

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*]

Sabbath day] Psal. 102 is entitled, *A Prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.*] The rest were of ordinary publike use. *Psalms* are Prayers and Praises to God for the most part : and both as Prayers, and Praises, and as *Psalms*, they are part of the Liturgy. 1 Chron. 16. 7. [*On that day David delivered first this Psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hands of Asaph and his brethren.*] The song of *Moses* is delivered in form, *Exod.* 15. And the Saints in the *Revelations* 15. 3. are said to sing the song of *Moses*, *Numb.* 10. 35, 36. there is an oft-repeated form of *Moses* prayer. There is a form for the people, *Deut.* 21. 7, 8. *Judg.* 5. there is *Deborahs Song* in form. There is a form of Prayer, *Joel* 2. 17. Abundance more may be mentioned but for tediousness. I shall now only add, 1. That the *Lords Prayer* is a form directed to God as in the third person, and not to man only as a Directory for prayer in the second person : it is not [*Pray to God your Father in Heaven that his Name may be hallowed, his Kingdom come, &c.*] But [*Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, &c.*] And it seems by the Disciples words that thus *John* taught his Disciples to pray, *Luk.* 11. 1. So that we have in the Scripture the mention of many set forms of service to God, which therefore we may well use.

Argum. 4. *It is Lawful to pray to God in the set words that we find in Scripture : but so to pray (in the set words of Scripture) is a form ; therefore a form is Lawful.* Argum. 4.

I do not here plead example, as in the last Argument, but the Lawfulness of praying in *Scripture words*. They that deny this, must be so singular and unreasonable, as that there is no need of my confutation for the manifesting of their error. And that it is to us a set form if we take it out of Scripture, as well as if we compose it, or take it out of another Book, is past all question. A multitude of the prayers of holy men are left on record in the Scripture, beside those that were the prescribed forms of those times : He that will but turn to his Concordance to the word [*O Lord*] and then to all the cited Texts, shall find many score, if not hundred Texts that recite the prayers of the Saints ; which when we use, we use a form, which we there find written.

Argum. 5. *Christ hath left us his Approbation of such forms : Argum. 5. therefore*

therefore we may use them.

His Approbation is proved, 1. By his owning and citing *Dauids Psalms*, *Luk. 20. 42. & 24. 44. &c.* 2. By his using a *Hymn* with his Disciples at the Pasover or Eucharist, which we have great reason to think was a form that had been of use among the Jews. But however, if Christ had newly then composed it, yet was it a form to his Disciples. 3. By his thrice repeating the same words in his own prayer. 4. By his teaching his Disciples a form, as *John* taught his. 5. By his never expressing the least dislike of the old Jewish custom of using forms: nor doth Scripture anywhere repeal it, or forbid it. 6. The Apostles command the use of *Psalms* and *Hymns*, which cannot be ordinary in the Church without forms. All this proveth Christs approbation.

Argum. 6. *If it be lawful for the people to use a stinted form of words in publike prayer, then is it in it self lawful for the Pastors: but it is lawful for the people: for the Pastors prayer (which they must pray over with him, and not only hear it) is a stinted form to them, even as much as if he had learnt it out of a Book. They are to follow him in his method and words, as if it were a Book prayer.*

Argum. 7. *It is lawful to use a form in Preaching: therefore a stinted Liturgy is lawful.* 1. Because preaching is a part of that Liturgy. 2. Because the reason is the same for prayer, as for that in the main. Now that studied formed Sermons are lawful, is so commonly granted, that it shall save me the labour of proving it (which were easie.)

Argum. 8. *That which hath been the practice of the Church in Scripture times, and down to this day, and is yet the practice of almost all the Churches of Christ on earth, is not like to be unlawful: but such is the use of some stinted forms of publick service: therefore, &c.* That it was so in the Jews Church, and approved by Christ, I have shewed. That it hath been of antient use in the Church since Christ, and is at this day in use in *Africk, Asia, Europe*, even among the Reformed Churches in *France, Holland, Geneva, &c.* is so well known, that I think I need not stand to prove it: yea those few that seem to disuse it, do yet use it, in *Psalms*, and other parts of worship, of which more anon.

