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THE SOCIETY AIMS at encouraging interest in and research into the origins and history of Congregational churches and principles. Its publication *Transactions* has appeared annually but because of increasing interest will be issued twice a year from the autumn. The Society arranges lectures when requested, besides holding an annual lecture during the May Meetings, and it assists students doing research.

ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP involves an annual subscription of 7s. 6d. Corporate Members (Churches, Colleges, Libraries, etc.) pay at the same rate. Subscriptions should be sent to the General Secretary (address above). Members receive copies of *Transactions* free.

Printed and Published for the Society by
J. H. Clarke & Co. Ltd., The Tindal Press, Chelmsford.

CONGREGATIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1662
AND ITS ISSUES

TRANSACTIONS
SUPPLEMENT

APRIL 1962

1662 AND ITS ISSUES

A Congregational Historical Society *Transactions* Supplement

EDITED BY JOHN H. TAYLOR, B.D.

VOL. XIX. APRIL 1962

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Note: The authors alone are responsible for the views they express.

Introduction

Congregationalists as a rule do not have as precise or self-conscious a racial memory as members of some other Communion; and it may well be, therefore, that the forthcoming Commemoration of the Great Ejection of 1662 will find some of them in an embarrassing position. That so decisive an event in British religious history should be commemorated few will doubt; but without accurate knowledge of what took place and of the main issues at stake no commemoration could be worthy. The essays which comprise this volume are designed to help those who feel the need of being reminded of those matters of conscience for which our fathers took so memorable a stand and of the relevance of this historic controversy to the present task of the churches.

It is important, for instance, to realize that not all the ejected ministers were of precisely the same mind. Some would have remained within the Established Church had its constitution been more in accord with their understanding of Christian obedience: they were not against the establishment of religion on principle. But others were. Some left the Established Church in 1662 to return later; while others who conformed on St. Bartholomew's Day later left the Church of England and threw in their lot with the Dissenters. It is not for us here to assess the motives of those who

participated in this two-way traffic. It is sufficient to notice the evidence that the situation must have been perplexing, that men of conscience differed in judgment, that some took steps in 1662 which they subsequently retraced, and that those whom we commemorate were not all of precisely the same colour.

They were all, however, exercised about the same great issues. What is the true relation of Church and State? To what extent should the State protect the Church? Could it be right for the State to decide what form of the Christian religion its citizens should follow? The way in which these issues were settled in 1662 set the pattern of English religious life for subsequent centuries; and the struggle as a result of which Dissenters were at last liberated from the penalties of the Clarendon Code affected Church relations for a long period. We now live in an entirely different atmosphere. The Established and the Free Churches live together on terms of real cordiality and frequently work together in all manner of concerns. Anglicans are not as content with the Act of Uniformity as their forefathers were three hundred years ago, and some of them are anxious for a new religious settlement; and Free Churchmen, on the other hand, are not as unanimously against some kind of national recognition of religion as were some of their predecessors and have come to a view nearer to certain of their founding fathers: at least, they are not averse to considerable financial and other concessions from the State. Meanwhile, Christians in other lands are confronted with tyranny and persecution. This 1662 issue is as relevant in Warsaw and Peking as it is in London.

Behind this political issue, however, there lay two deeper ones, the most profound of which concerned the nature of the Church and its ministry. How should those who are called by God to the holy ministry be authorized to do their work? Is ordination by a bishop desirable only, or is it essential? What is the status of a minister who has been otherwise ordained? May he undertake ministerial duties within the Church of England without ordination, simply by declaring that he accepts its teaching and practice? Or should he be reordained episcopally; and if so, what bearing does that have upon his previous ministry? Is the price of ministry within an episcopal church the admission that any previous ministry is somehow defective, invalid or null? Such questions remain with us, and are the constant subject of discussion wherever Christians consider what is involved in that reunion of Christendom to which all at least pay lip-service. For reasons which Mr. Bocking

expounds on a later page this matter cannot and ought not to be discussed apart from the nature of the Church ; and behind that problem lies another : how is authority exercised in the Church ? Our fathers declared that all was to be done agreeably to the Word of God. We often use the same formula ; but we often hide from ourselves the fact that we think of the Word of God very differently from our fathers. They were persuaded that the Scriptures provided a blue-print for Church Order : what was needed was to reproduce in the seventeenth century what had been done by the earliest Christians. We can no longer think of the Bible in such terms ; and even if we did suppose that such a pattern of Church Order could be extracted from the Bible, we should ask whether it need be slavishly followed. What then do we mean by describing a Church Order as 'scriptural' ?

It was not only the ordering of the Church which had to be scriptural : the same applied to worship. Our fathers did not discuss liturgy in terms of taste ; nor did they judge such matters on the basis of what was temperamentally congenial. They argued from principle, and said that certain features of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer were out of keeping with the Word of God. They differed among themselves as to the extent of this failing ; but this was the gravamen of their charge. It so happens that we are living in a time of liturgical renewal ; and we have opportunity to be familiar with the worship of other Christians. We are therefore in a relatively good position to consider what should be the character and the quality of the worship of the Church. Once again, what does the adjective 'scriptural' mean in this connection ?

It is to such issues as these that the Commemoration of 1662 bids us address our minds. And it is because the essays in this volume expound them both in their historical setting and in relation to our contemporary scene that I count it an honour to commend them to the serious study of Congregationalists everywhere.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS The editor and contributors wish to express their debt of gratitude to Principal Huxtable for his warm encouragement and particularly for his helpful suggestions on Issues I and II. They are similarly grateful to Dr. G. F. Nuttall of New College with respect to the first essay, and to Dr. J. A. Guillum Scott, Secretary of the Church Assembly, with respect to Issue I.

UNIFORMITY AND NONCONFORMITY

I

On 19 May, 1662 the Royal Assent was given to 'An Act for the Uniformity of Public Prayers and Administration of Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies : and for establishing the form of making, ordaining, and consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons, in the Church of England'.

The preamble of the Act is worth noting in detail, for it indicates both the basis, and the aims of the legislation.

Whereas, in the first year of the late Queen Elizabeth, there was one uniform order of common service and prayer, and of the administration of sacraments, rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. . . . And yet this, notwithstanding, a great number of people in divers parts of this realm, following their own sensuality, and living without knowledge, and due fear of God, do wilfully and schismatically abstain and refuse to come to their parish churches . . . and whereas, by the great and scandalous neglect of the ministers in using the said order or liturgy so set forth and enjoined as aforesaid, great mischiefs and inconveniences, during the time of the late unhappy troubles, have arisen and grown, and many people have been led into factions and schisms, to the great decay and scandal of the reformed religion of the Church of England, and to the hazard of many souls. For prevention thereof in time to come, for settling the peace of the church, and for allaying the present distempers which the indisposition of the time hath contracted, the king's majesty (according to his declaration of the five-and-twentieth of October, one thousand six hundred and sixty) granted his commission, under the great seal of England, to several bishops and other divines, to review the Book of Common Prayer, and to prepare such alterations and additions as they thought fit to offer. . . .

The Act then proceeds as follows :

Now in regard that nothing conduceth more to the settling of the peace of this nation . . . than a universal agreement in the public worship of Almighty God, and to the intent that every person within the realm, may certainly know the rule to which he is to conform in public worship. . . . Be it enacted . . . that all and singular ministers in any cathedral, collegiate, or parish church or chapel, or other place of public worship within this

realm of England, dominion of Wales, and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, shall be bound to say and use the morning prayer, evening prayer, celebration and administration of both the sacraments, and all other the public and common prayer, in such order and form as is mentioned in the said book annexed and joined to this present Act,

Be it further enacted . . . that every parson, vicar, or other minister whatsoever, who now hath and enjoyeth any ecclesiastical benefice or promotion within this realm of England, or places aforesaid, shall in the church, chapel, or place of public worship belonging to his said benefice or promotion, upon some Lord's day before the feast of St. Bartholomew, which shall be in the year of our Lord God one thousand six hundred and sixty two, openly, publicly, and solemnly read the morning and evening prayer appointed to be read by and according to the said Book of Common Prayer at the times thereby appointed ; and after reading thereof, shall openly and publicly, before the congregation there assembled, declare his unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all things in the said book contained. . . .

And that all and every such person who shall . . . neglect or refuse to do the same . . . shall, *ipso facto*, be deprived of all his spiritual promotions. And that from thenceforth it shall be lawful to, and for all patrons . . . to present or collate to the same, as though the person, or persons so offending or neglecting were dead.

