

(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



in it, to have one ( that is approved sound ) then to have as many as men please. 3. The Churches may the better know whom to hold communion with in Prayer, ( though the Pastors may be unable to pray without forms ) when they know the substance of their Prayers. 4. The Magistrate may the better do his duty and be responsible for the service that is offered to God, even by the weakest Pastors, and see that Gods name be not abused. It is therefore desirable that a Common Liturgy be extant.

2. And for the use of it, let these Rules contained in the Proposition be observed.

1. Let no man be ordained a Minister that is not able to Pray without a Form, in such a manner as is not dishonourable to the worship of God, unless the Necessity of the Churches shall require it. All friends of the Church will agree to this, that the Church have the ablest Pastors that can be got.

2. But because it is not to be hoped for that all the Churches can be thus supplied ( at least in haste, ) if the Ordainers or Approvers shall appoint any to the work in *Wales* or other necessitous places, that are not able competently to administer Sacraments, &c. without a Form of Prayer, let them tie such to use the Form Agreed on.

3. If they approve only of such as are able to do it without a form, but yet so weakly ( some of them ) as is less to the Churches Edification, then the form would be, let such be advised, sometimes to use the Form, and sometime to forbear it, till they are more able.

4. And that it may be no dishonour to the publick Form, that it is used only by the weak, let the Ablest Ministers sometime use it, but with these cautions: 1. Let them not be compelled to it against their judgements, but perswaded. 2. Let not the ablest use it so frequently as the weak, ( unless their own judgement require it. ) Let the weaker use it often, and the Abler more seldom.

5. Let neither of them ( that can competently worship God without it ) use it *Constantly*; but sometime use it, and sometime forbear it. And this is the main point that I intend in this Proposition, and therefore shall now briefly give my Reasons for.

Reas. 1. *The constant use of forms ( and so of Ceremonies and*  
any



any Indifferent things ) doth potently tend to perswade the people that they are matters of Necessity, and not indifferent. All the words that you can use will not satisfie them that it is indifferent, if you use it not Indifferently. We see by experience the power of custome with the vulgar.

But you will say, *What if they do overvalue it as necessary, what danger is in that?* I answer very much. 1. They will offer God a blind kind of service, while they place his worship in that which is no part of worship ( as forms are not, as such ) but an indifferent circumstance. 2. They will be hereby induced to uncharitable censures of other Churches or persons that think otherwise, or disuse those customs. 3. They will be strongly induced to rebell against their Magistrates and Pastors, if they shall judge it meet to change those customs. 4. They will turn that stream of their zeal for these indifferent things, that should be laid out on the matters of Necessity: and perhaps in vain will they worship God, by an outside hypocritical worship, while they thus take up with mens Traditions. 5. They will forsake Gods own Ordinances, when they cannot have them cloathed with their desired mode. All this we see in our dayes at home. The most ignorant and ungodly do by hundreds and thousands, reject Church discipline, and Sacraments, and many of them the Prayers and Assemblies themselves, because they have not the Common Prayer, or because the Churches kneel not at the Lords Supper in the act of Receiving, and such like. So that it is a grievous plague to our peoples souls to be led into these mistakes, and to think that Circumstances and things indifferent, are matters of Necessity.

And yet on the other side, lest the constant disuse of all convenient forms, should lead the people into the contrary extream, to think them all unlawfull ( and so to be guilty of the like uncharitable censures and evils as aforesaid ) I think it safest, that the ablest men should sometime use them. And this Indifferent use of them, will lead the people to indifferent thoughts of them, and so they will not provoke God by blind worship, nor be so ready to fly in the faces of their Ministers when they cross them herein, as now they are. For example, what a stir have we if men may not kneel at the Sacrament, or



if the dead ( in case of Ministers absence, or other hinderance ) have not somewhat said over them at the grave ; and in some places, if Ministers go not in procession in Rogation week, and many such like customs. If these were sometime used ( in a good and lawfull way ) it would keep men from mistaking them to be unlawfull ; and if they were sometime disused , people would not take them as things necessary , nor so hate and reproach both Ministers and brethren that neglect them, or do not alwayes humour them herein , yea or that were against them : nor would men separate on these accounts.

