

of God requiring it upon the absolute Necessity of the Being of a Church (what hinderances soever may interpose) but a Divine institution warranting it where it is, and requiring it where it may be had. Every Church therefore which is capable of this form of Government, both may and ought to affect it — but those particular Churches to whom this power and faculty is denied, lose nothing of the true essence of a Church, though they miss some thing of their glory and perfection — And page 32. [Our form of Government — differs little from their own, save in the perpetuity of their (πρὸς αἰῶνα) Moderatorship, and the exclusion of that Lay-Presbyterie which never till this age had footing in the Christian Church.] — And Page 41, 42. [Alas my Brethren, while we do fully agree in all these, and all other Doctrinal and Practical points of Religion, why will you be so uncharitable, as by these frivolous and causeless Divisions to rend the seamless coat of Christ? It is a Title, or a Retinue, or a Ceremony, a Garment, or a Colour, or an Organ Pipe, that can make us a different Church, while we preach and profess the same saving truth, while we desire (as you profess to do) to walk conscientiously with our God according to that one Rule of the Royall Law of our Maker, while we oppose one and the same common enemy, while we unfeignedly endeavour to hold the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of Peace? — For us, we make no difference at all (in the right and interest of the Church) betwixt Clergy and Laity, betwixt the Clergy and Laity of one part and of another: we are all your true Brethren; we are one with you, both in heart and brain, and hope to meet you in the same heaven: but if ye will needs be otherwise minded, we can but bewail the Churches misery and your sin. —] You hear how this good Bishop was far from a separation.

§. 6. How contrary to this, is the foresaid writing of Dr. Hide (which I instance in, because it is come new to my hand) who stigmatizeth the front of his book with the brand of separation, and that of one of the most rigid and unreasonable kinds. Thus he begins, [“ When Conscientious Ministers cannot associate in the Church, and Conscientious Christians cannot go to Church; and Customary Christians go thither, either to little purpose, because to no true worship, or to great shame, because to no true Ministers, tis fit the Church should come to private houses] — Doth

Doth he not begin very wisely and charitably? What could the most Schismatical Papist say more? What! *no true worship! no true Ministers!* and *but Customary Christians* that come thither? Yes, and that's not all: he pursues it with an exprobration, that we are *fallen from our Religion*, (p. 4.) and yet that's not all: he adds, ["*Here seems yet to be a very bad certainty of their Religion; and how can there be a better Certainty of their salvation? unless (that we may gratifie their singularity more than our own veracity) we will say, There may be a company of good Christians out of the Communion of Saints, or a Communion of Saints out of Christs Catholike Church.*] Should we laugh or weep at such a man as this? What! *no communion of Saints*, but with the separating party of the Prelates? Unhappy we that live in England, and can meet with so small a number of these Saints. Is the *Catholike Church* confined to *this party*? and *Salvation to this Church*? Transcendent Papal arrogancy! Its well that these Prelates are not the only Key-keepers of heaven! for we see how we should then be used. I must tell this Dr. and all of his mind, that it is an easier way to Heaven, then we dare hope to come thither by, to joyn our selves to their separating Communion of Saints, and live as the most that we are acquainted with, that are of that Saint-like Communion. He had been better have talked at these rates to men of another Age or Nation, then to us that see the lives of their adherents. We never changed our Religion nor our Church. What if he read his prayers, and I say mine without book; or what if he pray in *white*, and I in *black*? or what if he *kneel* in receiving the Eucharist, and I *sit* or *stand*? or what if he use the *Cross* in baptism, and I baptize no better then the Apostles did without it; do these or such like make us to be of two Religions? Do I change my Religion, if I read with a pair of spectacles, or if I look towards the South or West, rather then the East &c.? We see what these men would make the *Christian Religion* to be. Were the Apostles no Christians, because they had no kneeling at the Eucharist, nor Cross in Baptism, nor Surplice, nor (at least our) Common Prayer-book, &c.? Dare you say they were no Christians? or yet that Christian Religion was one thing then, and another thing now? And for our Churches, we do not only meet in the same places, but we have the same doctrine,