And be it further enacted . . . that every dean, canon, and prebendary, of every cathedral or collegiate church, and all masters, and other heads, fellows, chaplains, and tutors of or in any college, hall, house of learning, or hospital, every public professor and reader in either of the universities, and in every college elsewhere, and every parson, vicar, curate, lecturer and every other person in holy orders and every schoolmaster keeping any public or private school, and every person instructing or teaching any youth in any house or private family as a tutor or schoolmaster, who upon the first day of May which shall be in the year of our Lord God one thousand six hundred and sixty-two, or at any time thereafter . . . shall before the feast day of St Bartholomew . . . subscribe the declaration . . .

I, A.B. do declare, that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king : . . . that I do hold

there lies no obligation upon me . . . from the oath commonly called, The Solemn League and Covenant . . .

And be it further enacted . . . that no person whatsoever shall thenceforth be capable to be admitted to any parsonage, vicarage, benefice, or other ecclesiastical promotion or dignity whatsoever, nor shall presume to consecrate and administer the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper before such time as he shall be ordained priest according to the form and manner in and by the said book prescribed, unless he have formerly been made priest by episcopal ordination ; . . .

And be it further enacted . . . that if any person who is by this Act disabled to preach any lecture or sermon, shall, during the time he shall continue or remain so disabled, preach any sermon or lecture ; that then, for every such offence, the person and persons so offending shall suffer three months' imprisonment in the common gaol . . .

II

Such are the principal features of the Act which brought to birth the English Free Churches. It did not bring into being the type of churchmanship to which they bear witness, but it did force that churchmanship to find expression outside the Establishment. The Cavalier Parliament, looking back to the days of Queen Elizabeth I, could see only one possible solution to the ecclesiastical situation : the Puritans must either conform to the clearly defined pattern of Church Order set out in the revised Prayer Book and associated with the restored Episcopate, or else be ejected. Episcopal ordination alone was recognised as valid ; all ministers were required to give unfeigned assent and consent to the contents of the Book of Common Prayer ; and, in the political realm, all ministers and teachers of every kind were required to accept a doctrine of non-resistance, renouncing all obligations incurred under the Solemn League and Covenant. This last was an oath which in 1644 had been imposed on all Englishmen over the age of eighteen years. It was concerned with the preservation of the Reformed religion, the rooting out of popery, the preservation of the rights of Parliament, the exposing of the enemies of Reformed religion, and the maintenance of the present peace. The penalty for failure to comply with the Act was ejection on St. Bartholomew's Day, 24 August, 1662.

In the setting of the Restoration of the Monarchy there is nothing surprising about the Act of Uniformity. The triumphant royalist

clergy and the newly-elected Cavalier House of Commons were naturally intent upon reversing the situation which had prevailed during the Commonwealth. Revenge had its place in the complex of motives which gave rise to the punitive laws known as the Clarendon Code. The spirit of Archbishop Laud had persisted among the clergy who had gone into exile after the Parliamentary victory in the Civil War, and it was this numerically small but active and vocal group which led the movement for the re-establishment of Episcopacy in 1660. The 1662 Act represents the goal of a well-organized group of High Churchmen.

The majority of parishes had been little affected by the fall of Laud and by the improvised ecclesiastical system which replaced Episcopacy during the Commonwealth. Many of the clergy, though not necessarily all 'Vicars of Bray', were not fanatical adherents of any particular type of Church Order. There were many sequestrations, of course; it has been estimated that about 30 per cent., of the parish clergy were removed from their livings. Some were removed for refusal to give up using the Prayer Book; others were alleged to be insufficiently qualified; others were accused of scandalous living, a charge capable of substantiation in not a few instances. In their places were appointed ministers of a variety of persuasions, the majority of them Presbyterians,¹ a small number Independents, and a very few Baptists. At first, the control of ecclesiastical affairs was in the hands of Parliament; later, it was exercised by the Lord Protector, whose Commissioners, or 'Triers', appointed to screen candidates for ministerial office, interfered hardly at all with specifically religious matters, other than forbidding the use of the Book of Common Prayer. Thus the national church comprehended men of varying churchmanship. Only the Laudians² had no place within it.

In the early days of the Commonwealth the majority of ministers, including those who were enthusiastic for the Parliamentary cause, had received episcopal ordination. But Episcopacy was abolished by Parliament in 1646, and new men entering the ministry after that date were ordained either by a Presbyterian district court, or else by the churches to which they were called. Even so, at the Restoration a considerable number of Presbyterians, including Richard Baxter and other leading figures, were prepared to accept some form of episcopal settlement, and were to the fore in welcoming the prospect of Charles' return to the throne, after Cromwell's death in 1658 had left a political vacuum.

Many of the parish ministers naturally welcomed the Restoration as marking a return to the days before the Civil War, though, it should be added, they were not necessarily enthusiastic for the policies of the returning Laudians and the younger men, often tutored by sequestered clergymen, who entered Parliament in 1661. They were not the instigators of the Act of Uniformity, which dealt a death blow to the hoped-for scheme of comprehension visualised by the Presbyterians. Charles' Declaration from Breda in April 1660 had seemed to offer grounds for such a hope, and this was further encouraged by his later Declaration of 25 October the same year; but the future pattern of Church Order was to be fashioned neither by Charles nor by the Presbyterians; it was the High Church Party which won the day.

While Baxter and many Presbyterians looked for comprehension, the most Independents could hope for was a measure of toleration; they were unable to come to terms with Episcopacy even in a modified form. In the outcome neither of the Puritan parties achieved its goal; uniformity on a rigid episcopalian basis was strictly enforced.

Events followed an almost inevitable course. The Establishment was rapidly recaptured by the triumphant royalists, and the Prayer Book was gradually reintroduced. Quite naturally, the survivors among those ejected by Parliament demanded the return of their livings. In some cases they took the law into their own hands: it seems clear that many Puritan ministers, foreseeing the inevitable, quietly relinquished possession. The restoration of the sequestered was confirmed by an Act for Confirming and Restoring Ministers, which received the Royal Assent 29 December, 1660. This Act also legalised a number of other displacements of 'Commonwealth' ministers: A. G. Matthews has estimated that about 800 were ejected at this time. Otherwise, ministers appointed since January 1642/3 were confirmed in their livings, unless they had petitioned for the trial of Charles I, or had actively opposed his son's return.

In Parliament, which for about a year after the Restoration had had a powerful Puritan element, the balance was changed by new elections. All members of the House of Commons were required to receive the Sacrament according to the Prayer Book rite, on pain of disqualification. The bishops returned to the House of Lords. The revision of the Prayer Book for which the Puritans had asked was indeed carried out, but this brought little satisfaction to the

petitioners. The Book to be revised was that of Elizabeth, established in 1559, and already revised in 1604 after the Hampton Court conference. About 600 changes were made, mostly verbal, and although a few were designed to meet Puritan objections to the old book, others made the Prayer Book even more objectionable. In particular, the great emphasis laid on the distinction between the bishop and the priest, and the stressing of the priestly character of the ministry, increased Puritan opposition. This revised Book of Common Prayer became the authorised liturgy on 24 August, 1662, for the Bill of Uniformity, which had already passed the Commons in 1661, was passed by the Lords, and received the Royal Assent 19 May, 1662.

What did Archbishop Sheldon and his fellow bishops expect? Did they regard the Act as an instrument with which to purge the Church of Puritan Doctrine? This is unlikely, for, though the new Anglicanism of Laud and his successors had no place for the Calvinism which was characteristic of the Puritans and which had been acceptable to the Church of England in the previous century, it was not intolerant of *theological* differences. What the Caroline bishops could not tolerate were divergences from the established pattern of worship and discipline. Laud expressed this clearly: 'Unity cannot long continue in the Church when uniformity is shut out at the church door', and: 'No external action in the world can be uniform without some ceremonies . . . Ceremonies are the hedge that fence the substance of religion from all the indignities which profaneness and sacrilege too commonly put upon it.'³ It was uniformity of liturgy and polity which the Established Church of 1662 sought to enforce.

In essence, this merely re-emphasized the attitude of Church leaders in Elizabethan times. In detail, the Act of Uniformity did go beyond the demands made in the sixteenth century. It was applied in face of a different situation: the existence of a body of ministers who, partly because of circumstances, had not been episcopally ordained, raised problems of conscience which had not been present earlier. Nevertheless, there was nothing fundamentally new about the policy adopted by the Laudians.