Reas. 2. *The constant use of Forms of Prayer depriveth people of their Ministers gifts, and potently tendeth to work the people into a dull formality, and to a meer outside heartless kind of service, Which is as great an enemy to serious Devotion, and consequently to mens salvation, as almost any thing thats to be found among professed Christians in the Church. How dangerously and obstinately do such delude themselves, and think that they are as uprightly religious as the best? and so refuse all the humbling convincing light that should bring them to a change, and blindly misapply the promises to themselves, and go on in meer presumption to the last : and all because they thus draw neer to God with their lips, and say over a form of words, when their hearts are far from him, and they know not, or observe not what they say.*

And that constancy in Forms doth potently tend to this dead formality, we need no other proof then experience. How hard doth the best man find it to keep up life and seriousness in the constant hearing or speaking of the same words? If you say that it is our fault ; I grant it : but it is an incurable fault while we are in the flesh : or at least its few that ever are very much cured of it, and non wholly. Theres much also in nature it self to cause this. A man that delighteth in Musick is weary of it, if he have constantly the same instrument and tune : or at least cannot possibly have that delight that Variety would afford him. So is it in recreations, and oft in dyet, and other things. Novelty affecteth : Variety pleaseth : Commonness dulleth us. And though we must not therefore have a New God, or a New Christ, or a New Gospel ( the fulness of these affordeth the soul a daily variety ; and also their perfect



fect goodness is such as leaves no need of a variety in kind,) yet is it meet that Ministers should have a gratefull variety of *Manner*, to keep up delight and desire in their people. A sick stomach cannot take still the same Physick, nor the same dish. I know that an ancient prudent man, especially the Learned Pastor himself, that better comprehendeth what a form of words contains, can make a much better use of forms, then younger Christians can do. But I think with all, I am sure with the generality, (to whom we must have respect) a constant form is a certain way to bring the Soul to a cold insensible formal worship.

And on the other side, if a form be *Constantly refused*, and people have not sometimes a recitall of the same, again and again, it may tend to breed a childish levity, and giddyness in Religion; as if it were not the matter, but meer Novelty and variety that did please; And so it may also easily make Hypocrites, who shall delude themselves with conceits that they delight in God and in his word, when it is but in these novelties and varieties of expression, that they are tickled and delighted; and their itching ears being pleased, they think it proves a work of saving grace on the heart. And therefore to fix Christians and make them sound, that they grow not wanton in Religion, and be not as children carryed up and down with variety of doctrines or of modes, I think it would be useful to have a moderate reasonable use of some forms as to the manner, as well as often to inculcate the same matter; Avoiding still that constancy that tends to dull their appetites, and make them weary or formal in the work.

Reas. 3. *The constant use of a stinted Liturgy, or form of Prayer, doth much tend to the remissness and negligence of the Ministry.* When they know that the duty requireth no exercise of their invention, and that before the Church they may as well perform it with an unprepared as with a prepared mind, it will strongly tempt them (and prevail too commonly) to neglect the stirring up of their gifts, and the preparing of their minds. When they know that before men they may (in Reading a Prayer) come off as well without any regard to their hearts, as with the greatest seriousness of devotion, we must expect that most should do accordingly: For we see that Ministers are men, and too many



are carryed as well as others, with the stream of temptation. But those Prayers and other duties that depend upon their parts, require preparation, or at least some present care and diligence for the awakening of their hearts, and excitation of their faculties.

Reas. 4. But the principal danger of a constant use of prescribed forms, is, lest it should let in an unworthy Ministry into the Church. For though I had rather have as weak Ministers as I before described, then none; yet it will be very dangerous when such are tolerated because of Necessity, lest the negligence of Ordainers and Approvers will take advantage of this, and pretend necessity where there is none, or hearken to them that come with such pretences, and so undo the Church by an ignorant insufficient Ministry; so hard is it for men to avoid one extremum without running into another. Now the utter prohibition of stinted forms will prevent this, but not without an evil on the other side. And therefore to avoid the evils on both sides, me thinks it would be best to let such forms be used, but unconstantly, unless by men that will lie under the dishonour of being able to do no better. And that dishonor will hinder men from resting in them, and the frequent exercise of other mens gifts, will awaken them to their duty, and the necessity of it will as well keep out insufficient men as if there were no form at all. For an insufficient man can no more perform the work once a day without a form, then twice a day. I shall add no more Reasons, because they that write against forms of Prayer, though they run too far, have said enough of the inconveniences. The motion that I make being for a voluntary and an unconstant use of them, I must expect to meet with objections on both sides, which I shall briefly answer.