the

the *same worship* (in every part, though he talk of our no true worship; as if Praying, Praising God, &c. were no true worship:) the things changed were by the imposers and defenders (see Dr. *Burges's* Rejoynder) professed to be no parts at all of worship, but meer accidents; we have the *same people*, save here and there a few that separate by yours and others seducement, and some vile ones that we cast out; we have abundance of the *same Ministers* that we had. And yet must we have *no worship, Ministry, Communion of Saints, or Salvation*, because we have only a Parochial and not a Diocesan Episcopacy? Forsooth we have lost our Religion, and are all lost men, because our Bishops have but single Parish churches to oversee (which they find a load as heavy as they can bear,) and we have not one Bishop to take the Government of an hundred or two hundred Churches. At *Rome* he is a damned man that believeth not in the Pope: and is out of the Catholike Church, because he is out of the subjection of the Pope: and with these men, we are lost men, if we never so much believe in Christ, because we believe not in an Archbishop, and are out of the Catholike Church and Communion of Saints, because we will not be ruled by such Rulers as these. And what's all this, to such Counties as this where I live, and most else in *England* that I hear of, that know of no Bishop they have (and they rejected none,) nor doth any come and command them any Obedience? Must we be unchristened, unchurcht and damned, for not obeying, when we have none to obey, or none that calls for our obedience? But I shall let these men pass, and leave them in their *separation*, desiring that they had Catholike spirits and principles. This much I have said to let men see, that there is no possibility of our union with this sort that are resolved on a *separation*; and that it is not these Novelists and Dividers, but the ancient Episcopal party of *England* that we can easily agree with.

§. 7. The next that I shall instance in, that was agreed with these Principles of ours, is the late Reverend and Learned Bishop *Usher*, of whose Concord with us, I have two proofs. The one was his own profession to my self. The other is his own writings, especially his Propositions given in to King *Charles*, now printed, called [*The Reduction of Episcopacy to the form of Synodical Government, received in the ancient Church*] which consisteth

consisteth of four Propositions (having first proved that all Presbyters have the power of Discipline and Church-govern- ment :) the first alloweth the single Rector of the Parish to take notice of the scandalous, reprove, admonish, and debar them from the Lords Table. The second is, that in every Rurall Deanry, all the Pastors within the Precinct, may by the Chorepiscopus or Suffragan, be every month Assembled in a Synod, and according to the Major part of their voices, he conclude all matters that shall be brought into debate before them, as Excommunication &c. The third is, for a Diocesan Synod once or Twice a year, whereby the consent of the Major part of the Rectors, all things might be concluded by the Bishop or Superintendent, call him whether you will, or in his absence, by one of the suffragans, whom he deposes to be Moderator. The fourth is for Provincial and National Synods in like sort.

§. 8. And when I had perused these papers (in *M. S.*) I told him that yet one thing was left out, that the Episcopal party would many of them stick at more then he, and that is, a Negative voice in Ordination in the President, to which and the rest I proposed this for accommodation in brief [1. *Let every particular or Parish Church have a Bishop and Presbyters to assist him, where possibly they can be had.* 2. *Let all these Associate and their several Associations have a stated President.* 3. *Let all men be at liberty for the name, whether they will call him a Bishop, President, Moderator, Superintendent, or the like.* 4. *And for the Negative voice in Ordination, let all Ministers of the Association agree that de facto they will not Ordain without him, but in Cases of Necessity; but let every man be left free to his own Principles on which he shall ground this practice, and not be bound to consent, that de jure a Negative vote is due to the President.*] These terms did I propose to the Bishop for Accommodation, and intreated him to tell me plainly his judgement, whether they are satisfactory and sufficient for the Episcopal party to yield to for Peace and Communion? and his answer was this [*They are sufficient, and moderate men will accept them, but others will not, as I have tried: for many of them are offended with me for propounding such terms.*] And thus this Reverend Bishop and I were agreed for Peace in a quarter of an hour; (the truth of which, I solemnly profess :) and so would all the Ministers and Christians

in England, if they were not either wiser or foolisher, honeſter or diſhoneſter then he and I. And this I leave on Record to Poſterity, as a teſtimony againſt the dividers and contenders of this age, [*That it was not long of men of the temper and principles of this Reverend Archbiſhop and my ſelf, that the Epiſcopal party and their diſſenting Brethren in England, were not ſpeedily and heartily agreed: for we actually did it.*] To no honour of mine, but to the honour of this peaceable man, and the ſhame of the unpeaceable hinderers or refuſers of our Reconcili-
ation, let this teſtimony live, that Poſterity may know whom to blame for our Calamities; they all extoll Peace when they reject it and deſtroy it.

Dr. Holdſworth.

Dr. Forbs.

§. 9 For a third witneſs of the Reconcilable-
neſs of the Moderate Epiſcopal party on theſe terms, I may well produce Dr. Holdſworth; who ſubſcribed theſe ſame Propoſitions of Biſhop Uſher to the King: and therefore was a Conſenter to the ſame way of Accommodation.

§. 10. A fourth witneſs is Dr. Forbs of Scotland, who having written purpoſely a Book called his *Irenicon*, for Accommodation on ſuch terms, I need to ſay no more of him, but refer you to the Book. I ſhall name no more of the Epiſcopal party. Theſe four are enow to my purpoſe.

Gataker.