The attitude of the Nonconformists likewise represented principles which can be traced back to Elizabethan times. Those who refused to conform in 1662 did so on grounds with which their forefathers would have been familiar. They were heirs of a tradition

of nonconformity to attempted enforcement of set ceremonial and fixed forms of words in worship. For a century Puritans had been striving for a fuller reformation of the Church's liturgy and polity; although the Establishment was or believed itself to be loyal to the Reformation, there was enough similarity to the Roman pattern to arouse anxiety and criticism in the Reformed Churches of the Continent.

The detailed provisions of the Act made conformity impossible for many Puritans. Ceremonies objected to on scriptural grounds were being enforced; fixed forms of words were enjoined, which, they believed, denied the reality of the Holy Spirit's promised aid in worship; the necessity of episcopal ordination was given renewed emphasis. Thus it was that on or before St. Bartholomew's Day about a thousand ministers were compelled to leave their homes and their churches. A. G. Matthews has patiently and painstakingly examined available sources of information, and his conclusions have won general approval. A summary of his figures is included at the end of this essay.

III

Although it is impossible to separate the Act of Uniformity, and its immediate effect of excluding the Puritans from the Church of England as by law established, from the vindictive legislation which was passed in later years, it is important to realise that they are not necessarily connected. The former was the Laudian answer to the Puritan request for comprehension; the latter was the answer to the claim for toleration. It may be added the latter was prompted partly by fear. The spectre of the Roundheads could not be wholly exorcised by the authorities, for whom political and religious considerations were deeply intertwined. But the severity of the penal code is one thing, the significance of the Act of Uniformity is another. The sufferings of the ejected were incidental to the Act, though the laws which followed probably reflected with some accuracy the mood of those who placed it on the Statute Book.

Of course the ministers and their dependents suffered, many of them severely; many endured poverty or persecution or both. While a number were men of independent means, whose loss of livelihood and home was not a financial disaster—William Blake-more of St. Peter's Cornhill, for example, had a relative of means, who placed a house at his disposal—many were less fortunate. Deprived of their harvest tithes, not due until after St. Bartholo-

mew's Day, and compelled to leave their homes, they were assured of nothing but uncertainty and hardship. Some found employment as domestic chaplains or as tutors, but many had to turn to trade or agriculture. When a wealthy man in Wiltshire, whose wife was dangerously ill, had failed to locate his parish clergyman, he was told by one of his servants that the shepherd could pray well. The shepherd was sent for, and at his master's request prayed for the sick lady. His fervour aroused the master's curiosity, and, on being questioned, he confessed that he was one of the ejected ministers, and that shepherding sheep had proved the only occupation open to him. This particular story, narrated by Samuel Palmer in *The Nonconformists' Memorial*, is regarded by A. G. Matthews as improbable, but it does reflect the difficulties endured by many of the ejected, and it accords well with the known character of 'Praying' Ince, the minister in question.

Not content with ejecting ministers from their churches, the Cavalier Parliament three years later imposed new and frustrating restrictions by An Act for Restraining Nonconformists from Inhabiting Corporations (usually known as The Five Mile Act). Nonconformist ministers were forbidden to come, except in course of a journey, within five miles of any town, or any place where they had ministered.

Nor was it only ministers who were made to suffer, lay Nonconformists also were affected by the Conventicle Act of 1664. This Act restricted the number of people permitted to gather under 'colour or pretence of religion, in other manner than is allowed by the liturgy or practice of the Church of England' to four, over and above members of the same household—the penalty for non-compliance was three months imprisonment, or a fine of £5. The law, it must be added, was not everywhere rigorously and consistently enforced; in many parts of the country there were wealthy sympathisers, and local justices sometimes turned a blind eye to breaches of the law. Nevertheless, the plight of the Bartholomeans was hard, and at particular times and in particular places the authorities persecuted them bitterly—some prisons were overflowing with Nonconformists, and it was reported that Newgate was so full that it bred a malignant fever, which claimed many victims. Many congregations were forced to meet in cellars and barns, where they were in constant danger of discovery, arrest and punishment. It was hardly surprising that many welcomed Charles' Declaration of Indulgence (1672) which temporarily suspended penal laws

against Nonconformists, and let Protestants meet in public in buildings for which certificates were obtained. It is even less surprising that the Revolution which brought William of Orange to the throne in 1689 had Nonconformist support, for this opened the way for a relaxation of the penal laws, and for the prospect of real toleration.

IV

But to return to the Act of Uniformity itself. What is its real significance? And how did it affect the ecclesiastical life of England, both the Episcopal Establishment and the Nonconformists? In the first place, it clearly indicated the Laudian contention that the State, *i.e.* Parliament, could and should validate the life of the national church. This contention had been explicit since Henry VIII broke with the Pope, and it is still acceptable to many in the twentieth century. Thus the Act of Uniformity reaffirmed an important principle of the English Reformation, and was the inevitable outcome of the idea that a national church must have a uniform liturgy and polity.

The Church of England lost a large number of able and godly ministers, among them some of the outstanding men of their age: John Owen, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University; Richard Baxter, scholar, pastor and ecclesiastical statesman; John Howe, chaplain to Cromwell. By any standard these men were among the great figures of the Church in England. Their departure weakened the Established Church, but it may be doubted if there had ever been a real possibility of comprehending them in any system then practicable. The Laudians were seeking to preserve a compromise, in which what we may call the Catholic and Protestant elements had a place; it seems probable that the inclusion of the Puritans would have threatened that compromise. Even allowing for the fact that the modern Anglican insistence upon episcopal ordination owes something to the Oxford Movement, the underlying doctrine could hardly have been modified at the Restoration without profoundly changing the character of the Church of England.

And what of the ejected? Was the Act of Uniformity all loss? The element of suffering has been mentioned. To this must be added the frustration of being unable freely to fulfil a divine vocation. But amid much that was regrettable, were there other and more happy effects? The spirit of Puritanism was tempered in the fire of persecution, and was thus fitted to play its part in the

religious life of this country in later ages. Furthermore, the very fact that a considerable number of Puritans were driven out of the Church of England aided the cause of religious toleration in this land. Had the Presbyterians and the more 'right wing' Independents been comprehended at the Restoration, the more radical Puritans, such as the 'left wing' Independents, the Baptists and the Quakers, who had not belonged to the Establishment even during the Commonwealth, might have been left in a dangerously isolated position. It may be doubted whether they would have been strong and numerous enough to sustain the struggle for toleration.

In fact, the Presbyterians, denied the comprehension for which they had hoped, and unable to establish a rival Presbyteral Church Order, were forced to become in effect Independents. The result was a large and able body of Nonconformists, which both Church and State had soon to recognize and tolerate. Although persecution was at times bitter, especially after the second Conventicle Act (1670) the method of suppression failed to achieve its object. Thus, in a sense, the cause of religious toleration was strengthened by the Act of Uniformity of 1662. This conclusion does not of course imply approval of the measure nor of the conception to which it gave expression, but an honest attempt to assess its significance must take account of its long-term effects.

Modern Nonconformity was born in 1662, or rather, the spirit of Puritanism was then cast in particular moulds. It may be that, in the circumstances of the Restoration, this was the only way in which that spirit could be preserved for the good of the whole Church.

WILFRED W. BIGGS

¹ The term 'Presbyterian' is used somewhat loosely to describe not only the ministers who wanted the establishment of a specifically Presbyterian Church, but also the many Puritans, including Richard Baxter, who were utterly opposed to the system associated with Laud and enforced by the Cavalier Parliament, but who favoured a moderate episcopal form of Church government.

² The term 'Laudian' is applied to the group of clergy who shared Laud's conception of Church government, and who at the Restoration led the movement for its re-establishment. In a sense they were the forbears of the nineteenth century Tractarians, and could be called the seventeenth century 'High Church' party.

³ Quoted by R. S. Boshier, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement*, p. 271.

UNIFORMITY AND NONCONFORMITY
STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF THE EJECTED
1660—1662

(after : A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, pp. xii-xvi, with acknowledgments to the author and the Oxford University Press)

| A. | Ejected from Livings (i.e. Incumbents, Lecturers, etc.) | Ejected from Universities and Schools | Totals |
|--|--|---|--------|
| 1660 | 695 | 114 | 809 |
| not certain (1662?) | 129 | | 129 |
| 1662 | 936 | 35 | 971 |
| | 1760 | 149 | 1909 |
| Afterwards Conformed | 171 | 6 | 177 |
| B. <i>Declaration of Indulgence—1672</i> | | | |
| | Totals of 'Teachers' Licensed in England under its authorization | 'Bartholomeans' included in Totals | |
| Presbyterians | 854 | 730 | |
| Congregationals | 375 | 205 | |
| | | (includes 16 licensed as Presbyterian and Congregational) | |
| Baptists | 202 | 5 | |
| Others | 3 | 3 | |
| | 1434 | 943 | |
| | | 338 | |
| | Died in the interval | 20 | |
| | Known to be out of the country | 197 | |
| | Living, but did not apply for licences | 1498 | |
| | | 1498 | |

No known evidence about the remainder.