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

This Proposition is to be proved by instances, and the proof of the parts. The parts where a set form is usually necessary, I shall enumerate: desiring you by the way to understand, 1. That I speak not of an *Absolute Necessity ad finem*, as if no other could be accepted; but a *Necessity of Duty*: it ought to be done, as the best way. 2. That I say but [*ordinarily*] as excepting some unusual cases.

1. The Communication or revelation of the will of God to the Church by Reading of the Holy Scriptures, is part of the publick service of God. As *Moses* and the Prophets were read every Sabbath day, so by parity of reason should the Gospel; and *Paul* required the publick reading of his Epistles, *Act. 13. 27. & 15. 21. 2 Cor. 3. 15. Luk. 16. 29. Col. 4. 16. 1 Thes. 5. 27. Rev. 1. 3.* But this Reading of the Scriptures is the using of a set form in publick service. For they are the same words that we read from day to day, and usually must read.

2. The Publick Praying of God by singing of *Psalms*, is a part of publick worship: and a most excellent part, not usually to be omitted. But this part of worship is ordinarily to be used in a stinted form: because the gift of composing *Psalms ex tempore* without a prepared form, is not usual in the Church: and if it were so to one, it is not to the rest that must use this worship. Had we not stinted forms of *Psalms*, we should have ill-favoured work in the Church.

3. Baptisme is usually to be administered in a form of words: for Christ hath prescribed us a form, *Matth. 28. 19. [Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost]* I think few sober men will think it ordinarily meet to disuse this form.

4. The use of a form in the *Consecration and Administration* of the Lords Supper (though not through the whole action) is ordinarily most fit: for Christ hath left us a form of words, *Take ye, Eat ye, &c.* which are most exact, and safe, and none can mend. And *Paul* reciteth his form, *1 Cor. 11.* And small alterations in the very words of Baptisme, or Delivering the

Lords Supper, may easily corrupt the Ordinance in time.

5. The very Sacramental *Elements and Actions* are stinted forms of Administration, which none may alter. As the washing with water, the breaking of bread, and pouring out of wine, and giving them, and taking them, and eating and drinking, &c. These are *real* forms, not to be changed, at least without Necessity, if at all.

6. The Blessing of the people in the Name of the Lord, was done by a prescribed form of old, *Nam. 6. 23.* and is usually to be done in a form still. For in all these forementioned parts of worship, should we still use new expressions, when so few and pertinent must be used, we should be put to disuse the fittest, and use such as are less fit.

7. In our ordinary Preaching a form (not imposed, unless in cases of great Necessity and unfitness, but) of our own premeditating, is usually fittest: I think few men are so weak as to prefer (with most preachers) unprepared Sermons, before those that have more of their care and study. And then at least, the Text, Method, and somewhat of the words must be premeditated, if not all.

8. Ordinarily there should be somewhat of a form in Publick Confessions of the Churches faith. For how else shall all concur? And it is a tender point to admit of great or frequent mutations in: so that in Baptisme, and at other seasons when the Christian faith is to be openly professed by one, or more, or all, a form that is exact, is usually meet to be retained; though in many personal Cases, explicatory enlargements may do well.

9. If there be not a frequent use of many of the same words, and so somewhat of a form, in Marriage, Confirmation, Absolution, Excommunication, the danger will be more, then the benefit by mutation will be.

10. And with some Ministers (of whom anon) even in Prayer, especially about the Sacraments, where there must be great exactness, and the matter ordinarily, if not alwayes the same, the ordinary use of a form may be the best and fittest way.

In the most of these Cases 1. The Nature of the thing sufficiently proves the ordinary fitness of a form. 2. The constant Practice of almost all Churches (if not all) is for it: even they

they that scruple forms of Prayer, use constantly forms of Praise, of Reading, of Sacraments, &c. 3. The rest are proved fittest as aforesaid by the Apostles generall Rules, 1 Cor. 14. 26, 40. *Let all things be done to Edifying: and Let all things be done decently and in order.* Now in the cases before mentioned, the Edification of the Church (to say nothing of Order) requireth the ordinary use of forms.

Prop. 3. **I**N those parts of publick worship where a form is not of ordinary necessity, but only Lawfull, yet may it not only be submitted to, but desired, when the Peace of the Church doth accidentally require it. Prop. 3.

