS and CONCORD may be the study and resolved work of your Life. This is the way, and only this, (let flesh and blood say what it will) to make you truly Great and Happy. God is the Center and Common Interest of all his servants. Keep close to him, and they will all keep close to you. There is no other Common Interest, nor any thing that the Godly do so highly value. If they see that it is indeed for God, they can bear any thing, or do any thing; for they are wholly devoted to him alone. The more of God appeareth on you, and the more you promote his Interest in the world, the highlyer will you be advanced, and the dearer will you be to all that Love him. And even with the ungodly multitude, that Piety is honoured in Princes, that is despised in their neighbours; and the hand of God is plainly demonstrated in their surviving Honour; the names of Pious Princes being Great, when the

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the Greatest leave a name that is vile, even in the
mouthes of common worldly men, who are ready to
keep a Holy-day for a Saint when he is dead, though
they hate or will not imitate the living. Your Zeal for
God will kindle in your subjects a Zeal for you. The
more your Life and Government is Divine, the more
Divine will you appear, and therefore the more Ami-
able and Honourable to the Good, and Reverend to the
evil. Parliaments will Love and Honour you, and ab-
hor the motions that tend to a division, or your just dis-
pleasure. Ministers will heartily Pray for you, and
Praise the Lord for his mercies by you, and teach all the
people to Love, and Honour, and Obey you. The
people will rejoyce in you; and you will be Loved or
Feared of all: Such happiness attendeth serious *Piety*,
when impiety, selfishness, and neglect of Christ is the
shame and ruine of Prince and People. I crave your
Highness pardon of this boldness, and your favourable
acceptance of the tendered service of

A faithfull subject to your Highness,
as you are an Officer of the Uni-
versall King.

Richard Baxter.



I
A PREFACE to those of
the Nobility, Gentry, and Com-
mons of this Land, that adhere to
PRELACY.

Honourable, Worshipful, and Beloved Country-men.

BEING much for your sakes that I have
published the following Disputations, it
behoveth me here to address my self to
you, in a few preparatory words. What
distance there hath long been, and still con-
tinueth between you and your Brethren (for
so they are) is too much known to friends and foes, at home
and abroad, and too much daily manifested by each side.
Shall it still continue, or would you have it healed? If it
must continue, tell us how long, and tell us why: Would you
have it go with us to Eternity? and will you not be recon-
ciled, nor dwell with us in Heaven? It is not in your Pow-
er to shut us out; And will you not be there, if we be there?
Or do you think there will be any Discord where Love is
Perfected, and we are One in God? If you can be content
to be saved with us, and believe that all of both Opinions,
that truly love and fear the Lord, shall live there in dearest

Love for ever ; how can you chuse, when you forethink of this, but Love them now, that you must for ever Love ? and long to be reconciled to them, with whom you must there so harmoniously accord ? You know that Earth is our preparation for Heaven : and such as men would be there, they must begin to be here : As they must be Holy here, that ever will there see the Lord in Holiness ; so must they here be Loving and Peaceable, that ever will live in that perfect heavenly Love and Peace. And why is it that the distance must be so great ? Are we not all the Children of one Father ? Have we not all the same God, the same Redeemer, the same Spirit in us ? (if we are Christians indeed, Rom. 8. 9.) Are we not in the same Baptismal Covenant with God ? Have we not the same holy Scripture for our Rule ? and are we not in the same universal Church, and of the same Religion ? some of you say, No ; to the grief of your friends, and the shame of your own understandings, and uncharitableness. I beseech you bear it, if I touch the sore : For my work is Healing ; and therefore though it Must be touch'd, it shall be as gently as the case will bear. If I may judge by such as I have had any opportunity to know, I must say, that the distance on your part is continued in some by confused apprehensions of the case, and not distinguishing things that differ ; In some by discontents of mind, and too deep a sense of worldly losses, and the things that you take as injuries from others : In some by the advantage of a co-interest and consociation with those Divines that are of your way, and so by a Willingness to think ~~them~~ in the right, and those in the wrong that you take for adversaries : In some by a stiffness and stoutness of disposition, that calls it Constancy to hold your own, and Manliness not to stoop to others, and takes it as dishonourable to seek for Peace, even in Religion with your supposed adversaries ; or to yield to it, at least without much