C. *Later Evidence*

In 1690, about 400 'Bartholomeans' were still alive, many of them in active service. The last survivor, Nathan Denton, of Yorkshire, died in October, 1720.

CHURCH AND STATE

The problem of Church and State is, like marriage, hardly a problem at all to satisfied people. Every minister knows how blissfully ignorant so many of those who attend his Church membership classes are of this problem and its history. Many are not much interested in any case. The Commemoration of 1662 is a rare opportunity for Free Churchmen to think again. It is salutary to remember that only 400 miles away in East Germany this is a crucial question, and that in too many parts of the world, not only Communist, Christians suffer degrees of restriction and oppression. In such surroundings it is neither brotherly nor prudent to ignore the danger that always lurks in Church-State relations. The fact that so many of our fellow Christians would like to have our liberties and are denied them should encourage us to appreciate our privileges and to give thanks to God for those who suffered and fought for them.

The Commemoration itself also cries out for a reappraisal on our part of the nature and desirability or otherwise of Establishment. It is too easily forgotten that the ejected men, whose courage and conviction we admire were, before ejection, happily benefited in the Established Church of the old order. This should make us ponder. We are not fair to them if we pass over this simple fact, or the additional one that many of them wanted a compromise with the Episcopalians which would have given them liberty to follow their vocations within the State Church of the Restoration. All this becomes relevant in our time for two reasons. Firstly, because, in face of secularism, denominations are drawing together ; bitterness towards the Church of England is a thing of the past ; friendship and understanding are happily growing apace ; and so we have to reconsider our attitude towards Establishment. Then secondly, the Church of England herself in this century is busy seeking a new settlement with the State—for the Establishment of the Restoration period is moribund, despite the Act of Uniformity's still being on the Statute Book—and she deserves our sympathy in her struggle with the 'magistrate', as the Puritan called the authorities. What, then, of Establishment ?

Certain texts will doubtless cross our minds, as they often crossed the Puritans', when thinking about Church and State. In particular there are, on the one hand, 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake' (*1. Pet.* ii. 13), and on the other,

'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.' (*Acts iv. 19*). Such texts were landmarks to seventeenth-century Christians. What is less likely to appeal to us in our different circumstances is the constant reference they made to the way the Jews dealt with the problem. Israel's solution was their example. Religion and politics in the seventeenth century were subjects of equal interest to all men and inseparably intertwined. The secular or semi-secular State of today would have been anathema to Puritan and Episcopalian alike.

We ought, however, before probing the problem of Establishment, to rehearse briefly the liberties we enjoy, which cost so much, and yet, like pieces of old family silver, tend to become neglected and black in some cupboard because no one is appreciative enough to bother about them. All the standard history books on the Free Churches recount the struggles in more or less detail; there is no room to do so here. Nonconformists are free to worship according to their conscience. The Toleration Act of 1689 first granted this right, relieving them of the punishments attaching to the Clarendon Code so far as worship was concerned. The Toleration Act has since been repealed and the right to worship is embodied in other statutes, as for example, the Places of Religious Worship Act, 1812, in which preachers in particular are exempted from 'pains and penalties' for preaching outside the Established Church. Ministers and teachers have been free to teach since the Nonconformist Relief Act, 1779, provided that they were willing to make a Declaration before a magistrate. This Declaration could still be enforced, it seems, upon all nonconformist ministers and teachers.

I, A.B. do solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God that I am a Christian and a Protestant and as such that I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as commonly received among Protestant churches, do contain the revealed will of God; and that I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine and practice.

The making of this declaration has long been obsolete, as Halsbury observes. However, it is under this measure that ministers are exempted from military service. Nonconformists in public service are familiar enough today but the way was only opened up by the repeal of the Test Act by Lord John Russell in 1828, and subsequent Acts in 1835 and 1867 which emancipated ordinary Nonconformists. Marriages according to nonconformist rites were first legalized in 1835. We have not space enough to complete this

catalogue but sufficient has been said to show the legal basis of our liberties.

The war which Nonconformists had to wage for their freedom, for which they raised immense armies of supporters, naturally fanned antagonism between Church and Chapel to white heat. These fires are only now dying down. But Establishment became a bad word amongst Nonconformists.

In the seventeenth century, however, Establishment was part of the ancient and honourable order of things. Something like two hundred years had yet to pass before the cry of Montalembert and the Liberal thinkers, 'a free Church in a free State'. The majority of ejected ministers subscribed to the view of the Presbyterian Westminster Confession of 1646 which asserts that it is the magistrate's duty to prevent and reform 'all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline', and that he should call synods to this end. He has power 'to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God'. One remembers how nowadays the Crown is formally represented at the General Assembly in Edinburgh by a Lord High Commissioner. The Savoy Declaration of 1658, which may be taken to speak for the Congregationalists, whilst asserting that the magistrate should 'encourage, promote, and protect the professor and the profession of the Gospel', does not allow him authority within the Church. He must respect 'differences about the Doctrines of the Gospel, or ways of the worship of God'. This is typical of Cromwell's toleration, and it should be remembered that Cromwell summoned the Savoy Conference and that he was an Independent.

Both Presbyterian and Congregationalist believed that the magistrate ought to guard his subjects against idolatry, Rome of course in particular, and to further the proclamation of the Gospel. Here David, Hezekiah, Josiah and Nehemiah were said to point the way. Only the Congregationalists, like the Separatists before them, drew the line at the State compelling everyone to be a member of the Church. By no means did they all see anything detrimental in compulsory attendance at public worship, where the Gospel would be proclaimed, but they perceived that compulsory membership was inconsistent with conscience and conversion.

With such a conception of the rôle of the State, it is possible to see how the average Puritan minister fitted happily into the pattern of Establishment during the Commonwealth. Many of them, such as Richard Baxter, loved parish evangelism; many emulated their

hero Calvin and became 'bishops' in their own towns and cities, respected and highly influential. But adamant Congregationalists were resented. These were the men who refused the Sacraments to all save the elect of the gathered church, and parishioners felt that they were being denied their rights, and so they often withheld their tithes. Some Congregationalists resigned. There were also a number of Independent churches, Congregational and Baptist, which were purely voluntary on principle.

This old Establishment of the Commonwealth was a makeshift arrangement which served whilst the Presbyterians and Independents failed to agree about a permanent solution of the Church question. That they could not come to terms was a tragic fact and nowhere was it more strikingly evident than in Exeter Cathedral where two congregations met, one Presbyterian and one Congregational, with a wall built between them. However, in some parts of the country—Worcestershire was notable under Baxter's leadership—they worked well together. There was no official system of ecclesiastical government. Financial aid in some measure came from Whitehall and there too sat the Commission known as the Triers which dealt with candidates for the ministry and cases of indiscipline.

Everyone was aware that the return of the king meant a new solution to the problem of Establishment would have to be found. Naturally the Presbyterians expected that it would include them as they were chiefly responsible for welcoming the monarch back to the throne. Their great error, however, was in allowing their Parliament, the Convention Parliament, to be dissolved in 1660 before any guarantees concerning toleration and comprehension, other than the king's promises at Breda, had been firmly established. The new Parliament, the Cavalier Parliament, had no intention of comforting Puritans of any kind.

The 1662 Act meant full-blooded Episcopacy. The Presbyterians had made clear to Charles II that they were prepared to have bishops. Moderators, that is chairmen, of presbyteries could become bishops, if the Episcopalians would have bishops act in and through presbyteries. This was of no avail. They were up against clergy and politicians who had been nursing their grievances in exile with the Royal Family and who had come to believe the more fanatically in their cause. Had not two noble martyrs died for the cause, one a king and the other an archbishop? In these futile manoeuvres the Presbyterians acted without the Congre-

gationalists who were, it seems, destined to be left out in the cold anyway. The Presbyterians, then, did not shy away from taking Episcopacy into their system.