Object. 1.

Object. 1. Those that are utterly against forms, will say that I am opening under pretence of Peace and Liberty a way to let in an unlawfull worship and a lazy insufficient Ministry. To which I answ. 1. For them that take all forms to be unlawfull, I think them fitter for compassion then disputes, and judge their reason to be as low as the Quakers that cry down the use of hour-glasses, and sermon-notes, and preaching on a Text of Scripture. 2. And for the rest of the objection, its answered before. The use of a Liturgy in the way described, will not more Countenance



tenance a lazy insufficient ministry, nor hurt the Church, then if there were none.

Object. 2. *But what need is there of it? Are we not well without it? why would you disturb our peace, to please the adversaries?* Object. 2.

*Ans.* 1. We are not without a Liturgy, as shall be further shewed, and therefore you cannot say we are well without it. 2. Some yong weak Ministers (we must speak the truth) do wrong both Baptism and the Lords Supper by many miscarriages, for want of further help. 3. Wales and many parts of England must be supplied with Forms, or be without, which is worse. 4. The Consciences of many of those that you call adversaries (and I call Brethren) must be indulged with the liberty of a convenient form, or else we shall not walk charitably.

On the otherside it will be objected, by them that would have all men forced to the constant use of forms, 1. that *If we have not forms, men may vent what they please in prayer: some raile in prayer, and some vent error, and some rebellion, &c.* Object. 1.  
*Ans.* 1. This Argument makes against all Prayer of Ministers, but what is prescribed. For if you force them to a form, and yet give them leave with their Sermons to use also either extempore or formed Prayers of their own, they may as well vent rebellion, heresie or malice in them, as if they had no Liturgy at all. And if you would have Ministers use no prayer but what they read out of the imposed books, for fear of these inconveniences, you will shew your selves enemies to the Church, and cure an inconvenience with a mischief. 2. And if men were forbidden all prayer but by the Book, yet it is more easie to vent error or malice in a Sermon. So that unless you tie them also to forbear preaching save out of an imposed book, you are never the better. And if you would do so, you are sorry helpers of the Church. 3. You have a better remedy then these at hand. Put no such Insufficient men, or Hereticks into the Ministry, that will so abuse prayer: or if they be crept in, put them out again, and put better in their places, that will not abuse it. If some Physicians kill men by ignorance or malice, will you tie them all to go by a Book and give but one medicine, or will you not rather cast out the unworthy, and licence only abler men?



Object. 2. *Object. 2. But how can I joyn with a Minister in prayer, If I know not before hand what he will say, when for ought I know he may pray blasphemy or heresie?*

*Ans.* 1. By this objection, you take it to be unlawful to joyn with any prayers at all, whether publick or private, but what you know before: And so it seems you think all prayer but whats by the book, unfit for any but a solitary person. And if this be your mind, that your Book. Prayers must needs shut out all others, blame not men so much to shut out your Book, when you so far provoke them. 2. According to this Objection you must not send for the Minister to pray with you when you are sick, or in trouble, unless he tye himself to your Book. And why then may not another do it as well as he; or at least, the sillyest man that can read as well as the most able? 3. It is the work of the Minister, to be the peoples mouth in prayer to God, and therefore if he fail in the manner of his own work, it is his sin, and not yours, and you may no more refuse for that to joyn with him, then subjects may refuse to obey the sovereign power because of some miscarriages, yea or to fight for them, and defend them. 4. Your presence signifieth not your consent to all that you hear from a Minister: And your Heart is not to follow him in evil, but in good: and therefore seeing you are at liberty, what cause of scruple have you? 5. It is supposed that no man is ordinarily admitted, or tolerated in the Ministry, that will so abuse prayer that men may not lawfully joyn with them. If they are such, cast them out: If you cannot cast them out, if they are Hereticks or Blasphemers, come not neer them. But if they are men fit for to be tolerated in the Ministry, you have reason to trust them so far in their office, as not to expect Heresies or Blasphemies from them, till you hear them: And if you hear them guilty of such, after a First and Second admonition avoid them. But let not wicked uncharitable censures be an argument against the worship of God. You know not but a Physitian may poison you, and yet you will choose the best you can, and then trust your lives with him. You may much more do so by a Minister, because you proceed not by so implicate a faith in the matters of your Salvation. You may refuse any evil that the Minister offereth.