This Proposition needs no proof, but only explication. For he is far from the temper of a Christian that sets so light by the Peace of the Church, that he would not use a Lawfull means for the procurement of it, when Paul would become all things to all men to save some, and would eat no flesh while he lived rather then offend his weak brother.

But here you must take these cautions, lest you misunderstand this Proposition.

1. The Peace of the whole Church must be in our eye, before the peace of a part; and of a great and more considerable part, rather then of a smaller, *ceteris paribus*.

2. It is supposed that (besides the simple lawfulness of the thing) there be also no other accidental inconveniencies on the other side (that will follow the use of a form) that is of sufficient moment to weigh down the argument from the Churches Peace. For when a thing is only good or evil, (I mean, necessary or sinfull,) by Accident, and not in it self, we must consider which side hath the most weighty accidents, and accordingly must choose or refuse it.

3. It is not the fullfilling of the humours of every unreasonable expectant, or every proud Magisterial usurper that is the Peace of the Church, that now we speak of: If a few proud men will hold no Peace with us, unless we will serve God in their unnecessary forms, as if none had wit enough but they, to know in what words the Churches should serve God: and all must speak but what

what they teach them, it is not the humoring of these Proud usurpers that is the *Peace* thus to be bought.

4. We must look to the *future* as well as the *present* Peace of the Churches : And therefore if any will hold no Peace with us now, unless we will own some formal Engine that is like to make hereafter more division then unity in the Churches, (by laying the Unity or Peace of the Church on things that will not bear it, and making things necessary, that are not necessary, nor to be made so) in such cases, it is not our duty to betray the general or future Peace of the Church for our private or present Peace.

5. The desirableness of this Peace of the Church which we must seek, must be much judged of by its tendency to the promoting of holiness, the saving of mens souls, the furthering of the Gospel, and prosperity of the Church in spiritual respects : For a Peace that undermineth and betrayeth these, is not desirable. The means is to be valued by its tendency to the attainment of the End.

6. There is need therefore of very great prudence, to compare things with things, for a man to know how to carry himself in such cases. For imprudent oversights, or laying greatest stress on smallest things, and slighting greater, will make men live in constant sin by abusing things indifferent.

But still the Proposition holds good with these cautions, that forms and such like indifferent things are to be used or disused much with respect to the Churches Peace.

Prop. 4. *SO great is the difference between men and men, times and times, that forms may be a duty to some men, and at some times, and a sin to other men, and at other times.*

As to private men in their families, it may be one mans duty to use a form, or book, and another mans sin, so is it with Ministers also in the Assemblies. Three distinctions (among others) are obvious, in which this is manifest.

1. Some Ministers are better able to perform Gods publick worship (except in the fore-expected cases) without a form : and some are better able to do it by a form.

2. Some

2. Some Ministers have a *People* that are scrupulous of using forms, and some have people that scruple the disusing them, and some have both sorts mixt.

3. Some Churches live under Magistrates that command a form, or with Churches that unanimously agree on a form; and others live in times and places where there is no such commands or Agreements. And according to these differences it may be one mans duty, and anothers sin to use some forms.

1. Gods work should be done in the most edifying manner. Where Ministers are able to perform the publick prayers of the Church in the most profitable manner without a form, there it is their duty to disuse a form, unless some other greater accident preponderate. Still remember that for Psalms and other fore-excepted parts, I take it for granted that ordinarily a form is necessary. But our main question now is of Praying and Preaching, and that especially with respect to one standing form that is not usually varied in Prayer, and an imposed form, or composed by others, in Preaching. It should be the ordinary case of the Church that Ministers should be able to do these without a constant form of words, to the peoples greater edification. But yet it is not alway so. And where it is not, it is better for Ministers to use a form, then to do worse, and dishonour the work of God, and wrong the Church by their erroneous or over-rude defective management. I know the great objection will be, that such men are not fit to be Ministers, and that its better to have none. But this is sooner said then proved. I am far from desiring any man to undervalue the precious mercy of an able Ministry, and from wishing for formalities and reading Pastors instead of the learned able guides that we here enjoy. I hope I should do or suffer as much as another to prevent so great a Calamity as an ignorant, unable, or negligent Ministry. But yet I am fully satisfied of it, that its better for the Church to have Readers then none.