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importunity: With too many (miserable souls!) it is meer ungodliness, and enmity to that way of Piety, that in many that you differ from, appears: And in the best of you it is a Remissness of Charity, and want of Zeal for the Churches Peace, and the Love and Unity of Brethren. To confute the reasonings of all these sorts, would draw out this Preface to too great a length. The first sort my experience hath caused me to observe. Oft have I fallen into company with men that pour forth bitter odious words against Presbyterie: and I ask them what that Presbyterie is that they speak of with so much abomination? Is it the Name or the Thing; which they so abhor? If the Name, is it not a term of Scripture used by the Holy Ghost? 1 Tim. 4. 14. Are not the Pastors of the Church most frequently called the Presbyters, or Elders? Tit. 1. 5. Act. 14. 23. & 15. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Act. 20. 17. James 5. 14. 1 Pet. 5. 1, &c. It must needs then be the Thing, and not the Name which they abominate. And what is that Thing? most of them cannot tell me. Some presently talk of the disuse of the Common Prayer; as if that were a part of Presbyterie; and Government, and the form of worship were all one. Some presently run to Scotland, and talk of forcing men to Confession of sin, and of their secular enforcement of their Excommunications. But 1. If this be odious, why was it used by the Bishops? Is it good in them, and bad in others? 2. And why plead you for Discipline, and against Toleration, if you so loath the things you plead for? 3. But will you not, when it is known so openly, distinguish the Ministerial Power from the secular? It is known by their Laws and constant Practice, that all the Power that was exercised by Violence, on Body or Estate, by the Assemblies, was derived from the Magistrate, whose Commisisoners also sate among them. And the Bishops in England were seconded by the Sword, as

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much as they. Its known that the Presbyterians commonly maintain in their Writings, that Pastors have no Coercive or Secular Power, but only the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, to exercise on the Conscience, committed to them by Christ. 4. And the writings and practice of those in England, openly manifest it: and its them with whom you have most to do. Some tell me that Presbyterie is the Government of the Church without Bishops: And is it only the Negation of your Prelacy that is the odious thing? Is there nothing Positive odious in Presbyterie? Thus our Belief is condemned by the Papists, even because we Believe not so much as they; when in the Positives of our Faith there is nothing that they can blame. Some make it the odious thing that they have Lay-Elders; But 1. The Presbyterians account them not Lay, but Ecclesiasticks. 2. And what is the Odious harm that these men do among them? They are present, and Consent to the admonishing and censuring of offenders. And what great harm doth that to the Church? Is it because they do not Preach? No sure; in that your Readers are much like them. What work can you Name that these Elders are appointed to, that by your Confession is not to be done? It is not the Work then, that you blame, but that these men do it. 3. But what is this to all that are in this point of your mind, and think that unordained Elders wanting Power to preach, or administer the Sacraments, are not Officers in the Church of Gods appointment? As far as I can understand, the greater part, if not three for one of the English Ministers that you stand at a distance from, are of this mind, and so far against Lay-Elders as well as you; of whom I confess my self to be One. (and that Mr Vines was One, I have shewed you in the End.) Surely then all we are none of the odious Presbyterians in your eyes. Why then is there such a distance? And are Lay-Elders as bad as Lay-Chancellors?

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So also when some have been hotly condemning us as being against Bishops, I ask them what a Bishop is : and what sort of Bishops it is that they mean? And most of them are unable to give me a rational answer to either of the Questions ? But some that are wiser, though they know no more sorts of Bishops but one, yet they can say, that by a Bishop they mean an Ecclesiastick Governour of Presbyters and the people. And if so, then why do they vilifie Bishops under the name of Presbyters ? I have here shewed you that if this be all, then every Parish hath a Bishop where there is a Pastor that hath Chappels, and Curates under him : Or any two Ministers that will subject themselves to a third, do make a Bishop. You delude your selves and others, while you plead only in general for Bishops : We are all for Bishops as well as you. All the Question is, What sort of Bishops they must be ? Whether only Episcopi gregis, or also Episcopi Episcoporum gregis : and if so, Whether they must be Bishops of single Churches, as our Parishes are, or a multitude of Churches, as Diocesses are ? And if the last were granted, Whether these be not properly Archbishops ? In all other parts of the Controversie I find, that the followers of each party go much in the dark, and take much upon trust from the Teachers whom they value, and little understand the true state of our differences : So that it is more by that common providence, commonly called Good luck, that some of them are Protestants or Christians, then from any saving grace within them. Had Papists or Mahometans but as much interest in them, as the Bishops, it is like they would have been as much for them.

As for those of you that know your own Opinions, and the Reasons of them, you must needs know that the Divines called Episcopal in England, are of two sorts, that very much differ from one another : And therefore supposing you

to be the followers of these differing Divines, I shall accordingly further speak to you as you are.