§. 11. That the *Presbyterians* (of England ſpecially) are willing to cloſe upon theſe terms of a fixed Moderator, I prove, 1. By the profeſt Conſent of that Reverend Learned ſervant of Chriſt Mr. Thomas Gataker, a Member of the late Aſſembly at Weſtminſter, who hath profeſſed his judgement of this matter in a Book againſt Lilly. I refer you to his own words, for brevity ſake.

The London Province.

§. 12. My next witneſs, and for brevity, many in one, ſhall be Mr. Ceree, and the Province of London, citing him in their *Jus Divinum Miniſterii*, pag. Append. 122. the words are theſe [*That the Ancient Fathers in the point of Epiſcopacy, differ more from the high Prelatiſt then from the Presbyterian: for the Presbyterians alwayes have a Preſident to guide their actions, which they acknowledge may be perpetual durance vita modo ſe bene geſſerit; or temporary to avoid inconvenience, which Biſhon takes hold of as advantagious, becauſe ſo little diſcrepant, (as he ſaith) from what he maintaineth.*] See the reſt there.

§. 13. 3. *Beza* (the Leader against Prelacy) saith, *de grad. Beza.*
Minist. Evang. Instituti Divini est, ut in omni cœtu Presbytero-
rum unus sit qui ordine præeat & præsit reliquis. It is of Divine
Institution that in every Assembly of Presbyters, there be one that
go before and be above the rest. And dividing Bishops into Divine,
 Humane, and Diabolical, he makes the Humane tolerable Pre-
 lacy to be the fixed President.

§. 14. 4. *Calvin* (who is accused for ejecting Episcopacy) *Calvin.*
 besides what he writes of it to *Card. Sadolet*, saith in his *Insti-*
tut. lib. 4. cap. 4. §. 1. [Ea cautione totam suam Oeconomiam
composuerunt (Ecclesie veteris Episcopi) ad unicam illam Dei
verbi normam, ut facile videas nihil fere hac parte habuisse à
verbo Dei alienum.] §. 2. [Quibus ergo docendi munus in-
stitutum erat, eos omnes nominabant Presbyteros. Illi ex suo nu-
mero in singulis civitatibus unum eligebant, cui specialiter da-
bant titulum Episcopi: ne ex aequalitate, ut fieri solet, dissidia nas-
cerentur. Neque tamen sic honore & dignitate superior erat Epis-
copus, ut Dominium in Collegas haberet: sed quas partes habet
Consul in Senatu, ut referat de negotiis, sententias roget, consulendo,
monendo, hortando, aliis præeat, autoritate sua totam actionem
regat; & quod decretum Communi Consilio fuerit, exequatur:
id munus sustinebat Episcopus in Presbyterorum cœtu] & §. 4.
sine [Gubernationem sic constituti nonnulli Hierarchiam vocarunt,
nomine (ut mihi videtur) improprio, certe scripturarum inusitato:
Cavere enim voluit spiritus sanctus, ne quis principatum aut do-
minationem seminaret, quum de Ecclesie gubernatione agitur.
Verum si rem, omisso vocabulo, intueamur (N.B.) reperimus
veteres Episcopos non aliam regendæ Ecclesie formam voluisse
figere ab ea quam Deus verbo suo præscripsit] This he writes
 after the mention of Archbishops and Patriarchs, as well as of
 Bishops governing in Synods.

§. 15. Where by the way let me give you this observation,
 that Bishops Governing but in Synods can have no other power
 of Government then the Synods themselves have: But Synods
 themselves as such are not directly for Government, but for
 Concord and Communion of Churches, and so consequently for
 well-governing the several flocks: Nor hath a Synod any Go-
 verning Power over a particular Pastor, as being his superiour
 appointed to that end: but only a Power of Consent or Agree-
 ment:

ment : to which for unity, and communion sake, he is consequentially obliged; not by Virtue of Gods Command, that requireth us to obey the Higher Power (for three Pastors are not made so the Rulers of one) but by virtue of Gods commands that require us to do all things in Unity, and to maintain the Peace and Concord of the Churches, and to avoid Divisions and discord.

§. 16. If any think that this doth too much favour the Congregational way, I must tell him that it is so true and clear, that the Episcopal men that are moderate acknowledge it. For instance: the Reverend Bishop *Usher* did, without asking, of himself profess to me that it was his judgement [*that certainly Councils or Synods are not for Government but for Unity, and that a Bishop out of Council hath the same Governing Power as all the Council, though their vote may bind him for Unity to consent.*]

§. 17. This being so, it must needs follow that an Archbishop, or the President of a National, Provincial, Diocesan, or Classicall Assembly, or of any Association of the Pastors of many Churches, hath no superiour Governing power over the Parochial or Congregational Bishop of one Church; but only in concurrence with the Synod, a Power of Determining by way of Agreement, such points as he shall be obliged for Unity and Communion to consent to and perform, if they be not contrary to the word of God. This evidently follows from this Reverend Archbishops doctrine, and the truth.