1. Consider that there have been some very Learned able Divines (Doctors of Divinity) that by age, or other decay of Memory, or natural impediments disabling them from extemporate performances, cannot do any thing in the worship of God without the help of Notes or books; or at least without preparation

ration for expressions ; when yet upon preparation, and by convenient helps, they excell many extemporate men.

2. The Necessities of the Church may require an allowance or toleration of such as have not ability to compose extemporate Prayers, or Sermons, no nor to prepare such upon deliberation neither, but meerly read the Sermons and Prayers composed by others. I know some will not believe that such should be Ministers, But they would have them only read as private men, rather then the people should have nothing : For they think that a man that cannot preach or pray is no more capable of being a Minister, then a man that cannot command an Army is capable of being a Commander, &c.

But 1. Let such brethren consider that there may be all abilities *essentially* requisite to a Pastor, without the ability of praying or preaching without a form (Though still I pray God to save us from a *Necessity* of such.) A man that can Teach men the substance of the Christian Religion, and administer the Sacraments, and Oversee and Govern the flock, hath as much ability as is necessary to the *Being* of a Pastor. But those may have all this that cannot fitly preach or Pray without a form. They may be godly men, able in conference to instruct the people in the substance of Religion, and to read the Scriptures, and the Holy writings of godly men, and to administer Sacraments, and prudently and diligently guide the people. And by the same rule as you will conclude it better that (*e. g.*) *Wales, Ireland, &c.* have private men to read good books, rather then none, lest they turn heathens ; I may also conclude that it is better for them to have Churches and Pastors of this weaker sort, then to have none, and leave their children unbaptized, and live without the Sacraments, and Church-Communion, and Government.

2. Consider I beseech you (which moves me more then any thing else) the state of the Christian world. In *Ethiopia, Syria, Armenia, Russia, Grecia*, and abundance of other Churches of Christ there are very few Preachers, but meer Readers. And can any man think that it is best for all these Churches to be without Ministers, and Sacraments, rather then to have such ? O that God would give them better ! But till then I shall pray that he

he will continue these among them, rather then leave them destitute. I know many godly judicious men, of able parts for conference, that yet are unable to compose a Sermon (though if they could, it were a form) that yet I am confident by Reading such Practical Books as are now extant, and by prudent oversight, might be tolerable Pastors for many a Congregation in *Wales*, that now have none.

2. In a time and place where no obligation by Magistrates Commands, or Churches Agreements is laid upon us for the use of forms, I am fully perswaded we should make no more use of them, then Necessity compelleth us to do: But the thing being lawfull, the Command of a Magistrate, or the agreement of the Churches may go far in moving us; And indeed must prevail with us, unless in cases where there are weightier Accidents to weigh down on the other side. For obedience and Agreement or Concord in Lawfull things is our duty, where we have not some greater reason to forbid it. There is much difference between men that are left at liberty, and men that are bound by lawfull Governours. Yea though they do not well in commanding, yet may we be bound to obey, when the matter is such as belongeth to their jurisdiction, and not forbidden by God.

3. A man is also much to regard the minds of his people: not out of man-pleasing disposition, but in order to their good. Prudence will tell us which way is likest to attain our Ends. Food is to be fitted to mens tempers and stomachs, and Physick, to their diseases. If a Church be so weak that they cannot bear the disuse of forms, and others so weak that they cannot bear the use of them, the Pastor must fit his practice to their Edification, till he can bring them to a wiser judgement, that so they may receive that which indeed is most fit to edifie them. Prudence must guide us in the circumstantial of worship, which are left to our Determination; that we may vary them as the condition of our flock requireth, to their good; (of which more anon:)

Prop. 5. **T**HE Ministers and Churches that earnestly desire it, should not by the Magistrate be absolutely, and generally prohibited the use of a convenient stinted Liturgy.

Note here that I speak not of the desires of any inconsiderable persons, contrary to the desires of that whole Church. If a few ignorant or wilfull people should be eager for a form, when the Pastor is able and willing to manage the work of God without it, and the Congregation professeth that it hindereth their Edification (by what accident soever, I am not now questioning,) it is fit that those unreasonable persons should be denied their desires (in that Church) rather then the whole Congregation. Also if the Magistrate should perceive that a whole Congregation, or many, or the Pastors themselves are eager for some one particular form, out of a corrupt humour, and in any ill design to the disturbance of the Churches Peace, or that they will needs have an unlawfull Form, that for matter is erroneous, or for manner absurd, or apt to breed unreverence, or hinder Edification, the Magistrate should prohibite this : Yet so, that Prudence and Moderation measure out his penalties in such a sort, as that he Churches Edification be not hindered by his over-rigorous correcting mens distempers.