What they drew back from was a return to a hierarchial system, buttressed with ecclesiastical courts, chancellors, canon law, and all the apparatus which they had seen used in Laud's time to drive reformers across the Atlantic. The Oath of Canonical Obedience required by the Act of Uniformity was therefore a formidable obstacle to them.

The Act also ordered the clergy to abjure the Solemn League and Covenant and to promise never to take up arms against the king. Oath taking at present savours of African nationalism. Certainly the Cavalier Parliament regarded the Puritans' Oath to reform religion as a menace. Baxter assures us that Puritans were prepared to undertake not to set about reformation 'in a Tumultuous and illegal way'; but this was not enough. The promise not to take up arms against the king seems justifiable in the light of the civil wars, but it was more than the Puritan clergy generally could accept. The Oath of Allegiance they would take willingly but to go further towards non-resistance they considered might betray their country's liberties. What was at stake was whether the king was above the Law or the Law above the king. Provided the king was subject to the Law they would be subject to him, but they reserved the right to protest with utmost vigour if he got out of hand.

These things, together with others yet to be discussed in the other essays, barred the way to Establishment for conscientious Puritans. In John Stoughton's words, 'They would have called the Church of England Mother,—but she drove them from her door'.

'Great disasters are caused by trying to learn from history and to correct past mistakes' says A. J. P. Taylor commenting on the fall of Bismarck in his biography. The present must be most in mind however necessary it is to know the case history. Things have changed since 1662: the State is different; so is the Church of England; and although the modern Free Churchman may be proud of his Puritan ancestors, he does not want to be identified with them.

The great and obvious difference in the State is secularization. Whereas John Owen, the spokesman of the Congregationalists, could say in 1659 in *Two Questions concerning the Power of the Supreme Magistrate* that it was right for the magistrate to exert

'his power, legislative and executive' to support and further Christianity 'in a nation or commonwealth of men professing the religion of Jesus Christ' it is most debatable today how far the State may go in assisting religion because it is questionable whether Britain can be said to profess the Christian faith. Yet the strange truth is that the State encourages the churches today in a way not dreamed of a hundred years ago. It is hardly necessary to catalogue the means: war damage compensation, fiscal concessions, education grants, broadcasting and television facilities, hospital and forces chaplaincies. Old-fashioned voluntarism, like personal independence, withers in the Welfare State. Certainly one point emerges, the modern State does not treat with the Established Church alone but with others as well, as if established.

The Church of England too has changed beyond all measure. Ordinary folk can see for themselves how much the Royal Navy has altered since Pepys was writing of it but they are far less aware of the new Church of England, and even Free Churchmen are not fully awake to the fact that when their battle for freedom was ending, the Established Church was beginning her struggles for spiritual liberty. Not until 1853, after agitation by Tractarians and Evangelicals alike, was she given back her voice, her convocations, which had been silenced partly for political reasons in 1717. Another very great step forward for her was the Enabling Act of 1919 sanctioning her Assembly's passing Measures to Parliament for acceptance or rejection.

The modern Church of England has a much stronger lay element in it than ever before. Anyone who has witnessed the Church Assembly in debate will realize that she is much more democratic than she used to be, bishops, representative clergy and laymen working in concert, though Convocations alone have the final word on doctrine and ritual and the sole right to make canons. At the local level, the modern incumbent has to work with and lead his parochial church council. His once unrivalled autocracy is no longer the ideal though he alone has authority in the matter of services. Congregations today are much more like 'gathered' ones of other denominations than they used to be, owing to the changed social patterns of urban Britain, and this is emphasized by the electoral roll system. Bishops, clergy and people are closer together than ever before.

Many reforms have come about but the battle is far from over. The way that Parliament rejected the Measures for a revised

Prayer Book in 1928 is not forgotten. Only recently the issue of Church and State recurred over the method of election of bishops. No one is satisfied with the *cong e d' lire* system which gives the chapter of the vacant see no alternative but to elect the man whose name is sent to them by the Crown upon the advice of the Prime Minister, but what should replace it is controversial. Less in the public eye, yet the cause of much labour, is the revision of canon law, a potential source of difficulty in conversations on reunion. The fact is that the Church of England is worried about her self-discipline. Neither canon law nor the old Prayer Book is anything but a hindrance to order and an open invitation to irregularity. All these matters require a new settlement.

Naturally the Scottish solution has attracted much attention, for the Church of Scotland remains established without her spiritual autonomy being impaired. Article IV of the Declaratory Articles of the Church of Scotland Act, 1921, makes it abundantly clear :

This Church, as part of the Universal Church wherein the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed a government in the hands of Church office-bearers, receives from Him, its Divine King and Head, and from Him alone, the right and power subject to no civil authority to legislate, and to adjudicate finally in all matters of doctrine, worship, government, and discipline in the Church

.....

The Report of the Archbishops' Commission of the Relations between Church and State, 1935, says that some similar solution might be found for England : ' We cannot believe that what is right for the Church of Scotland is in principle wrong for the Church of England.' (p. 56.)

In return for subjection the Anglicans have certain privileges. They have the use of parish churches and cathedrals ; they represent the Church on public occasions such as coronations, the opening of assizes, and remembrance days ; certain bishops sit in the House of Lords. The Church of England enjoys endowments and there is fear that disestablishment might involve the loss of some of these. Prestige is probably the greatest benefit gained in the long run.

Reunion would probably involve Establishment. Is there any reason to fear Establishment as such ? Indeed, according to legal authorities our denominations are already established. Halsbury's *Laws of England* says ' In one sense every religious body recog-

nized by the Law and protected in the ownership of its property and other rites may be said to be by law established'. (IIIrd ed., vol. 13, p. 29.) In so far as the bodies receive various benefits under the modern State, this kind of establishment is acknowledged by the recipients. It is the terms of Establishment which make the difference, whether in 1662 or 1962. The Puritans of the Commonwealth could accept the terms then; the United Free Church of Scotland was able to embrace the 1921 terms. Certainly, any new Establishment must, to satisfy Anglicans, grant spiritual autonomy to the Church. If it is so, the chief objection of Free Churchmen, that the Crown Rights of the Redeemer were infringed, would have been removed.

There are, of course, Free Churchmen who object to Establishment in principle. They say, for one thing, that there is evidence to suggest that the Church makes greater progress in countries where there is no Establishment. This is a viewpoint; but many in Britain of different denominations and none, alarmed at the secularization of society, are apprehensive of the secularized State which must be the result of disestablishment. Whilst the *status quo* continues there is no pressing need for Free Churchmen to make up their minds but reunion would make decision inescapable. Is Establishment something to fear? Is it wrong? If it is then we must not hide our censure from the Church of England.

In the writer's view Establishment itself is not a major obstacle in the way of reunion. The subjects of the two subsequent essays are of far more consequence.

JOHN H. TAYLOR

CHURCH AND CHAPEL HISTORIES

The Congregational Historical Society welcomes copies of local Church and Chapel Histories for mention in *Transactions*. Copies should be sent to the Research Secretary.

REORDINATION AND THE MINISTRY

I

‘ Mr. Graffen had two thousand in the streets, who could not get into the Tantling Meeting House, to hear him bang the Bishops, which theme he doth most exquisitely handle.’¹ In these words a London citizen in 1661 set the scene in the capital for his reader in the country. Though it was an indication of popular feeling 300 years ago, the impossibility of its happening today is a sign of the change that has occurred during the intervening years. For the Lambeth Conference of 1958, passing its resolution deploring restrictions on religious liberty ‘ imposed in some cases by the State alone and in others by the State influenced by a dominant religious group ’ is far removed from the Parliament of 1662 in which an episcopalian and royalist majority passed the Act of Uniformity in which it is stated, among other things, that any clergyman in a living of the Church of England who had not obtained episcopal ordination by St. Bartholomew’s Day, 24 August 1662 would be ‘ deprived of the same and all his ecclesiastical promotions shall be void as if he was naturally dead ’. Nevertheless the nature and form of the divisions between Christian people in this country largely result from the Act of 1662. It is therefore fitting at this time both to rejoice at the very different relationship existing between the Established Church and the Free Churches today, and to recognize the continuing existence of differences which the provisions of the Act of Uniformity made crucial in 1662.

In its final form this Act was the work of a Parliament which sought to impose on the country a religious settlement that would, by compelling uniformity of practice, create unity and give peace. The considerations which lay behind it were political rather than ecclesiastical, concerned more with law and order than with Church Order. The ministers who were ejected were Nonconformists, not Separatists ; they agreed with State recognition of religion but not with the requirements of the Act. Their exclusion from the life of the National Church weakened it and affected the course of its subsequent development.