§. 18. And if any shall think that the Presbyterians will not yield that a particular Church do ordinarily consist but of one full Congregation, I confute them by producing their own Concessions: in the *London Ministers Jus Divinum Ministerii*. Appendix. pag. 123. they plainly say, that [*The later (Bishops) were Diocesan, the former (that is the Bishops of the first or ancient times) were Bishops only of one Congregation.*] And pag. 82. they say [*These Angels were Congregational, not Diocesan: In the beginning of Christianity, the number of Believers, even in the greatest Cities were so few, as that they might well meet, om̄i tò autò in one and the same place. And these were called, the Church of the City, and therefore to ordain Elders ἐπί ἐκκλησιῶν and κατὰ πόλιν, are all one in Scripture*] Thus far they yield to the Congregational men.

§. 19. 5. One other witness of the Presbyterians readiness to accommodate on these terms, I shall give, and no more, and that is Mr. *Richard Vines*, a man that was most eminent for his management of the Presbyterian cause in the Assembly, and at *Uxbridge Treaty*, and in the *Isle of Wight*; the Papers there presented to the King are to be seen in Print. When we did set up our Association in this County, I purposing to do nothing without advise, and designing a hearty closure of all sober Godly men, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational and *Erafrican*: did consult first about it by Letters with Mr. *Vines*, and in his answer to mine, he approved of the design, and thought our distance very small, and yielded to a fixed Presidency, though not to a Negative voice: (which I would have none forced to.) Because they are too long to put into this section, I will adjoyn that part of his Letter that concerns this subject, prefixing one that went next before it, against the selling of the Church lands, that the Bishops may see how little such men as he consented to it or liked it; and may take heed of charging them with Sacrilege.

§. 20. Lastly the *Erafricans* are known to be for Episcopacy it self, so be it, it come in by the power of the Magistrate. And that nothing proposed crosseth the Principles of the *Congregational* men, I have shewed before: But whether really we shall have their consent to a Peace upon these proposed terms, I know not; because their writings that I have seen, do not meddle with the point, save only one Congregational man, Mr. *Giles Firmin*, hath newly written for this very thing, in his *Treatise of Schism against Dr. Owen*, page 66, 67, 68. I desire you to read the words to save me the labour of transcribing them. In which he giveth us to understand, that some of the Moderate Congregational Party, will joyn with us in a Reconciliation on these terms: Whether many or all will do so, I know not. Let their practise shew whether they will be the first or the last in the Healing of our Divisions. But if they refuse, we will not for that refuse to Love them as Brethren, and study to perform our duty towards them: as knowing that we suffer much more when we come short of our duty and love to others, then when they come short of their duty and love to us.

Mr. Richard Vines his Letters before mentioned as a Testimony that the Presbyterian Ministers are not against a fixed President, or that Episcopacy which Bishop Hall, &c. would have been satisfied with.

Reverend Friend,

I Received your two last; and as for a Schoolmaster I shall do the best I can to propound one to you, &c. As for your Question about Sacriledge, I am very near you in present opinion. The point was never stated nor debated in the Isle of Wight. I did for my part decline the dispute: for I could not maintain the cause as on the Parliaments side: and because both I and others were unwilling, it was never brought to any open debate: The Commissioners did argue it with the King: but they went upon grounds of Law and Policy; and it was only about Bishops Lands: for they then averred the continuance of D. and Chapters Lands to the use of the Church. Some deny that there is any sin of Sacriledge under the Gospel: and if there be any, they agree not in the definition: Some hold an alienation of Church goods in case of Necessity; and then make the Necessity what and as extensive as they please. The most are of opinion that whiles the Church lies so unprovided for, the donations are not alienable sine Sacrilegio. If there were a surplussage above the competent maintenance, it were another matter. Its cleer enough that the Donors wills are frustrated, and that their General intention and the General use, viz. the maintenance of Gods worship and Ministers, should stand, though the particular use might be superstitious. I cited in my last Sermon before the Parliament (unprinted) a place touching Sacriledge out of Mr. Hildersham on Psal. 51. It did not please. You may find the words in his book by the Index. If his description of it be true, then you will still be of your own mind. I dare encourage no purchasers; but do desire to have some more of your thoughts about it, and I shall return you mine: as I do my thanks for your excellent and worthily esteemed Treatise which you vouchsafed to prefix my name before. Sir, I have no more time or paper but to subscribe myself

Your truly loving Friend

R. Vines.

London, July 20.