Object. 3. *Object. 3. But many of them speak nonsense and irreverent Words,*



words, and abuse Gods worship. *Ans.* Get better in their stead, that are able to do Gods work in a more suitable manner. But see that your quarrellsome capricious wits, do not odiously aggravate imperfections, or make faults where there are none. And remember that you have not Angels, but men to be your Pastors; and therefore imperfections must be expected: But a blessing may accompany imperfect administrations. But if People, Patron, and Ordainer will choose weak men, when they may have better, they may thank themselves. A Common Prayer book will make but an imperfect supply, instead of an able Minister: Though in some cases I am for it, as aforesaid.

*Object. 4.* But prayer is a speaking to God: and therefore *Object. 4.* men should say nothing but what is exactly weighed before hand.

*Ans.* 1. We grant all this. But men may weigh before hand the matter of their requests, without preparing a form of words: or a man may fore-consider of his words, without a Prayer-book. 2. *Preaching* is a speaking in Gods name, as though God speak by us, and as Christs ambassadors in his stead. 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. And to speak as in Christs stead, and Gods name, requireth as great preparation, as to speak to God in the peoples name. It seems more, as it were to represent Christ in speaking, then to speak to Christ while we represent but the people. And therefore by this argument you should let no man preach most at oratory and fine words. It is an humble, contrite, faithfull, honest heart that he looks at: And where he sees this, with earnest desires, and that the matter of Prayer is agreeable to his will, he will bear with many a homely word. One Cold request, or the least formality and dulness of affection, and carelessness and disesteem of the mercy, is more odious with God, then a thousand Barbarisms, and Solæcisms, and unhandsome words. Yet the tongue also should carefully be lookt to: but men should not mistake themselves, and think that God judgeth by the outward appearance, and as man judgeth. 4. Still I say, get Ministers that are able to do better if you have insufficient ones. A man on a common prayer-book is likelier to provoke God, by a careless, heartless, customary service, and meer lip labour, let the the words be never so exact, then another (that fears God) is like to provoke him by disorderly or unhandsome words: Though both should be avoided.



Object. 5. *Object. 5. Our minds are not able to go along with a Minister on the sudden, unless we knew what he will say before hand.*

*Answ.* A diligent soul that marketh what is said, may with holy affections go along with a Minister without knowing what he will say before hand. The experience of Christians confuteth this objection. 2. And this would not only plead for a form, but shut out all other prayer: which is sufficient to disgrace it with any understanding man.

Object. 6. *Object. 6. The publick Prayers of the Church are they that we must own by our concurrence: His own conceived Prayers are but the Private Prayers of the Minister.* *Answ.* The Minister is a publick person, and his prayers publicly made for and in the Church, are as much the Publick prayers of that Church as if they were read out of an imposed Book: But indeed when many Churches Agree in a form, that form may so far be called the Common Prayers of all those Churches: but its no more the Publick Prayers of any one Church then sudden conceived prayer is. And when there is no form, yet the matter may be the Common Prayer of all Churches.