II

Whenever, during the last half century, discussions concerning Church union have taken place between the Church of England and the Free Churches, the question of Episcopacy, and of episcopal ordination, has invariably arisen and proved to be a thorny problem. Today the question is a theological one, often reflecting emphases upon the nature of Episcopacy which developed very largely during the nineteenth century, under the influence of the Oxford Movement. But the fact that the debate again and again centres upon Episcopacy is a result of the Act of 1662. By its requirement that all clergymen in livings in the Church of England should have received episcopal ordination it focussed attention upon this point of Church Order. Thus the historical situation has obscured the vital question of the nature of the Church, and by emphasizing a point of Church Order relating to the ministry, has both separated ordination to the ministry from the total life of the Church, and consequently turned men's attention from consideration of the Church as such.

When Bernard Manning in his *Essays in Orthodox Dissent* (p. 124) said, 'I always agree with what *The Church Times* says about the Church : we differ only in defining it', he was not being facetious, but pointing to the real issue today—the nature of the Church. This issue, however, is itself the child of the Act of Uniformity because that Act made it inevitable that the Reformed understanding and practice of churchmanship in England and Wales during the following years would exist outside the Establishment. It was the sometimes persecuted and often despised dissenting churches which emphasized the covenanted fellowship of the church and sought with varying success to achieve a Church Order shaped by the Gospel, often being prepared to exercise discipline over their members for this reason. Thus arose what may well be regarded as *the* tragedy of English ecclesiastical history : the legal separation of Episcopacy from a sense of the close corporate fellowship of the Church.

The requirement of the Act that every minister in a living must be ordained by a bishop was a political action, in itself indicative of the utter rejection of everything done during the period of the Commonwealth. Then it had been virtually impossible for a minister to obtain ordination from a bishop, even if he had desired to do so. The new requirement therefore affected many younger ministers

and faced them with the moral problem of deciding whether or not they could seek reordination. But to the dominant party in Parliament this requirement was not a moral issue but—together with the declaration against taking up arms against the king and repudiation of the Solemn League and Covenant—part of the attempt to repudiate the Commonwealth and all that it stood for. At the Restoration the bishops had also been restored and their political reliability made it right that they should have full control of the Church. Confirmation of this view is supplied by the action of the Scottish Parliament when Charles II decided to restore government by bishops to the Scottish Church. His Parliament there decreed that by 20 September, 1662 every minister appointed to a parish since 1649 (when the right of election was given to kirk sessions) had to apply to the patron for presentation and to the bishop for collation, which actions meant recognition of the hierarchy and acknowledgment of State control.² Significantly there was no question of reordination; that would have been political suicide. Politics is the art of the possible. Even so, the ejections following failure to obey this law were so numerous that in South and West Scotland the main effect was to close the churches.

By the Act of Uniformity the English Parliament also effected a change in the life and practice of the Church of England. The late Dean of Winchester, Dr. Norman Sykes, in his *Old Priest and New Presbyter* (p. 118) calls reordination 'the outstanding innovation'. For the first time since the Reformation this Church could only have ministers who had been ordained by a bishop, which inevitably increased its isolation from the Reformed Churches of the Continent. Prior to 1662 a minister of other Protestant Churches of the Continent, Lutheran or Reformed, could hold an English benefice, providing he assented and subscribed to the Articles of Religion. Now he could not do so without being reordained, an act which implied repudiation of his former ministry. All this naturally intensified the doubts of the Continental Reformed Churches, which had rejected diocesan bishops as popish and contrary to the New Testament, regarding the Protestantism of the Anglican Church.

Moreover, such a limitation was foreign to the thought of the Elizabethan Anglican divines. Richard Hooker (1554?-1600) in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* argued for the threefold order of the ministry on the grounds of antiquity and good order; but he did not assert its necessity. In his view those parts of the Church which lack Episcopacy are unfortunate, but it is better to keep

the faith and lose the bishops than keep the bishops and lose the faith—which had been Luther's option; and Hooker made it clear that he did not regard Luther as having erected a new Church.³ Keble says of these men: 'It is enough, with them, to show that the government by archbishops and bishops is ancient and allowable; they never venture to urge its *exclusive* claim, or to connect the successions with the validity of the holy Sacraments'.⁴

That last remark points to another result and subsequent problem. After 1662 only episcopally ordained ministers could lawfully conduct the Communion service. Others did, but unlawfully. In the event this proved to be a decisive step along the road that led to the statement of the late Bishop of Oxford that 'should such a ministry fail, the apostolic Church, which is the Body of Christ in space and time, would disappear with it . . .'.⁵ The Communion thus came to be seen as dependent upon the bishop's ordination and his own place in the apostolic succession. This is a long way from the Elizabethan Bishop Jewel's rejoinder to Thomas Harding, "'Succession," you say, "is the chief way for any christian man to avoid antichrist." I grant you, if you mean the succession of doctrine'.⁶

Thus Parliament in 1662 made a necessary link between episcopal ordination and the sacrament, a link which served to emphasize views such as those expressed by Edward Hyde in a letter in 1659:

I do assure you, the names of all the Bishops who are alive and their several ages are as well known at Rome as in England; and both the Papist and the Presbyterian value themselves very much upon computing in how few years the Church of England must expire.⁷

It was this line of thought which, developed in the nineteenth century under the influence of the Oxford Movement, rooted the lawful link in religious necessity. So episcopal ordination came to be regarded as necessary for the sacrament, not because the law said so, but because only thus was authority transmitted from Christ through the apostles and their successors. The apostolic succession is no longer desirable; it is indispensable.

This view has not gone unchallenged from within the Anglican Church itself. A Canadian Anglican, R. F. Hettlinger, considered this teaching, as expressed by the late Bishop of Oxford and his associates, to be 'a low church doctrine without foundation in apostolic tradition or thought' because 'it makes the continuance of the Church dependent upon the continuity of the ministry'.⁸ But

it was the Act of Uniformity which made ministry in the Church of England dependent upon episcopal ordination and spoke of such ordination as if it could be divorced from the life of the whole Church. Newman's comment, after he became a Roman Catholic, that,

Catholics believe their Orders are valid, because they are members of the true Church ; and Anglicans believe they belong to the true Church, because their Orders are valid °

may be bitter but it highlights the effect of the Act. He might have used the first half of the Dissenters, except that 'valid' is a word foreign to their vocabulary.

III

Many ministers in 1662 refused to seek reordination from a bishop and so were ejected. Usually they had received presbyteral ordination. The reason for their refusal was that they regarded the Church and ordination to the ministry so seriously that the suggestion was preposterous. When John Howe, ejected in 1662, was asked by Seth Ward, then Bishop of Exeter : ' Pray sir, what hurt is there in being *twice* ordained ? ' he replied, ' Hurt, my lord,—it hurts my understanding ; the thought is shocking ; it is an absurdity, since nothing can have two beginnings '.¹⁰ Their successors today reject it as a necessary condition of union on precisely the same grounds.

The political situation made it appear that the ejected ministers were taking a negative position, but in fact they were making a positive assertion. Their refusal was based on the conviction that Church Order must be an expression of the Gospel, that it is the presence of Christ with His people that makes the Church and that He alone has rule in it. For the building up of the Church He gives the ministry as a gift, and this ministry is His servant to the Church, the means of its recreation and the instrument of its fulfilling of its calling. Therefore, no separation of Church and ministry is possible. Ordination is the act of the Church responding to the act of grace whereby God calls a man to be a minister of the Gospel. It is in this recognition that the commission to the ministry is *by the Lord* that the seriousness of ordination lies. How can a minister be reordained ? Further episcopal ordination cannot give him something which he has not already received from his Lord. Reordination implies repudiation of God's commission and denies that the gifts of the calling have been given ; for this reason many ministers in 1662 knew that they could not accept it.

Their refusal to submit to reordination meant for these ministers ejection from their livings. But it also meant that there was excised from the State Church a company of men who saw that this requirement of the law went far deeper than a concept of Church Order, deeper even than the nature of the Church and meaning of ordination ; ultimately it ran counter to their understanding of the grace of God. It was this last which was the real issue then and is the real issue now. All other divisions spring from it, for ultimately this is *the* determining factor of all Church life and order. P. T. Forsyth put the point when he wrote in *The Church and Sacraments* (pp. 140-1) :

We hear much question raised whether our ministry is a *valid* ministry. . . . Only that gospel validates the ministry which created it. . . . Sometimes . . . we are only *irregular*. Again, there is but one thing that regularises the ministry. It is the gospel and a Church of the gospel.