Sir

T Hough I should have desired to have understood your thoughts about the point of Sacriledge, that so I might have formed up my thoughts into some better order and clearer issue then I did in my last: yet to shew unto you how much I value this correspondence with you, I am willing to make some return to your last. And first touching the Schoolmaster intended, &c. ——— The Accommodation you speak of is a great and a good work for the gaining into the work such useful parts and interests as might very much heal the discord, and unite the strength of men to oppose destructive ways, and in my opinion more feasible with those men then any other, if they be moderate and godly: for we differ with them rather about some pinacles of the Temple then the foundation or abutment thereof. I would not have much time spent in a formula of doctrine or worship: for we are not much distant in them and happily no more then with one another: But I would have the agreement attempted in that very thing which chiefly made the division, and that is Government; heal that breach and heal all: there begin and therein labour all you can. What influence this may have upon others I know not in this exulceration of mens minds: but the work speaks it self good, and your reasons for the attempting of it are very considerable. For the Assembly, you know, they can meddle with just nothing but what is sent unto them by Parliament or one house thereof (as the order saith) and for that reason never took upon them to intermeddle therein. What they do in such a thing, must be done as private persons, and not as in the capacity of Assembly men, except it come to them recommended by the Parliament. The great business is to find a temperament in ordination and government, in both which the exclusion or admittance of Presbyters (dicis causa) for a shadow, was not regular: and no doubt the Presbyters ought and may both teach and govern, as men that must give account of souls. For that you say of every particular Church having many Presbyters, it hath been considered in our Assembly, and the Scripture speaks fair for it, but then the Church and City was of one extent: no Parishes or bounds assigned out to particular men (as now) but the Ministers preached in circuitu or in common and stood in relation to the Churches as to one Church, though

meeting

meeting haply in divers houses or places (as is still the manner of some Cities in the Low Countries.) If you will follow this model, you must lay the City all into one Church particular, and the Villages half a dozen of them into a Church: which is a business here in England of vast design and consequence. And as for that you say of a Bishop over many Presbyters, not over many Churches; I believe no such Bishops will please our men: but the notion as you conceive it, hath been and is the opinion of learned men. Grocius in his commentary on the Acts in divers places and particularly Cap. 17. saith, that as in every particular Synagogue (many of which was in some one City) there was ἀρχιεπίσκοπος; such was the Primitive Bishop: and doubtless the first Bishops were over the community of Presbyters as Presbyters in joint relation to one Church or Region; which Region being upon the increase of believers, divided into more Churches, and in after times those Churches assigned to particular men: yet he the Bishop continued Bishop over them still. For that you say, he had a Negative voice, thats more then ever I saw proved, or ever shall, I believe for the first two hundred years; and yet I have laboured to enquire into it. That makes him Angelus princeps, not Angelus præses as Dr. Reynolds saith Calvin denies that, & makes him Consul in Senatu. or as the Speaker in the house of Parliament, which as I have heard that D. B. did say, was but to make him fore-man of the Jury. Take heed of yeilding a Negative voice. As touching the Introduction of ruling Elders, such as are modelled out by Parliament, my judgement is sufficiently known: I am of your judgement in the point. There should be such Elders as have power to preach as well as rule: I say power; but how that will be effected here I know not, except we could or would return to the Primitive nature and constitution of particular Churches: and therefore it must be helped by the combination of more Churches together into one as to the matter of Government, and let them be still distinct as to Word and Sacraments. That is the easiest way of accommodation that yet occurs to my thoughts. Sir I fear I trouble you too long, but it is to shew how much I value you and your Letters to me: for which I thank you, and rest

Yours in the best bonds

R. Vines.

Septemb. 7.

Though

T Hough Mr. Vines here yield not the Negative Voice to have been *de facto* in the first or second age, nor to be *de jure*, yet he without any question yielded to the stating of a President, *durante vita*, if he prove not unworthy, (which was one chief point that I propounded to him.) And I make no doubt but he would have yielded to a voluntary Consent of Presbyters *de facto* not to ordain without the President, but in case of Necessity: But that I did not propound to him. And the difficulties that are before us *de facto* in setting up a Parochial Episcopacy which he mentioneth, I have cleared up already in these papers, shewing partly that the thing is already existent, and partly how more fully to accomplish it. All would be easie, if Holy, Self-denying, Charitable hearts were ready to entertain and put in execution the honest, healing Principles that are before us, and obvious to an ordinary understanding: Or (if still the Pastors will be contentions) if Holy, Peaceable Magistrates would seriously take the work in hand, and drive on the sloathful and quarrelsome Ministers to the performance of their duty.

The Episcopacy of the Protestant Churches in Poland.

A Drian. Regenvolscius Histor. Ecclesiast. Sclavonicar. Provinc. lib. 3. page 424.