Object. 7. *Object. 7. But what confusion will it make in the Church if one Congregation shall have a Form, and another none, and every man shall be left to do what he list in Prayer?*

*Answ.* This is the voice of that Ignorance, Pride, and Dividing usurpation that hath caused all the Schisms and troubles of the Church. Must the Churches have no Peace but on your imposed terms? Must none be endured, but all cast out of the Church of God that dare not say your forms of prayer, though they are as wise and pious and peaceable as you? Nothing but Proud arrogancy and uncharitable cruelty will say so. 2. But if we must needs all Agree in the manner of our Prayers, we must shut out all forms, and agree all to be without them (which yet I consent not to.) For there is no one Form that you can expect that all should agree in, thats of humane invention: Not but that we may well do it: but it will not be. 3. How had the Church Unity before any of your forms were known? 4. If it be no blemish for several Nations to have several Forms, and manners, it is tolerable for several Congregations, 5. How did the Ancient Churches maintain their Unity, when Liturgies were in use, and the variety was



so great as is commonly known? Many Churches had no singing of Psalms (*Vid. Pamel. in Cyprian. de Orat. Dom. Not. 6.*) Others used it by the whole Assemblies ( see *Ball's Friendly Tryal*, page 60. citing the Authors that attest it ) Other Churches did use to sing by course, or two at a time. ( See it proved by *Ball* *ibid.* out of many witnesses.) This variety and much more consisted then with Unity, and may do now, when forced uniformity will not. 6. We are all now at Liberty what Gesture we will use in singing Psalms, &c. and is here any discord hence arising? But men were forced to kneeling only in Receiving the Lords Supper, and there came in discord. Mens fancies makes that seem confusion that is no such thing. No more then that all that hear or pray, have not the same coloured cloaths, complections, &c.

Object. 8. *But should not men obey Authority in forms and matters of indifferency?* *Ans.* They should, if they be indeed indifferent. But should Authority therefore ensnare the Church with needless Impositions? All men will not be satisfied of the Indifferency. I have heard many say that they would preach in a fools Cap and Coat if authority command them. But is it therefore fit that Authority should command it? All men will not judge it lawfull to obey them in such cases, and so there will be needless snares laid to intrap and divide men.

Object. 9. *But antiquity is for set forms, and therefore No.* *Object. 9. veltly, must not be permitted to exclude them.*

*Ans.* 1. Let Scripture be the Rule for deciding this, which is the chief witness of Antiquity: and let the oldest way prevail. 2. Forms were at first introduced in Variety, and not as necessary for the Churches Unity to Agree in one: And they were left to the Pastors Liberty, and none were forced to any forms of other mens composing. When *Basil* set up his New forms of Psalmodie and other Worship, which the Church of *Neocæsarea* were so offended at, he did not for all that impose it on them, but was content to use it in his Church at *Cæsarea*.

Object. 10. *No man can now say what is the worship of God among us, because there is no Liturgy, but its mutable as every persons pleases.* *Object. 10.*

*Ans.* We have a Liturgy, and are agreed in all the parts of worship. To have forms or no forms is no part of it, but a circumstance or mode.

THE



The summ.

Besides forms  
of Care-  
chisms.

**T**HE summ is this; 1. We have already a fainted Liturgy. 1. A form of Doctrine in Scripture, 2. Real forms in Sacraments 3. A verbal form in Baptizing, 4. A form in delivering the Lords Supper. 5. A Creed (used at Baptism) as a form of confession. 6. We Read the Psalms as Liturgical forms of praise and prayer. 7. We have forms of singing Psalms. 8. We have a form of blessing the people in the End. 9. And of Excommunication (see the Government of the Church, &c.) 10. And of Absolution. 11. And of Marriage. 12. And Ministers preparation makes much of their Sermons a form. 13. And they are at liberty to pray in a form if they Please.

2. No more is necessary (of it self) unless (accidentally) Authority or Peace, &c. require it.

3. If Peace, &c. require a form, let it be one, by common Agreement as neer as may be taken out of Scripture, even in words, and as much of the old as is consistent with this Rule retained.

4. Let it not contain any doubtfull or unnecessary things, but be as much certain and necessary for the matter as may be.

5. Let none be forced to use it, but such as by Ordainers or Approvers, are judged insufficient to worship God without it, and yet are allowed or Tolerated in the Ministry.

6. Let no Tolerated Ministers be Absolutely forbidden to use it.

7. Let none be suffered to lay the Unity and Peace of the Church on it, and suspend, excommunicate or reproach all that dissent from them in using or not using it.