But out of these and such like Cases, when it is meer weakness that causeth Pastors or people to be set upon a (lawfull) form, The Magistrate ought not to prohibite them by such restraints, as shall deprive them of the liberty of worshipping God, or hinder their Edification.

The Reasons of this Proposition are these. 1. Because the thing being Lawfull, no Power should causelessly restrain men from the use of Lawfull things. God having left men to their Liberty, none should without great reason deprive them of it.

2. The Magistrate should not hinder the Peoples Edification in the manner of Gods worship : But in many places a stinted Liturgy is most for the peoples Edification. Therefore, &c. Whether it be the Ministers weakness, or the peoples, that makes it most usefull to them, yet when the Magistrate cannot cure
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that weakness, he must bear with them. It was the weakness of *Nicodemus* that made him he could not bear the day-light, in coming to Christ; yea and such a weakness, as shewed, or was joyned with an unregenerate state, and yet Christ would rather teach him privately then not at all.

3. Where Consciences are scrupulous, and think it a sin to worship publickly without a form, (though it be their error yet) the Governors are not to drive them away from it; because then they will not publickly Worship God at all: And *no worship* is worse then a *lawfull form* of worship.

4. A Minister that is for the Necessity of a form (though erroneously) may be in other respects so usefull to the Church, that he should not be laid by and lost to the Church for such a thing as this.

5. The use of some forms (as aforesaid) being necessary, and of other forms, not only lawfull, but of almost common reception through all the Churches on earth, Governors should be very cautelous in denying men liberty in that which almost all the Churches have Liberty in, and more; even that which is their constant use.

Prop. 6. **T**O prescribe a Form of Prayer, Preaching (or other service where is no Necessity of it) and to lay a Necessity on it, as to the thing it self, or the Churches Peace, &c. and to punish, silence, suspend, excommunicate, or reproach as Schismatics, the able, godly, peaceable Ministers or People, that (justly or unjustly) dare not use it, is so great a sin, that no Godly Ministers should desire or attempt it, nor any godly Magistrate suffer it. Prop. 6.

This was the great sin of the late Magistrates and Prelates in England; and it is the main difference between their party and others at this day. The Magistrate doth not forbid men using a form or Liturgy (though they forbid one particular Liturgy more strictly then I could wish:) But there is a very few of these men that I know of, that can be contented with a Liberty of using it themselves, if they may not have all others compelled to do as they do, and go to God with the words that they have formed for them, or that are best in their esteem. They must

must be all Schismatics that will not use their form, and the Churches Peace must be laid upon it, and no man must be thought meet to preach or pray that will not be of their opinion, but the ablest Pastors of the Church must be silenced and cast by, if they will not use the Common-Prayer. The sinfulness of this practice shall be manifested in the next dispute more fully, to which I reserve the most of my reasons against it: In the mean time let these few be well considered.

1. *It is a certain way to the Division of the Church*: when men will lay its Unity or Peace on that which will not bear it, they are the most desperate disturbers and dividers of it. If one form of Prayer or Preaching had been necessary to the Churches Unity or Peace, Christ or his Apostles might as easily have composed it, as they did other necessities. Nay experience tells us, that it is not held necessary by men themselves: For the Romanists use one or more forms: and the Grecians another, and the Ethiopians another, and so of other Churches. In the *Bibliotheca Patrum* how many Liturgies have they given us? And if no one of all these is necessary to all Churches, then not to any one Church, further then accidents, and mens impositions make it necessary. And no man should make that necessary, that is not some way necessary before. It is easie to know that either the Form as such, or somewhat in the Form, is like to be scrupled by some, even godly, able men: and so it will prove an engine of division. The Church hath been brought to that torn divided condition that it is in, by this arrogancy of domineering imposers, that must lay its Peace on their unnecessary devices: and will not let us have unity in Christ and his Institutions and peace upon his terms.