N. B. Quoniam à prima Ecclesiarum in minoris Polonia Provincia Reformatione, usu & consuetudine receptum est, ut è senioribus hisce omnium Districtum, quorum nomina 36. recensuimus, unus Primarius, sive in ordine Primus, qui vulgo Superintendens Ecclesiarum minoris Polonia vocatur, Synodisque Provincialibus presidet; totius Synodi Provincialis auctoritate, consensu ac suffragiis eligatur, ac, non quidem per impositionem manuum, (propter evitandam Primatus alicujus suspicionem, aut juris ac potestatis alicujus in ceteros seniores speciem,) benedictione tantum, fraterna appreciatione, Officiorum qua hocce concernunt munus prelatione, piisque totius Synodi precibus, Regiminis duntaxat & Ordinis boni in Ecclesia Dei causa, inauguratur ad declaratur; No-

mina Primariorum horum Seniorum, sive Minor. Polon. Ecclesi-
arum superintendendum.]——

The Churches of the Bohemian Confess. called Unitatis Fra-
trum, have among the Pastors of the Churches, their Conseniors,
and Seniors, and one President over all. *Id. Regen. Voss. p. 315.*
[Seniores sive superattendentes Ecclesiarum Bohemicarum & Mo-
navicarum, &c. — plerumq; e Consenioribus eliguntur, ac
per impositionem Manuum publicamq; inaugurationem, in ma-
nus Senioratus ordinantur ac consecrantur. Et longa consue-
tudine in Ecclesiis trium harum provinciarum receptum est,
ut e senioribus unus Primarius (sive in ordine Primus)
quem vulgo illi Præsidem vocant, non eligatur quidem, nec pecu-
liariter Ordinetur, sed post decessum aliorum, ipso Ordinationis
tempore prior succedat.]

if Holy Self-deceiving, Charitable heart
tain and put in execution the honest, healing Principles that are
before us, and obvious to an ordinary understanding: Or (if still
the Pastors will be contentious) if Holy, Peaceable Magistrates
would seriously take the work in hand, and drive on the faithful
and quarrelsome Ministers to the performance of their duty.

The Episcopacy of the Protestant Churches in Poland.
Dign. Regensvossii, Histor. Ecclesiae. Schizmaticar. Pro-
vinc. lib. 3. page 424.
N. B. Quoniam a primis Ecclesiis in minoribus Polonis Pro-
vinciis Reformatione, et postea Reformatione, ut s. scri-
bitur, hunc ordinem Episcopatus, quoniam nomen s. Reformationis
nunc Primarius, sive in ordine Primus, qui vulgo Reformationis
Ecclesiarum minoribus Polonis vocatur, Synodusque Provincialis
præstat; totius Synodi Provincialis auctoritate, consensu ac suf-
fragio eliguntur, ac non videtur per impositionem manuum, (prop-
ter constantem Primatus auctoritatem) benedictione tantum pro-
visi aliter in ceteris (senioribus) benedictione tantum pro-
visi approbatione, Officiorumque hanc hanc concernent manuum pro-
fatione, quibus, totius Synodi prædictæ, Reformationis hanc hanc
hanc boni in Ecclesia Dei causa, inauguratur ad decessum, &c.

The Fourth
DISPUTATION:
Of a Form of
LITURGY:

How far it is Necessary, Desirable, or Warrantable; In order to a Peace between the Parties that differ herein, and too uncharitably prosecute their difference.

By Richard Baxter.



LONDON,
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Qu. *Whether a stinted Liturgy, or form of Worship, be a desirable means for the Peace of these Churches?*



Unnecessary prolixity is not so acceptable to the Reader that loves both Truth and time, but that I may take it for granted that you desire me to leave out superfluities in this Dispute. 1. The Etymologists shall be better agreed among themselves of the derivation of *λεειτουργία* and *λεειτουργία*, before I will trouble you with their judgments. But we are commonly agreed

that *λεειτουργία* is only used for any *Ministration*, but more strictly; and usually for a *publick Ministration*, or any work of publick office; and yet more strictly from the Septuagint, Ecclesiastick writers have almost confined it to *Holy Ministration*, or *publick service* or *Worship of God*. The several uses of the word in Scripture, and prophane and Ecclesiastick Writers, you may find in so many Lexicons at pleasure, that I shall pass by the rest. *Bellarmino* doth too grossly pretend that when its applied absolutely to holy things, the word is taken awayes in the New Testament, for a *Ministration in*

sacrificing. A little observation may confute that mistake. Nor is it agreeable either to Scripture or the use of the Antient Church, to call only *Forms* of publick worship that are *written*, by the name of a *Liturgy*. Whether it were *Form*, or no *Form*, *Writren* or not *written*, *Premeditated* or *extemporate*, *Words* or *Actions*, all the *Publick holy Ministration, or service* of God, was of old called *The Churches Liturgy*: And so men may be for a *Liturgy* that are not for a *Prayer Book*. But latter times have most used the word for those *stinted forms*, that some call *Offices* containing both the *Rubrick* or *Directory*, and the *Form* of words prescribed as the matter of the service. And seeing that those that now we speak to, understand it in *this* sense, we must speak as they do, while we are speaking to them.