8. In times of Liberty, let none use it constantly (but the unab'le before excepted.) But let the weaker use it oftner, and the abler seldomer, yet sometimes (voluntarily, and cæteris paribus, still looking to the state of their flocks, and fitting all to their Edification.)

9. When Magistrates command it, or the Agreement of Pastors and Peace of the Churches (though accidentally by mens infirmity) require it, let none refuse the frequent use of lawfull forms.

10. But let none desire or endeavour the introducing of any such Necessity of this or any indifferent thing, that is not first Necessary by some considerable antecedent occasion to the Edification of the Church.

This much will please the moderate, but not the self conceited.

FINIS.



The Fifth  
DISPUTATION:  
Of Humane  
CEREMONIES:

Whether they are necessary, or profitable to the Church, and how far they may be imposed or observed?

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By *Richard Baxter.*

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

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CHAP. I.

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*Distinctions and Propositions in order to  
the Decision.*

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§. I.



THE discussion of the Controversie about the Etymologie of the word [ *Ceremony* ] is unnecessary to our ends, and would be more troublesome then usefull. Whether it be derived *ab oppido Cere*, or *à carento*, or *à Caritate*, or *à Cerere*, as several mens conjectures run, or rather as *Scaliger* and *Martinus* think, from *Cernis*, which in *veteri lingua erat sanctus*; it sufficeth us that it signifieth a sacred rite. *Servius* saith that all sacred things among the Greeks were called *εργα*, and among the Latines *Ceremonie*: But by *Ceremonies* we mean only external Rites or Orders in or about the worship of God. And by *Humane*, we mean such



as are devised and appointed to be used, by men, without any special Revelation from God, or any extraordinary inspiration of his Spirit, by which the institution might have been justly ascribed to God as the certain principal cause.

§. 2. There is so much ambiguity partly in the terms, and partly in the supposed or implied passages that will rise before us in the dispute, that I judge it necessary to make the way to the true decision of the controversie, and your right understanding of it by these distinctions following, and then to lay down the truth in certain Propositions.

§. 3. *Dist. 1.* We must distinguish between such Ceremonies as God hath left to humane determination in his worship, and such as he hath not so left; but hath either 1. *Expressly* forbidden them in particular. 2. Or in a *General* prohibition forbidden them, or 3. Hath given no man authority to institute them. So great difference is there between things that commonly go under the name of Ceremonies, that they are not in this Controversie to be confounded, if we would not lose the truth.

§. 4. *Dist. 2.* We must distinguish between Ceremonies commanded by man as in Gods name, and by pretence of a *Commission* from him; and such as are only commanded in mens own names, or at least on pretence of nothing but a *General Power*.

§. 5. *Dist. 3.* We must distinguish between Ceremonies commanded by men as necessary duties or means of worship, and such as are only commanded as *indifferent things*.

§. 6. *Dist. 4.* We must distinguish between Ceremonies imposed by a *Lawfull Magistrate*, or *Church-Governours*, and such as are imposed by *usurpers*, or men without authority.

§. 7. *Dist. 5.* We must distinguish between Ceremonies imposed as *Universally* to be practised by all ages, or all people, in the Church at least, and such as are imposed only on some one *Congregation* or *Nation* by their proper Governours, and that as *things mutable*, that upon special occasion were taken up, and may so be laid aside again.

§. 8. *Dist. 6.* We must distinguish between Ceremonies commanded as things necessary to the being of the Church or Worship, or only necessary to the Order and convenient administration, and better being of them (in the judgement of the imposers.)

§. 9. *Dist. 7.* We must distinguish between the absolute command



mand of Governors imposing such ceremonies, upon grievous penalties, or without tolerations; and the simple recommending them, or requiring them to be used with (expressed or implied) exceptions.

§. 10. *Dist. 8.* We must very much difference the several Countreys where such things are imposed, and the several sorts of People on whom, and the several seasons in which they are imposed, and thence foresee the effects or consequents that are like to follow.