2. *By this means the people will be involved in the guilt of bitter contending, and having all that conform not to their way, and uncharitably reproaching them as schismatics*, and consequently of disliking the very doctrine that they preach, or hold, and the way they take; and thus if uncharitableness, and all this sin, the off-spring of it, be the way to Hell, then you may see what a notable service they do to Satan, and how they ensnare and undo mens souls, that make such forms of common Necessity to the Unity or Peace of the Church.

3. *By this means they will involve themselves and the Magistrate*

in the guilt of persecution : For no better will it prove, even in many cases where the refusers scruples are unjust.

4. *By this means they will hinder the Edification of the Church.* What if a Minister have a Congregation that (suppose upon mistakes) do scruple these forms, and by prejudice or weakness are hindered from serving God with cheerfulness and profit; where they are used; must we be bound to deny them that mode of worship which their weakness doth require? and to force them to that which will not down with them? Must a Physician be bound to give all his Patients one kind of dyet? What if it be wholesome? Will you say, *If that will not down with him, he shall have none* : let him die? This is contrary to the end of our office : we are commanded to do all to Edification, which this doth contradict.

5. *It is contrary to the Office, Power and Trust of the particular Pastors of the Church, to be thus compelled in variable things.* As it is the office of a Physician to judge what dyet and physick to prescribe his Patients, and to vary it as persons do vary in their tempers and diseases, and to vary it with the same persons, as their condition changeth and requireth it : and as it would be foolish Tyranny against the very office of the Physician to restrain him from this exercise of his prudence by a Law, and to tie him to give one kind of food or physick to all ; so is it in our present case. What is a Pastor, but the guide of a Congregation in the worship of God? &c. And if Magistrates and Bishops take this work out of their hands by their unnecessary prescriptions, they so far prohibite him to do the work of a Pastor. What a grief is it to a Minister (that being in the place, and knowing the people, is the most competent Judge what is fit for them) to be constrained by men that know not the state of his flock, to cross their Edification, and to be forbidden to use his prudence and due power for their spiritual good?

6. *And what a sinful arrogant usurpation is this, for any man to be guilty of?* It is Christ that hath given his Ministers their Power, and that for Edification : and who is he that may presume to take it from them? If they are unworthy to be Ministers, let them not be Ordained, or let them be degraded or deposed. But if they must be Ministers, let them do the work
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of Ministers; lest as he that despiseth them, despiseth Christ, so he that restraineth them from their duty, and depriveth them of the exercise of their power unjustly, be found one that would arrogate an authority over Christ.

7. *And what intolerable Pride is this, for a few Bishops to think so highly of themselves, and so basely of their more judicious Brethren, as if no man must speak to God but in their words?* These forms of Prayer are conceived and invented by some body. And why should the Conceiver think so highly of his own understanding, as if he were fit to teach a whole Nation what they must daily say to God? and why should he think so unworthily of all others in comparison of himself, as if none but he (and his Companions in this usurpation) knew how to pray or utter their minds, but by his dictates or prescriptions? Is this Humility?

8. *Moreover this Imposition of forms (as before described) doth discover too much Cruelty to the Church:* when they had rather Ministers were cast aside, and the people left in darkness, then Ministers should teach them, and worship God with them, that will not tye themselves to the very words that they devise for them. What abundance of ignorant, drunken Readers and other Ministers were suffered in *England*, while the learned, godly, painful Ministers were cast out, and silenced, or persecuted, because they would not conform to all the forms and ceremonies imposed by the Bishops? And so how many thousand souls may we think are gone to Hell, through the ignorance or ungodliness of their Guides, as if their damnation were more desirable, then their salvation by the teaching of Ministers that dare not use the Common Prayer Book and Ceremonies? I know they will say, that such Schismatical Preachers do more hurt by breaking the Churches peace, then they do good by converting souls. But who was it that laid these snares in their way? Who laid the Churches peace upon your inventions? Had not the Church a sure Rule, and an happy order, and unity, and peace, before your Common prayer Book or Ceremonies were born? Why must the Church have no peace but upon such terms? Who made this Necessity, that all men must be taken for intolerable schismatics that dare not stint themselves in the publick worship by your impositions? Will you not be confound-
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ed before God, when these Questions must be answered? The Church might have kept both Peace and her Pastors, if you had let all alone as the Apostles left it, and had not turned the forms of your Devotions to be a snare for others.