2. Note that it is not any *one* part of Publick Worship that we speak of *alone*, either *Prayer*, *Praise*, or other part, but we speak of the *whole frame*, and therefore of a *Liturgy*, or *Prescribed words* in *General*, because that is the controversie that the times call us to decide.

That which I take to be the Truth, and usefull to our Healing, I shall lay down in these ten Propositions following.

Prop. 1. A *stinted Liturgy* is in it self *Lawfull*.

2. A *stinted Liturgy* in some parts of publick holy service is ordinarily necessary.

3. In the Parts where it is not of Necessity, it may not only be submitted to, but desired when the Peace of the Church requireth it.

4. There is so great difference between Ministers, and People, and Times, that it may be convenient and eligible to some, at some times, and unfit and not eligible to others, and at other times.

5. The Ministers and Churches that earnestly desire it, should not by the Magistrate be generally or absolutely forbidden the use of a convenient prescribed Liturgy.

6. To prescribe a frame of *stinted service*, or *Prayer*, &c. and lay a Necessity, or the Peace of the Church upon it, and to punish, silence, suspend, excommunicate, or reproach the able, peaceable, godly Ministers; or people that (justly or unjustly) scruple the using of it, is so great a sin, that no conscientious Ministers should

should attempt it, or desire it, nor any godly Magistrate suffer it.

7. The safest way of composing such a Publike Form, is to take it all, for matter and words, out of the Holy Scriptures.

8. Yet is not this of such Necessity, but that we may join in it, or use it, if the form of words be not from Scripture.

9. The matter of a common Liturgy, in which we expect any General Concord, should not be any unnecessary things, much less things doubtfull, or forbidden.

10. Forms of Publike Prayer should not be constantly used by Ministers that are able to pray without them: and none else should be admitted ordinarily to the Ministry, but such as are able competently to pray without such Forms; unless in great Necessities of the Church.

These ten Propositions are the summ of all that I shall trouble you with, which I shall now review, and prove in order.

Prop. 1. **A** Stinted Liturgy is in it self lawfull.

This is thus proved:

Argument 1. That which is not directly or consequentially forbidden by God, remaineth lawfull: A stinted Liturgy is not directly or consequentially forbidden by God: therefore it remaineth lawfull.

The Major is undoubted, because nothing but a Prohibition can make a thing unlawfull. Sin is a transgression of a Law: Where there is no Law, there is no transgression: And yet I have heard very Reverend men answer this, that it is enough that it is not commanded, though not forbidden. Which is plainly to deny both Scripture and Civil Principles. Precept makes Duty, or a Necessity *ex praecepto*: Prohibitions make an Omission sinfull, which is prohibited, as Precepts prove an Omission sinfull of the Duty commanded. But *Licium* which is between Duty and sin, is that which is neither commanded nor forbidden. And such an act is not *Actus Moralis*, being neither good nor evil.

Here note these two things. 1. That though we say that a Liturgy is in it self lawfull, and that all things not forbidden are Lawfull;

Lawfull; yet in the actual exercise *hic & nunc*, it will be hard to find one actual use of it, which is not a duty, or a sin. For though I am not of their mind that think every act both simply and respectively considered is a duty, or a sin (For 1. then every act must be *Actus Moralis*, and so deliberate and chosen, which is not true; as for instance, the winking of the eye, &c. 2. Then nothing were indifferent. 3. Then every act must have a Reason for it. 4. And the Consciences of Christians must be perpetually tormented: as *e. g.* to give a reason when I walk, why I set the right foot forward before the left; or when two eggs of a bigness are before me, why I take one rather than the other: these are not moral acts.) Yet I must needs think that in the worship of God, its hard to imagine such a case, in which the using of a Liturgy will do neither good nor harm: Or in which a man cannot discern, whether it be like to do more good or harm: and so make it the matter of election or refusal. And therefore as *Paul* makes *Marriage indifferent in it self*, when its hard to find a case, in which it shall not be a duty or a sin to particular persons, so say I of the point in question: and yet possibly sometime such cases there may be. A man sometimes in Prudence may find that constantly to use a form would be to him a sin, by reason of the ill consequents, and so it would be constantly to disuse it: And therefore may find himself bound (by accident) sometimes to use, and sometimes to disuse it: And yet may see no reason at all, as to the particular day and hour, why he should use or disuse it this day rather than another, or in the the Morning rather than the Evening.