§. 11. *Dist. 9.* We must distinguish between the Commanding of such Ceremonies, and the Obeying of such Commands. Its one thing to ask whether it be necessary, profitable, or lawfull to Impose them? and another whether it be necessary or lawfull to use them when commanded?

§. 12. *Dist. 10.* We must distinguish between that which is Necessary or Profitable to the order or Peace of one Church or Nation: and that which is necessary or profitable to the order, peace or unity of many Churches or Nations, among themselves: or supposed to be so.

§. 13. These Distinctions premised to remove ambiguity; I lay down that which I conceive to be the truth in these Propositions following; which having mentioned, I shall re-assume and confirm such of them as seem of nearest concernment to the Question.

§. 14. Prop. 1. Such Ceremonies as God hath wholly exempted from humane power to determine of, or institute, or hath given man no power to institute, are not necessary, or profitable to the Church, nor may they lawfully be instituted by man.

§. 15. Prop. 2. In such unlawfull Impositions, it is a great aggravation of the sin, if men pretend that they are the Institutions of God, or that they have a Commission from God to institute or impose them, when it is no such matter; and so pretend them to be Divine.

§. 16. Prop. 3. If things unlawfull (either forbidden, or that want authority) are commanded as indifferent, it is a sinfull command, but if commanded as parts of Gods Worship or necessary to the Being or well being of the Church, it is an aggravation of the sin.

§. 17. Prop. 4. Things indifferent, lawfull and convenient, are sinfully Comanded when they are pretended to be more necessary then they are, and as such imposed.



§. 18. Prop. 5. *A thing convenient and profitable, is sinfully commanded, when it is commanded on a greater penalty, then the nature and use of it doth require, and the common good will bear.*

§. 19. Prop. 6. *It is not lawfull to make any thing the subjects Duty by a command, that is meerly Indifferent, antecedently both in it self, and as cloathed with all accidents.*

§. 20. Prop. 7. *Some things may be lawfully and profitably commanded at one time and place, and to one sort of People, that may not be lawfully commanded at another time, or to another people: nor obeyed, if so commanded.*

§. 21. Prop. 8. *Those Orders may be Profitable for the Peace of the Churches in one Nation, or under the Government of one Prince, that are not necessary or profitable in order to the unity or Peace of the Churches under divers Princes.*

§. 22. Prop. 9. *There is no meer humane Universal Sovereign Civil, or Ecclesiastical over the Catholick Church, and therefore there is no power given to any from God, to make Laws that shall universally bind the Catholick Church.*

§. 23. Prop. 10. *If it be not our own Lawfull Governors Civil or Ecclesiastical, but Usurpers that command us, we are not therefore bound to obey them, though the things be lawfull.*

§. 24. Prop. 11. *The Commands of lawfull Governors about lawfull Ceremonies are ordinarily to be understood with exceptions, though there be none exprest, as that in certain cases it is not their will that such commands should bind us.*

§. 25. Prop. 12. *It may be very sinful to command some Ceremonies, which may lawfully, yea must in duty be used by the subject when they are commanded.*

§. 26. Prop. 13. *Though they are not Commanded, nor called Necessary, but professed to be indifferent, yet constantly to use Indifferent things, doth breed that custome which maketh them to be taken as necessary by the people, and usually doth very much hurt.*

§. 27. Prop. 14. *Yet certain things that are commonly called Ceremonies may lawfully be used in the Church upon humane imposition, and when it is not against the Law of God, no person should disobey the commands of their lawfull Governors, in such things.*

§. 28. *Having laid together these Propositions, I shall review them, in a very short explication and confirmation, and insist more largely on those of chief concernment.*





## CHAP. II.

*Such Ceremonies as God hath forbidden,  
or given man no Power to institute,  
are not to be imposed on the Church, as  
profitable or lawfull.*

§. 1.



**H**AT some Ceremonies (things commonly so called) may Lawfully be commanded, and some not, me thinks should easily be yielded. I meet with none that are against all indeed, though some think the name [*Ceremony*] unfitly applyed to those Circumstances which they consent to: And that any should think that the wit and will of Ceremonie-makers hath no bounds imposed by God, is most unreasonable. All the business therefore is to know what God hath authorized Governors to institute, and what not?