9. *And it is great unmercifulness to the Souls of particular men,* when you will drive them into such snares, and compell them to go against their consciences in indifferent things: what ever is not of faith is sin. And whether they believe it good or bad, you will compell them to practise all that you impose. Have you not Consciences your selves? Do you not know what it is for a man to be driven against his Conscience? If not, you are no Christians: and then no wonder if you want the Charity and compassion of Christians, and so easily for nothing, abuse and injure the Christian cause.

10. *And in thus doing, you deal unjustly, and do not as you would be done by.* You would have Liberty your selves now to use a Liturgy: And why should not others have Liberty to disuse it? Either you take it for a thing Necessary in it self, or for Indifferent. If as Necessary, then you are so much the more arrogant and injurious to the Churches, and your usurpation is the more intolerable, and you do much to Justifie them that deprive you of your own liberty: For I know no Liberty that you should have to make universal Laws for the Church: or to make new duties by your own meer wills, or turn Indifferent things into Necessary, and so to multiply our work, and burden, and danger; and to silence, suspend or excommunicate all that dare not submit to your usurped Dominion. But if you take it for a thing in it self Indifferent, whether we pray in a Form of prescribed words, or not, then as we are content that you have your Liberty on one part, you have as just cause to allow us our liberty on the other, and to do as you would be done by.

11. *And by these Impositions, you set up a New Office or Power in the Church, Consisting of a New Legislation, and a Government of the Church by such new humane Laws.* We know no Law-giver but 1. Christ as to universal Laws of standing necessity to the Churches, in the matters of Salvation. And 2. Magistrates to make by-laws under Christ for a just determination of those mutable circumstances that ought to be determined by humane Prudence; and 3. The Ministers or Pastors of particuclar Church-

es to direct and guide the people as there is cause. As for Bishops or Councils, we know of no Legislative Power that they have over their Brethren, though Agreements they may make, which may be obligatory, 1. by consent, as other contracts, 2. and in order to unity, where the case requireth such Agreements. But to set up a New sort of Jurisdiction in the Church, by Legislation to make Forms and Ceremonies obligatory, and by Executions to punish Pastors that will not practise them, is a dangerous device.

12. Lastly by this means you will harden the Papists, that by their Inventions and Impositions have divided the Church, and been guilty of so much usurpation and tyrannie; For how can we condemn that in them that is practised by our selves? And though in number of Inventions and Impositions they exceed, yet it is not well to concur with them in the kind of unnecessary Impositions, and so far to Justifie them in their injury to the Church.

If none of these or other Reasons will alloy the Imperious distemper of the Proud, but they must needs by a usurped Legislation be making Indifferent things become necessary to others, and domineer over mens Consciences, and the Church of God, we must leave them to him, that being the Lord and Lawgiver of the Church, is Jealous of his Prerogative, and abhorreth Idols, and will not give his glory to another, and that delighteth to pull down the Proud, and humble them that exalt themselves.

But yet how far an Agreement or voluntary Consent of the Churches is desirable as to a Liturgy, I shall shew more anon.

Prop. 7.

Prop. 7. **T**HE safest way of composing a stinted Liturgie, is to take it all, or as much as may be, for words as well as matter, out of the Holy Scriptures.

Reas. 1. This way is least lyable to scruple, because all are satisfied of the infallible Truth of Scripture, and the fitness of its expressions, that are not like to be satisfied with mans. And it is a laudable disposition in the Creature to prefer the words of God before all other, and therefore not to be discouraged in any.

Reas. 2. This way tends most to the peace of the Church. All will unite in the words of God, that will not unite in the forms

forms and words of men. If they understand not a word of God, yet knowing it to be true, they will not quarrel with it, but submit: But if they understand not the words of men, they will be ready to suspect them, and so to quarrel with them, and so the Churches peace will be broken. Besides, the judgements of men being fallible, many will suspect that its possible there may be some error in their forms, though we see them not, and God should be worshiped in the surest way.

Reas. 3. There is no other words that may be preferred before the words of God, or stand in Competition with them: and therefore me thinks this should easily be decided.

Object. But the Scripture hath not forms enough for all the Churches uses. *Ans.* It hath matter and words for such Forms. Without any additions, save only terms of Connection, the sentences of holy Scripture may suffice the Church for all its uses, as to forms.