2. Note also that God being the supream Lawgiver of the Church, having by *Moses* given a Law to *Israel*, did in general command, *Deut. 12. 32.* that they should *add nothing thereto, nor take ought therefrom*: And consequently, we may conclude it prohibited under the Gospel; Nay indeed the very prohibition of self-idolizing makes it a sin for any man to arrogate that Legislation which is the Prerogative of God. For that were to deifie himself. And so this General prohibition doth make all unwarrantable Additions to be sinfull, that is, all Additions which God hath not authorized men to make. But then, such additions are not *sinfull formally*, because *not commanded*, but because *so-bidden* by the General prohibition of [*not adding.*]
Now

Now for the Minor, *that a stinted Liturgy is not forbidden*, we need no other proof then that no Prohibition can be produced. If it be prohibited, it is either by some *special Prohibition*, or by the *General prohibition of not adding*: But it is by neither of these, therefore not at all. *Speciall prohibition* I never yet saw any produced. God hath nowhere forbidden a form of Prayer. And the *General prohibition of not adding*, extends not to it. For 1. It is the *Worship of God* which is the matter that we are there forbidden to add: But the Praying with a *form*, or *without a form*, as such, are neither of them any part of the worship of God; nor so intended (as we now suppose) by them that use it: It is but an indifferent *Mode or Circumstance* of Worship, and not any *part* of Worship. 2. If Prayer with a form be an Addition to Gods Worship, then so is praying *without a form* (for God only Commands Prayer, but neither commands a form, nor that we *forbear a form*) But the Consequent is false, as the Opponents will confess; therefore so is the Antecedent. 3. Undetermined mutable Modes and Circumstances are none of the prohibited Additions, but left to humane determination. But such is the form in question. God hath bid us *Preach*, but not told us whether we shall study a *form of express words* alwayes before hand, but left that to prudence: more instances will be added under the next Argument; and therefore I shall now forbear them.

Argum. 2. *The Prudential Determination of such Modes and Circumstances of worship as God hath left to humane Determination, is Lawfull. A stinted form or Liturgy may be such a Determination; therefore a stinted form or Liturgy may be (or is in it self) lawfull.* Argum. 2.

The Major is past doubt, if the Hypothesis be first proved, that some modes and circumstances of worship are left to humane Prudential Determination. And thats easily proved thus.

Those Modes or Circumstances of worship which are Necessary in *Genere*, but left undetermined of God in *specie*, are left by God to humane Prudential Determination: (else an Impossibility should be necessary.) But many such there are that are Necessary in *Genere*, but left undetermined of God

in specie, therefore many such are left to humane Prudential Determination.

The Minor is sufficiently proved by instances. God hath made it our Duty to Assemble for his Publick Worship: But he hath not told us in what *place*; nor in what *seats* each person shall sit. Yet some *place* is necessary: and therefore it is left to mans Determination: Nor hath he tied us for weekly Lectures to any one day; nor on the Lords day, to begin at any *one* certain *hour*: and yet *some day and hour* is necessary; which therefore man must determine of. So God hath commanded us to read the Scriptures: But hath not told us whether they shall be *printed or written*; whether we shall read *with Spectacles or without*; what *Chapter* we shall read on such or such a day; nor how much at a time; Ministers must *preach* in season and out of season: But whether they must *stand or sit*, or *what text* they shall preach on, or how long; and whether in a *prepared form* of words or not; whether they shall *use notes*, or *not*, or use the *Bible*, or recite texts by memory, &c. none of these things are determined by God; and therefore are left to humane prudential determination. Abundance of such undetermined circumstances may be enumerated about Singing, Praying, Sacraments and all duties.

Now that the form of Liturgy is of this nature is manifest; God hath bid us Pray; but whether in fore-conceived words, or not, or whether in words of other mens first conceiving or our own, or whether oft in the same words or various, and whether with a Book or without, these are no parts of Prayer at all, but only such undetermined Circumstances or Modes as God hath left to our prudential Determination: And the forementioned Instances, about Reading, Preaching Singing, &c. are as pertinent to our question as this of Prayer, they being all parts of the Liturgy, or publick service, as well as this.

Argum. 3.

Argum. 3. *There are many expresse Examples in Scripture for forms of Gods service: therefore they are unquestionably lawful.* The *Psalms* of David were of common use in the Synagogues and Temple-worship, and also in Private; and indited to such ends. *Hezekiah* commanded the Levites to sing Praise unto the Lord, with the words of David and of *Asaph the seer*, 2 Chron. 29. 30. The 92. Psalm is entitled [*A Psalm or song for the Sabbath*]