§. 2. And here they that claim a Power of introducing new Institutions, must produce their Commission, and Prove their power if they expect obedience. For we are not bound to obey every man that will tell us he hath such Power.

§. 3. For the right understanding of this, it must be supposed, as a Truth that all Protestants are agreed in, that the written word of God is his law for the government of the universal Church to the end of the world; and consequently that it is sufficient in its kind, and to its use, and consequently that nothing is to be introduced, that shall accuse that law of imperfection, or which did belong to God himself to have imposed by



by his law. If we once forsake the Scripture sufficiency (what ever the Papists or Infidels vainly say against it,) we have nothing left in which we may agree.

§. 4. God hath already in his written Laws, instituted his publick worship-ordinances; and therefore he hath done it perfectly: and therefore he hath not left it unto man to come after him and mend his work, by making other ordinances of worship, as to the substance of them. He hath given us one faith, and no man may preach another, and *one Baptism*, and no man may institute another: and so of the like. If any one bring another Gospel, though an Angel, he is to be accursed, *Gal. 1. 7, 8.*

§. 5. Yet is it in the Power of man to determine of such Modes and Circumstances as are necessary to the performance of that worship which God hath instituted in his word: And therefore lawfull Governors may in such cases bind us by their commands.

§. 6. The things that are committed to humane determination, are such as are commanded in general by God himself (either in Scripture or nature,) but are left undetermined *in specie, vel individuo*: so that it is not a thing indifferent, whether a choice or determination be made or not, but only whether it be *this* or *the other* that is chosen by the determination. But where the thing it self *in genere* is not necessary, or no humane election or determination necessary, because God himself hath determined of it already, there men are not to meddle, as having no authority from God.

§. 7. I shall first give some instances of the former sort (the Lawfull Ceremonies) and then name the latter (that are unlawful,) which I shall afterward give my reasons against. And 1. It is left to humane determination what *place* the Publick assemblies shall be held in. God having commanded us to frequent such assemblies, and not forsake them, doth oblige us to some place in general, and to a fit place. He that bids us preach, and hear, and pray, and assemble to these ends, doth plainly bid us, do this *some where*. It is impossible to meet, and not in a *Place*. And in that he hath not determined of any place himself, he hath left it to our reasons to determine of as occasion shall require. God hath not commanded to build a Temple



Temple in such a place rather then another : or to go thither to worship rather then another place (but by consequence and generall directions : ) nor hath he determined what place the Minister shall stand to preach in, or where all the people shall have their seats. All these are but the circumstances of a holy action, which are left to humane prudence.

§. 8. 2. It is left to man to determine of the *Time* of holy duties, except only where God hath determined of it already. As that the Lords day shall be the Day for publick holy Assemblies, is a thing that God himself hath determined; and here we have nothing to do but to discern his determinations and obey them. But withall he hath in Generall commanded us to *preach in season and out of season*, and to Assemble frequently, on severall great occasions : And here he hath not determined of the *Time*, but left it to humane prudence upon emergent occasions, and according to their severall cases, to determine of what hour on the Lords day we shall begin; how long the Sermon shall be; what hour the Assembly shall be dismissed: what daies the Lords supper shall be administered, and how oft: when any shall be Baptized: what day the Lecture shall be on, or any more private meetings for edification: what hour, or just how oft men must pray in secret, or with their families: these with the like are undetermined by God (and good reason, as I shall shew anon,) and left to our selves and to our Governors: *Some Time* or other we are commanded by God himself to choose.

§. 9. 3. It is left to the determination of humane Prudence, what *Utensils* to imploy about the publick worship of God. For these in Generall are commanded by God, and so made necessary; as also in the nature of the thing. He that commanded us to do the work, that is not to be done without convenient *Utensils*, doth thereby command us virtually, the use of instruments fit for the work. What form and proportion the Temple where we meet shall have, is left to men: whether we shall preach in a Pulpit? and what shall be its shape? where we shall read? whether we shall Baptize in a River, or Pond, or Spring, or Font, or Bason, and what materials, whether stone or Silver, or Pewter, &c. they be made of? whether we shall