

Considerations on the Etcaetera Oath (1640)

Ralph Brownrigg

Transcript

British Library, Harley MS 4931, ff. 54r–55r

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Supposed to be by Dr Brownrigg

[*Left margin:* Answer] I have not [th]e bookes to searh into those statutes, nor have I seene [th]e petition of right But that [th]e King may authorize vnder his great Seale [th]e administering of an oath (as this hee doth) appears in his making of Incorporations and giueing them power to sweare [th]e members of them to [th]e statutes of those In-corporations: The Oath against Simon^ey is thus authorized in King Ieames his booke of Canons Can 40, Oour Oath in [th]e Vniversity, and in perticuler Colledges have noe other warrant. 2ly Suppose by [th]e lawes of [th]e Land [th]e giving of such oathes ware vnlawfull yet I conceive, that [th]e Statutes make such oathes pr[e]iudicall to those that administer and impose them, not to those that take them being imposed.

[*Left margin:* 2 Answer.] The clause of [th]e oath to which this doubt refirrs, I conceiue to be this, I doe approoue [th]e doctring and discipline or Govern[en]t established in [th]e Church of England, as containing all things necessary to salvation: By which words it appears that ye doctrine of the church of England is by the oath acknowledged, to containe all fundamentall truthes, and not to be wanting or defectiue in any truth necessary to salvation: So that w^hether this clause respect only [th]e 39 Articles, or any other publike and authorized explanation of any perticuler truth noe man can conceiue, that there is wanting eyther in the one or in [th]e other any truth which is necessary to salvation, And furthe[r] [th]e Oath extends not 2ly when it is said that our doctrine containes all things necessary to salvation, it is not to be thought, that we esteeme every truth taught and established by our church to bee necessary to salvation, but onely yt in [th]e body of sacred truth established in our church, there are all, and every necessary saveing truth contained, though over, and above, there are many other profitable truthes acknowledged, and established, which are not of fundamentall necessity to salvation 3ly: By Discipline in the place are not vnderstood [th]e Canons of [th]e church, appointing rites, and ceremo-nyes for order, and decency, which [th]e Church never intended to make vnchan^geable, as Appeares in [th]e pr[e]face to [th]e Common prayer booker concerning ceremo-nies, and in [th]e 34 Article: And to pr[e]vent any mistake herein, and for clearing of the meaning of [th]e word, Discipline, [th]e other word Government was purpose-ly added for explanation, whereby this Synod vnderstood, [th]e p[ar]te of Ecclesiasticall discipline, which consistes of [th]e severall Governours, and officers of [th]e Church, as Arch-Bishops, Bishops, Deanes, Arch-deacons, [th]e abolishing of these gover-nours, [th]e Synod intended to prevent by [th]e Oath but not to make [th]e Ca-nons concerning rites, and ceremonies vncapable of alteration.

[*Left margin:* 3 Answer] First, suppose that clause (all things necessary to salvation) referr onely to [th]e doctrine of [th]e Church expressed in [th]e 39 Articles, yet [th]e lawfullnes of [th]e Oath hath warrent from thence being in [th]e 36 Article ratified and authori-zed. 2ly I see not why wee may not conceive [th]e sense of [th]e words now in doubt to be taken

conjunctim comprehending both doctrine, and disciplin^e or government, for vnderstanding of which, we must grant that a lawfull ministry is in a great degree necessary to [th]e being of A church to [th]e preach-ing of [th]e word, And administration of [th]e Sacramtents. And in what degree [th]e preaching of [th]e word, And administration of [th]e Sacraments, are necessary; in [th]e same degree is A lawfull ministry necessary, soe [tha]t when we say, [tha]t [th]e discipline, or government, of [th]e church by Bishops containe some

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things necessary to salvation, wee only acknowledge that [th]e Bishops are, and have power to ordaine A lawfull Ministry, Not but that other Churches have a lawfull Ministry allso, although not soe regularly, and according to [th]e practise of [th]e Primitive church established amongst them.

[Left margin: 4 Answer] First by consent is ment A p Active, operative consent concurring to alter [th]e government of which implyes willingnesse, desire, endeavour, and vo-ting such A change 2ly, The p[ro]mise of not giveing such consent to [th]e altering of [th]e government of [th]e Church established by Arch-Bishops Bishops Deanes Archdeacons may well be conceived to be absolute, and not Conditionall 3ly Hence it followes, not, that A man taking his Oath shall bee inforced to goe contrary to [th]e Oath of Alegiance and supremacy, and to resist Authority, because there is A middle way betweene those two extremities of consenting, or resisting; Namely, in case such an alteration should be brought uppon [th]e Church though I may not consent to it by vertue of this oath, nor yet oppose, and resist [th]e Kinge when he shall doe it, by verute of any Allegiance yet I may patiently submitt to it./

[Left margin: 5 Answer] The Calling of Bishops hath much more evidence in Theology, and antiqu{i}ty for [th]e warrent of it, then [th]e calling of Deanes, and Archdeacons, for which nothing is nor can bee alleadged, but onely Canonically, and Ecclesias{ti}call constitution, yet they being usefull, and expedient help^es for [th]e government of [th]e Church, and soe for A long time approved, [th]e alteration and removeall of them may well bee provided against, together with [th]e more principall and primitive government of Bishops./

[Left margin: 6 Answer.] I conceiue those wordes (as it stands now established) have reference of [th]e Former legall establishm[en]t, of Episcopall government, before this Synod was call'd, The Synod adding noe other establishm[en]t, but requiring the oath of recognition, which is but an affirmation of what was formerly in being in [th]e Church, And I swearing not to alter [th]e government, As it is now established, That particle, Now, in all good construction, is Anteced{ent} to [th]e oath as being part of [th]e matter uppon which [th]e oath passeth, and soe is pr[e]supposed before [th]e oath is taken, otherwise it is not actually establisht by [th]e oath till [th]e oath be fully performed, and cosumate./

2ly These words, and as by right it ought to stand, are generall tearmes imp[or]ting [th]e lawfull appiointment of these severall officers, but not determining [th]e spetiall right uppon which they are grounded, The like ~~moderation~~ as [th]e 36 Article of religion affirmes, That [th]e consecration of Bishops is right, orderly, and lawfull, but descends not to any p[ar]ticular determination of [th]e kinde of right, and yet wee subscribe to this Article, without questioning what is [th]e speciall right uppon which they are grounded, The like moderation doth [th]e oath use, not vrging any p[ar]ticular acknowledgement of this, or that kind of right, but contents it selfe with generall repressions of right, and lawfullnes, and [th]e oath running in gener-all tearmes, obliges noe man further then to [th]e acknowledgement in

gene-rall; according to [th]e Kinges declaration before [th]e Articles, where it is said, That [th]e generall meaning of [th]e Articles of [th]e church is to be held

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without drawing [th]e Article aside any way, or put any mans private sense; or Comont, to be [th]e meaning of [th]e Article, but it shall bee taken in [th]e litterall or gramaticall sense,; soe [tha]t hee [tha]t holds [th]e right-full establishment of this goverment in generall satisfies [th]e oath.

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/BrownriggConsiderations1640.html>