

reversed: that the longsomeness of suits in ecclesiastical courts, which hang sometimes two, three, four, five, six, or seven years, may be restrained: that the oath *ex officio*, whereby men are forced to accuse themselves, be more sparingly used: that licences for marriage, without banns asked, be more cautiously granted.

These, with such other abuses yet remaining, and practised in the Church of England, we are able to show not to be agreeable to the scriptures, if it shall please your Highness farther to hear us, or more at large by writing to be informed, or by conference among the learned to be resolved. And yet we doubt not but that, without any farther process, your Majesty, of whose Christian judgement we have received so good a taste already, is able of yourself to judge the equity of this cause. God, we trust, hath appointed your Highness our physician to heal these diseases. And we say with Mordecai to Esther, 'Who knoweth, whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time?' Thus your Majesty shall do that which, we are persuaded, shall be acceptable to God; honourable to your Majesty in all succeeding ages; profitable to his Church, which shall be thereby increased; comfortable to your ministers, who shall be no more suspended, silenced, disgraced, imprisoned, for men's traditions; and prejudicial to none, but to those that seek their own quiet, credit and profit in the world. Thus, with all dutiful submission, referring ourselves to your Majesty's pleasure for your gracious answer, as God shall direct you; we most humbly recommend your Highness to the Divine Majesty; whom we beseech for Christ's sake to dispose your royal heart to do herein what shall be to his glory, the good of his Church, and your endless comfort.

Your Majesty's most humble subjects, the ministers of the gospel, that desire not a disorderly innovation, but a due and godly reformation.

Fuller, *Church History*, III, 215-17

38. A proclamation enjoining conformity to the form of the service of God established, 16 July 1604

The care which we have had, and pains which we have taken, to settle the affairs of this Church of England in a uniformity, as well of doctrine as of government, both of them agreeable to the Word of God, the doctrine of the primitive Church, and the laws heretofore established for these matters in this realm, may sufficiently appear by our former actions. For no sooner did the infection of the plague, reigning im-

mediately after our entry into this kingdom, give us leave to have any assembly, but we held at our honour of Hampton Court for that purpose a conference between some principal bishops and deans of this Church and such other learned men as understood or favoured the opinions of those that seek alteration, before ourself and our Council.

Of which conference the issue was, that no well-grounded matter appeared to us or our said Council why the state of the Church here by law established should in any material point be altered. Nor did those that before had seemed to affect such alteration, when they heard the contrary arguments, greatly insist upon it, but seemed to be satisfied themselves, and to undertake within reasonable time to satisfy all others that were misled with opinion that there was any just cause of alteration. Whereupon we published by our proclamation¹ what had been the issue of that conference, hoping that when the same should be made known, all reasonable men would have rested satisfied with that which had been done, and not have moved further trouble or speech of matters whereof so solemn and advised determination had been made.

Notwithstanding, at the late assembly of our Parliament there wanted not many that renewed with no little earnestness the questions before determined, and many more as well, about the Book of Common Prayer, as other matters of church government, and importuned us for our assent to many alterations therein; but...the end of all their motions and overtures falling out to be none other in substance than was before at the conference at Hampton Court, that is, that no apparent or grounded reason was shown why either the Book of Common Prayer or the church discipline here by law established should be changed, which were unreasonable considering that particular and personal abuses are remediable otherwise than by making general alterations, we have thought good once again to give notice thereof to all our subjects by public declaration, who we doubt not but will receive great satisfaction when they shall understand that after so much impugning there appeareth no cause why the form of the Service of God wherein they have been nourished so many years should be changed; and consequently to admonish them all in general to conform themselves thereunto, without listening to the troublesome spirits of some persons who never receive contentment, either in civil or ecclesiastical matters, but in their own fantasies, especially of certain ministers who, under pretended zeal of reformation, are the chief authors of divisions

¹ Of 5 March 1604, *Foedera*, XVI, 574-6.

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and sects among our people. Of many of which we hope that now, when they shall see that such things as they have proposed for alteration prove upon trial so weakly grounded as [to] deserve not admittance, they will out of their own judgment conform themselves to better advice, and not omit the principal and substantial parts of their duties for shadows and semblances of zeal, but rather bend their strength with our intent to join in one end, that is, the establishing of the Gospel and recovering of our people seduced out of the hands of the common adversaries of our religion, which shall never be well performed but by a uniformity of our endeavours therein.

But if our hope herein fail us, we must advertise them that our duty towards God requireth at our hands that what intractable men do not perform upon admonition they must be compelled unto by authority, whereof the supreme power resting in our hands by God's ordinance we are bound to use the same in nothing more than in preservation of the Church's tranquillity, which by God's grace we are fully purposed to do. And yet by advice of our Council, and opinion of the bishops, although our former proclamations, both before the conference and since, ought to be a sufficient warning and admonition to all men who are within the danger of them, we have thought good to give time to all ministers disobedient to the orders of the Church and to ecclesiastical authority here by law established, and who for such disobedience, either in the days of the Queen our sister of famous memory deceased or since our reign, have incurred any censures of the Church or penalties of laws, until the last of November now next ensuing to bethink themselves of the course they will hold therein.

In which mean time both they may resolve either to conform themselves to the Church of England and obey the same, or else to dispose of themselves and their families some other ways as to them shall seem meet, and the bishops and others whom it concerneth provide meet persons to be substitutes in the place of those who shall wilfully abandon their charges upon so slight causes, assuring them that after that day we shall not fail to do that which princely providence requireth at our hands, that is, to put in execution all ways and means that may take from among our people all grounds and occasions of sects, divisions and unquietness; whereof, as we wish there may never be occasion given us to make proof, but that this our admonition may have equal force in all men's hearts to work a universal conformity, so we do require all archbishops, bishops and other ecclesiastical persons to do

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their utmost endeavours, by conferences, arguments, persuasions, and by all other ways of love and gentleness, to reclaim all that be in the ministry to the obedience of our church laws, for which purpose only we have enlarged the time formerly prefixed for their remove or reformation, to the end that if it be possible that uniformity which we desire may be wrought by clemency and by weight of reason, and not by rigour of law. And the like advertisement do we give to all civil magistrates, gentlemen, and others of understanding, as well abroad in the counties as in cities and towns, requiring them also not in any sort to support, favour or countenance any such factious ministers in their obstinacy, of whose endeavours we doubt not but so good success may follow, as this our admonition, with their endeavours, may prevent the use of any other means to retain our people in their due obedience to us, and in unity of mind to the service of Almighty God.

Cardwell, *Documentary Annals*, II, 80-84

39. The canons of 1604

OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

* * * * *

IV. *Impugners of the public worship of God established in the Church of England censured*

Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, That the form of God's worship in the Church of England established by law and contained in the Book of Common Prayer... is a corrupt, superstitious or unlawful worship of God, or containeth anything in it that is repugnant to the Scriptures, let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored but only by the archbishop, and after his repentance and public revocation of those his wicked errors.

* * * * *

V. *Impugners of the Articles of Religion established in the Church of England censured*

Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, That any of the nine and thirty Articles agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces and the whole clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God 1562, for avoiding diversities of opinions and for the establishing of consent touching true religion, are in any part superstitious or erroneous, or such as he may not with a good conscience subscribe unto; let him be excommunicated... [etc.]