I. The Bishops of England, and their followers from the first Reformation, begun by King Edward the sixth, and revived by Queen Elizabeth, were sound in Doctrine, adhering to the Augustinian Method, expressed now in the Articles and Homilies : They differed not in any considerable points from those whom they called Puritans : But it was in the form of Government, and Liturgy, and Ceremonies that the difference lay.

II. But of late years a new strain of Bishops were introduced, differing much from the old, & yet pretending to adhere to the Articles and Homilies, and to be Fathers of the same Church of England as the rest. I know of none before B^p Mountague of their way, and but few that followed him, till many years after. And at the demolishing of the Prelacy, they were existent of both sorts. Would you know the difference ? If you have read the writings of B^p Jewel, Pilkington, Alley, Parry, Babbington, Bailly, Abbot, Carlton, Morton, Usher, Hall, Davenant, with such like on one side ; and the writings of the New Episcopal Divines that are now most followed, on the other side, I need not tell you the difference. And if you will not be at the labour to know it by their writings, its like that you will not believe it if I tell you. For if you will take all on trust, I must suspect that you will put your trust in them to whom your selves are addicted.

The New party of Episcopal Divines are also subdivided : some of them are (if their Defence of Grotius, and Grotius his own Profession may be believed) of Grotius his Religion, that is, Papists : Others of them, though they draw as neer the Grotians as Protestants may do, yet own not Popery it self. So that we have three notable parties of Episcopal Divines among us. I. The old Orthodox Protestant

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Protestant Bishops and their followers. 2. The New Reconciling Protestant party. 3. The New Reconciling Papists, or Grotians. *A brief taste of the difference I will give you.*

1. The Old Episcopal party, as I said, in Doctrine agreed with the Non-conformist, and held that Doctrine that now we find in the Articles, and Homilies, and in the Synod of Dort, where B^p Carlton, B^p Hall, B^p Davenant, and three more Divines of this Nation were, and had a great hand in the framing of those Canons, and by consenting, did as much to make them obligatory to us in England, as commonly is done in General Councils by the Delegates of most Nations.

But the New Episcopal Divines, both Protestants and Papists, do renounce the Synod of Dort, and the Doctrine of our Articles and Homilies, so far as it is conform thereto, in the points of Predestination, Redemption, Free-will, Effectual Grace, Perseverance, and Assurance of Salvation: following that Doctrine which is commonly maintained by the Jesuites and Arminians in these points.

2. The Old Episcopal Divines did renounce the Pope as Antichrist, and thought it the duty of the Transmarine Churches to renounce him, and avoid communion with his Church, as leprous and unfit for their communion. But the New Episcopal Divines do not only hold that the Pope is not Antichrist, but one part of them (the Protestants) hold that he may be obeyed by the Transmarine Western Churches as the Patriarch of the West, and be taken by us all to be the Principium unitatis to the Catholick Church, and the Roman Determinations still may stand, except those of the last four hundred years, and those, if they obtrude them not on others. So B^p Bramhall, and many more: And M^r Dow, and others tell us that the Canon Law is still in force in England, except some parts of it which
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the Laws of the Land have cast out. And the Grotians teach, that the Church of Rome is the Mistress of other Churches, and the Pope to stand as the Head of the Universal Church, and to Govern it according to the Canons and Decrees of Councils: and they receive the Trent-Creed and Council, and all other Councils which the Pope receives, excepting only against some School-points, and abuse of minners among the Papists, which their Canons and Decrees condemn.

3. The old Episcopal Divines did take Episcopacy to be better than Presbyterian Equality, but not necessary to the Being of a Church, but to the Better being where it may be had. But the New Prelatical Divines of both sorts, unchurch those Churches that are not Prelatical.

4. The Old Episcopal Divines thought that Ordination by Presbyters without Prelates was valid, and not to be done again, though irregular. But the New ones take it to be No Ordination, nor those so ordained to be any Ministers, but Lay-men.

5. And accordingly the Old Episcopal Divines did hold the Forrein Protestant Churches, of France, Savoy, Holland, Geneva, Helvetia, &c. that had no Prelates, as true Churches, and their Pastors as true Ministers of Christ, and highly valued and honoured them as Brethren. But the New sort do disown them all as no true Churches, though they acknowledge the Church of Rome to be a true Church, and their Ordination valid.

6. The Old Episcopal Divines thought it lawful to joyn in actual Communion with the Pastors and Churches that were not Prelatical. But the New ones separate from their communion, and teach the people to do so, supposing Sacramental administrations to be there performed by men that are no Ministers, and have no authority.

7. The Old Episcopal Divines thought it meet to suspend,
silence,