In different words Bernard Manning re-echoed the same theme :
The Supper of the Lord is either celebrated or not celebrated. The Body and the Blood of Christ are spiritually received or they are not received. We simply do not know what an irregular or an invalid celebration is. We do not deal in percentages with the grace of God."

At the end of this passage come the memorable words which go to the heart of the issue :

We are in the presence of God. When we can botanise about the Burning Bush, either it has ceased to burn or it has been consumed.

The fellowship of the Church is a gift of grace and order follows from that. 'In the Congregational churches order is never far removed from fellowship : it must express fellowship or it is nothing' says Dr. G. F. Nuttall in *Visible Saints* (p. 94). In the last resort the issues of 1662 arose from men's differences in their understanding of God's grace ; the ecclesiastical problems of later ages do likewise.

The cruciality of the issues of 1662 arose from the desire of the government of the day to achieve uniformity by legal action. Today's problems are the legacy of that act of folly, not least because it cleft asunder the Protestant religious life of England, and so through years of separation and antipathy created the tensions of faith and order with which the Church in this land lives today as the Holy Spirit presses the people of Christ both to realize their

essential unity in Him and to seek for the ordered expression of that unity, to the shattering of which the Act of Uniformity of 1662 contributed so much.

RONALD BOCKING

¹ Quoted in J. Stoughton, *History of Religion in England* (IVth ed., vol. III, p. 150); Tantling is St. Antholin's and Graffen is Zachary Crofton: see Eng. Hist. Rev. X—ref. to Calendar of State Papers 18 March, 1661.

² See J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, pp. 241ff.

³ See *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, III. ii. I and III. i. 10; also VII. xi. 8, though some doubt the authenticity of book VII.

⁴ In his Introduction to his edition of Hooker's Works; quoted by N. Sykes, *Old Priest and New Presbyterian*, p. 18.

⁵ Essay in *The Apostolic Ministry* (ed. K. E. Kirk), p. 40.

⁶ Jewel, *Wks.*, III. p. 348.

⁷ Quoted in J. Stoughton, *op. cit.*, III. p. 36.

⁸ E. R. Fairweather and R. F. Hettlinger, *Episcopacy and Reunion*, pp. 64-5.

⁹ J. H. Newman, *Essays Critical and Historical* (4th ed., 1877) vol. II, p. 87. (Note to the essay on 'The Catholicity of the Anglican Church.')

¹⁰ Quoted in J. Stoughton, *op. cit.*, III. p. 261.

¹¹ *Op. cit.* p. 116-7.

CHURCH RECORDS

We commend to you the growing practice of depositing old church records in the local County or Borough Record Office, which accepts them on loan. There they are kept by experts; they are available to students; and they are entered on the list held by the National Register of Archives in London. They can be borrowed back by the church if it wants them. Not only Minute Books of various kinds form basic records, but less obvious material, e.g., old orders of service, printed year books and magazines. Press cuttings, with the name of the paper and the date, and photographs of groups, with identifications and date if possible, are all useful records.

The special appeal of the Research Secretary (address on the back cover) is for those churches who have records prior to 1850 to send him details of these and the dates they cover. The information will be recorded on the Card Index of Congregational Churches prepared by the Rev. Charles E. Surman, now at Dr. Williams's Library, London.

All interested in the matter are welcome at a discussion upon it to be held by the C.H.S., at Westminster Chapel, 16th May, 5.30 p.m., during the May Meetings.

H. G. TIBBUTT, *Research Secretary*.
J. H. TAYLOR, *Editor*.

LITURGY AND CEREMONY

Following the events of 1660-62 is like attending the performance of a great tragedy. One is aware at the beginning what the outcome is going to be. Yet one is appalled anew each time by the inevitability and irony of the conclusion. The principal characters possess elements of greatness and nobility. Yet these very qualities bring them into a conflict which must end in disaster. Given the liturgical principles of the conflicting parties, the Episcopalian and the Puritan, it is difficult to see how the final deadlock could have been avoided. And since neither party was entirely innocent in its past treatment of the other, the kind of generosity that could alone have avoided the ejection was too much to expect. The bishops were certainly insensitive to the claims of the Puritans. But the latter had proved themselves quite intolerant of the worshipping habits of the majority of Englishmen during their period of ascendancy. The preamble to the Act of Uniformity reflects the general hope :

Nothing conduceth more to the settling of the Peace of this Nation . . . nor to the honour of our Religion, and the Propagation thereof, than a universal agreement in the Public Worship of Almighty God.

A survey of the events of the period 1660-62 indicates that a 'universal agreement' was too much to expect.

What were the liturgical issues of 1662 ? To answer this question we must examine the circumstances. It must be realized from the start that the liturgical struggle was an intensely practical one. It was not a case of Puritans bringing a lot of conscientious objections to the enforcement of a Prayer Book. They were fighting for a practical solution. The Puritan case was put by a number of leading Presbyterian ministers who would dearly have loved to continue their pastoral duties under an established system. However, they felt that they could not go so far as to use the Book of Common Prayer. Of recent years they had been using another book, the Directory of Public Worship, which replaced the Book of Common Prayer in 1645. The Anglican book had regulated all prayers and gestures and even vestments by enforcing certain printed prayers, and certain actions to the exclusion of all others. The Directory gave only orders of service and orders for the administration of the Sacraments, and where prayers were concerned suggested suitable topics. The Directory left much to the

discretion of the minister. What it gave was not restrictive, but intended to help and guide. It was in this respect of the same type as the Book of Services and Prayers recently published for the Congregational Union of England and Wales by the Independent Press.

It was for the retention of such a book as the Directory of Public Worship that the Presbyterian ministers struggled in the period 1660-62. At first they hoped that England would remain what it officially was, Presbyterian, and that the Directory would continue to be used. But it became clear very soon that Episcopacy and the Prayer Book would be restored with the Monarchy if the Anglican bishops had their way. At this time the Presbyterians hoped to reach an agreement with the bishops about the form that the official Prayer Book would take in the future. They hoped that Presbyterians and Episcopalians would be able to compose a new book between them. A group of leading Presbyterian ministers met at Zion College in July 1660. What they did was to state their views as to what sort of official liturgy there ought to be. They said that they could agree on the need for a public liturgy on certain conditions. It had to be agreeable to the word of God and it must not be too rigorously imposed, nor the ministers confined by it. As for ceremonies, they could do without them. Ever since the Reformation, Puritans had been objecting to such ceremonies as kneeling to receive Holy Communion, the making of the sign of the cross in Baptism, the use of the ring in the marriage ceremony and the wearing of all kinds of vestments in church. To their mind only ceremonies that were positively enjoined in Scripture could be used in Christian worship. For example, as no ring was mentioned in Scripture, no ring should be used in the marriage service. Indeed, no special marriage service was mentioned in Scripture. Consequently the more rigorous Puritans forbade marriages in church. Under the Protectorate, marriage was a legal and secular affair. The keener the Christian, according to Puritan lights, the more he insisted on being married by a magistrate away from church premises. The ministers meeting at Zion College observed on ceremonial that the worship of God is in itself perfect without ceremonies; that worship is most pure and agreeable to God when there is the least of human admixture; and that the ceremonies had been rejected along with popery by many Reformed churches abroad. It ought to be clear from these summaries that acceptance of Puritan liturgical principles would involve a total departure

from the Book of Common Prayer. They clearly desired a radical alteration of the way of worship of the majority of Englishmen.

At this point it is worth mentioning the position of the Independents. Meeting at the Savoy in 1658, the Independents had expressed their attitude towards public worship. Article XXII of the Savoy Declaration contains the following :

But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men . . . or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.

These words are an exact reproduction of the sentiments expressed by the Presbyterians in the Westminster Confession, ten years earlier. The Independents' principal liturgical difference from the Presbyterians lay in their attitude towards printed forms. They would not countenance the use of any printed guide. But it might be fair to say that the Presbyterians wanted to see printed in a Book roughly the same principles as those the Independents would practice anyway. Both were confident that God's will regarding the 'how' of worship was fully expressed in the Scriptures. Both agreed that fully printed liturgies, complete with directions for ceremonial and dress, were manifestly the 'imaginations and devices of men', since they were not 'prescribed in the holy Scripture'. In most of what they said in defence of the Puritan position, the Presbyterians could be said to be speaking for the Independents.