Object. But men may speak untruths in Scripture words if they will, and by misplacing and misapplying them, may make them speak what was never meant in them. *Ans.* But 1. When they use no expository terms of their own, but merely recite the words of Scripture, the perverting them will not be so easie or common: And 2. When they have placed them how they please, the people are left at liberty to interpret them according to the sence they have in the Scripture, and not according to what mens misplacing may seem to put upon them: when we professedly make our forms out of Gods word, we do as it were tell the people that they must give each sentence its proper interpretation as its meant in Scripture, because we pretend not to change it, but to use it. But when its our own words that we compose our own imposed forms in, the people are left more uncertain of the soundness. For the maker is the Interpreter.

Object. But the Church hath ancient venerable forms already; and who may presume to alter them?

Ans. 1. Hath it any that are more Ancient or more venerable then the Scripture? undoubtedly it hath not; nor any but must stoop to Scripture. 2. All that is in the words of Scripture, we are contented be continued (at least.) 3. If it were lawful for the first devisers or compilers of these Forms, to make

make a new Liturgy, when the Church had so many before, then is it lawful for others to do the like. And if the compilers of the first of those Liturgies, might make a new one in their own words, why may not others make a new one in the Scripture words, that will be new only as to the connexion of Sentences? 4. The Church of Rome that is most for their forms, have yet so often innovated, that they have no reason to condemn it in others.

Prop. 8.

Prop. 8. **T**Hough it be safest and most venerable in Scripture words, yet is not this of so great necessity, but that we may lawfully use a Liturgy that is not thus taken out of Scripture.

As long as the matter is agreeable to Scripture, it is more for Conveniency, then necessity, that the words be thence, as is easily proved.

1. In our Preaching we judge it lawfull to speak words that are not in the Scripture: therefore by parity of reason, we may do so in Prayer.

2. In our extemporize Prayers we judge it lawfull to use our own words that are not taken out of Scripture: therefore we may do so in a Liturgy.

3. Some persons may be so strange to Scripture language, that for a time more familiar Phrases may be more edifying to them.

4. Words are but to express our minds: If therefore our words are congruous expressions of sound and well ordered conceptions, they are not only lawful, but convenient. And therefore it is not warrantable for any man to quarrel with expressions because they are not Scriptural, nor to scruple the use of Liturgies, because the forms are not in the words of Scripture.

prop. 9.

Prop. 9. **T**HE matter of a common Liturgy in which we expect any general Concord, should not be any doubtfull or unnecessary things.

1. It should impose no doubtfull or unnecessary ceremonies,
(of

(of which I shall speak by it self in the next Disputation.)
 2. It should not restrain men needlessly in things indifferent, by determining of mutable circumstances, as time, place, gesture, vestures, words, &c. (Of which also in the next.) 3. It should not make those things to be of general indispensable immutable necessity, that are but sometimes necessary, or meet; but Pastors should have their Liberty to vary them as there is occasion.
 4. Much less should any thing Materially dubious and uncertain be put in.

For God will be worshipped in knowledge and faith. And, as is said before, the Church will be divided, and the Consciences of men ensnared; by laying so much on unnecessary things. And therefore though such imposers pretend to a perfect Unity and Concord, then in a few Generals or Necessaries can be had, yet they will find they miss their mark.

Prop. 10. **H**umane Forms of publick prayer, or other worship (excepting the fore-excepted Necessary cases, as Psalms, &c.) should not be constantly used by Ministers, that have their liberty, and are able to pray without them: Nor should any be ordinarily admitted into the Ministry (except in the great necessities of the Church) that are not able to pray without such forms.

In this Proposition are these considerable points implied, and expressed. 1. That it is not unfit to have forms by the common Agreement of the Pastors, to be used when its meet (as is before and after expressed.) There are few Nations in the world, so well provided for with able Ministers, but that some places must be supplied with men that have need of forms of Prayer, if not of Preaching, composed by others. And therefore it is fittest that such should have Forms that are Agreed on by all. And therefore I doubt not but when we came newly out of Popery, and had not a full supply of preachers, it was a wise and lawfull course to compose a common form of Prayer. For,
 1. It will be the surest way to keep out unsoundness and abusive passages, when nothing is allowed as a publick form but what hath obtained the common consent. 2. It will be the way of fullest concord: when forms are necessary, there is more of Concord in