So far we have seen some of the principles that the Puritans held and wished to see in practice in the parish churches of England. They also had many practical criticisms and suggestions to make about the actual conduct of worship. These are far too numerous to describe here. A full account of their objections to the principal features of the Prayer Book, and to all kinds of detail within it, may be found in the records of the Savoy Colloquy which took place from March to July of 1661. There the twelve Presbyterian ministers, who had been invited by the King to confer with twelve bishops, subjected the Book of Common Prayer to minute criticism. At this Colloquy they were asked to state exactly which features of the 1604 Prayer Book were repugnant to them. In their criticism they dealt systematically with every service in the Book, from morning and evening prayer to the churching of women. They found the prayers too short, too general and too worldly; the congregation was to their mind too active and over distracted by

antiphonal chanting and responsals ; and the Scriptures were hacked into disconnected chunks—‘pistling and gospelling’ they called it—instead of being read in whole chapters or books ; they scorned the provision of homilies to replace a sermon if the minister were unable to preach. They could find no reason to suppose that the Prayer Book services were agreeable to the word of God. In a word, the Book of Common Prayer was ‘unscriptural’.

The Puritans would not have the Prayer Book. But the bishops could not agree either to allow Puritan principles to govern public worship. Let us try to understand why. The Puritans were Calvinists. Under the conviction that Rome had removed all traces of true Christianity from worship, Calvinism made a clean break in public worship. Geneva scrapped the Mass and restored the Supper, and made provision for regular services of Bible reading and praise and prayer. Calvinism made a new start, destroying the Missal and compiling entirely new service books. Now the Church of England had never done this. Prayer Book revision, even at the Reformation, had taken the form of alterations to the current Book. The first English Prayer Books were alterations of the Missal. The sort of radical approach that the Puritans wanted had been consciously rejected from the beginning as unwise. In refusing to countenance the demands for a total alteration of the Prayer Book, the bishops were being as true to their own principles as the Puritans were to theirs. It would be an offence to the consciences of the Puritans if the Prayer Book were imposed. But it would likewise be an offence to Churchmen if the Book were altered to suit the Puritans.

The bishops did not hold the Puritans’ belief in the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures as a liturgical directory. Neither did they agree with the Puritan criticisms of the services in the 1604 Book. They said that they were fully satisfied with them, and they meant it. As Bishop Sanderson later wrote in the Preface to the 1662 Book, they were :

fully persuaded . . . that the Book, as it stood before established by Law, doth not contain in it anything contrary to the word of God, or to sound doctrine, or which a godly man may not with a good conscience use, and submit unto.

A universal agreement was impossible. What was to be done ? According to the terms of reference of the Savoy Colloquy, the Prayer Book could only be altered in ways that both sides could agree upon. They could not agree. Even before the Colloquy ended in deadlock, the Act of Uniformity had received a successful third

reading in the Commons, and had been sent to the Lords. By this Act, Parliament imposed a Prayer Book that retained all the features the Puritans found most offensive. This was probably the only practical course open at the time, though Richard Baxter offered a most interesting solution during the Colloquy.

Baxter retired at one point to compose a complete alternative Book of Common Prayer, to show that Puritan principles could be positively expressed in worship. He wrote out in full the sort of prayers for which a Reformed manual would normally be content to supply topics. Taking every service and ordinance in the Book of Common Prayer, Baxter composed a Puritan parallel for it. Not only this, he put in the preface a most significant request. He asked that the additions and alterations to the Common Prayer that are contained in his 'Savoy Liturgy'

be inserted into the several respective places of the liturgy to which they belong, and left to the minister's choice to use one or the other

Baxter was here suggesting a comprehensive Book of Common Prayer, which would allow at different points the use of alternative forms specially devised by adherents of the differing traditions. He was anticipating by three hundred years the solution that the Church of South India has adopted in our own time. We might now ask, with Baxter, where it is impossible to reach agreement as to how all should worship, why not practice mutual toleration for the sake of unity? It may be that even today Churchmen and Dissenters cannot agree on liturgical principles, as they could not in 1662. But surely Baxter's suggestion need not be rejected now as it was then. Even if theologians reach agreement on some principles, the various traditions will certainly need to come together by stages. Here again, Baxter's solution should have much to commend itself.

In 1662, the clash was head-on. For seventeen years Anglicans had been deprived of their beloved Prayer Book, and they wanted it back. They saw no reason, religious or human, for accommodating the Puritans. The deep-rooted differences on liturgical matters rendered the ejection inevitable. So much so that, if the modern descendants of these protagonists should be found to maintain intact the positions of their forbears, agreement would be impossible still. If there is to be any kind of closer unity in worship there are many questions to be asked, and it is surprising how many of them were asked in the seventeenth century.

Is there to be a common prayer book? Will it be so designed as to permit the widest possible use? Or will parties insist on keeping it narrow, so as to exclude persons whose views they cannot share? Today the Church of England itself is finding the principle of uniformity a great embarrassment. The Prayer Book is far too narrow. The places where it is observed with the strictness that was demanded in 1662 are very few indeed. Anyone familiar with Anglican ways of worship knows that orthodoxy is now a matter of disobeying the Prayer Book at the right places. It is unorthodox to disobey it only in unusual places. In some churches the book is hardly ever used. A recent humorous introduction to the churches of a certain university town describes what happens to a worshipper as he enters a certain Anglo-Catholic church. 'Inside you are given a Prayer Book. The smile that accompanies it indicates how little use it will be'. And whilst the ecumenical liturgical revival promises to open up new areas of agreement, as the Archbishop of Canterbury observed in a recent diocesan letter, there can be no radical change in the liturgy of the Church of England, however pressing the need for revision. Indeed, as long as the principle of uniformity is retained, parties in that church will be able effectively to restrict the freedom of others to worship after their consciences. The 'Low church' party, for example, now openly aims at preventing any changes in the Book, since it fears that changes will be inimical to its theological position. Possibly the Church of England needs to ask whether or not different shades of belief cannot be accommodated by alternative forms. And surely, the variety of practice ought to make Anglicans ask if it is not high time rubrics were officially recognized as permissive, and in no sense restrictive. The Church of England has changed a lot. Has it not adopted in practice, if not in theory, many of the devices that Baxter suggested in 1661?

And certainly, Congregationalists in this century are by no means to be identified in their views with seventeenth-century Independents. Who would find anybody to agree that no Congregationalist could use a ring in a marriage service and remain true to his principles? How many ministers would do entirely without a manual of some kind? Most Congregationalist ministers would incline to the views of Baxter rather than to those of the strict Independents on the question of whether or not to use printed prayers and orders of service at least as guides and helps. Neither are we so universally hostile to responses as we were. Our understanding of the authority of the Scriptures is not everywhere the

same as it used to be. We still believe in the authority of God's revelation in Jesus Christ in all matters. But we are not as certain as the Independents that the Scriptures are intended to be fully prescriptive of how to worship. Certainly the Gospel ought to control our worship and dictate its spirit and purpose. The contents of our services ought to express the Gospel of God's grace as adequately as possible. But whether or not responses are more appropriate than silence, whether God is best worshipped in stillness or by reverent movement and gesture, we are not so universally agreed. Can we be certain that general or particular prayers must always be right or wrong? Certainly, God may not be worshipped by man's devices. But Christian men are no longer mere men. The traditions of Christian men are surely more than mere human devices.

We must all do a lot of thinking before unity in worship is possible. The things that were said and done in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are still an essential part of our study.

One reason for optimism is that willingness to worship with others is no longer hopelessly confused with loyalty to the Crown. Obedience to conscience in matters of worship is no longer regarded by those in civil authority as evidence of a seditious disposition. The spiritual principles of worship can now be discussed freely among us, without the risk of civil war. This is not to say that mutual tolerance will bring us into unity. The majority of the members of the Church of England are quite content to go on worshipping as they have done for 300 years. This in itself involves a sort of consent to the principles upon which that worship is founded. And this is true of Congregationalists also. The underlying principles are all there, though dormant, and will have to be faced sooner or later. This is why this essay has given so much attention to the events of 1662. Any future attempts to achieve unity in worship are bound to face the same issues in one form or another. They have not yet been solved. Ejection and subsequent toleration have hardly affected these at all. They were merely shelved 300 years ago, and 1962 is a most suitable occasion for taking them out for a little dusting.

A second reason for hoping that we shall succeed this time is the modern liturgical revival. Through it all denominations are now free to examine their own and others' ways of worship in the light of an ever-increasing understanding of the meaning and purpose of worship.

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