

Grounds of Exceptions against the Etcaetera Oath (1640)

Northamptonshire Clergy

Transcript

British Library, Harley MS 4931, ff. 56r–57r

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Grounds of Exceptions ag[ains]t the Oath required in [th]e [*Left margin*:Northamptonshire] 6t Canon established in the Synod 1640.

[*Left margin*: 1.] The taking of this Oath seemes to establish the Legality of it, & to prepare way for the imposing of other new Oathes, wheras it is questionable whether any oath may be imposed not established, & appointed by Act of Parliam[en]t.

[*Left margin*: 2.] Taking of it may seeme to approue the exacting of it of all the p[er]sons of w[ho]m it is requi-red, many of w[ho]m cannot take it (probably in iudgm[en]t) as not being acquainted w[i]th the Doctrine, & Discipline of the church, nor the controversies concerning the same.

[*Left margin*: 3.] It is required we shold swears All things necessary to salvation to be contained in the Doctrine, & Discipline of the Church of England, whereas

- 1 It is not tō declared w[ha]t is to be accounted the Doctrine of the Church, the booke of Homilies haue beene disclaimed, the Articles claimed by the Arminians, & others, & some of [th]e[m] corrupted.
- 2 It hath not beene conceived by the Church, that any ^{p[ar]ticular} kind of Discipline was necessary to salvation, for
 - 1 The Presbyterians haue beene derided, & written against for making [thei]r Discipline a p[ar]t of the Kingdome of xt.
 - 2 It is acknowledged, that the Reformed Churches [tha]t differre from us in Discipline, want nothing necessary to salvation, but [tha]t a man in those churches might be saved.

[*Left margin*: 4.] It is required nōt to swears not to consent to the alteration of the Governm[en]t by Archb[isho]ps, B[isho]ps &c, as it now stands established, & as by Right it ought to stand; w[hi]ch clause we dare not swears to, & [tha]t for these causes.

- 1 Because we iudge it unlawfull to swears the p[er]petuation of any meere Ecclesiasticall Ordinance, w[hi]ch is subiect to such corruptions as may necessitate an al-teration, & such we iudge this Governm[en]t to be (at least in part) for Archb[isho]ps Archdeacons, & Deanes, are but Ecclesiasticall, what ever may be sayd for B[isho]ps.

- 2 Bec. we haue taken the Oath of Supremacy, wher by we acknowledge the Kings Ma[jes]ty, & his Successours, the Supreme Head of the Church, & Governour in Causes, & over p[er]sons as well Eccl[esiastic]all, as Civill, w[hi]ch this oath seemes to contradict, in that
 - 1 It binds from consenting to the alteration of the Governm[en]t, so [tha]t if the king, or his Successours shold alter it, we cannot but dissent, & preach against [the]m, as in the 8th Canon.
 - 2 It binds to acknowledge a furder right [tha]t B[isho]ps &c haue in the Governm[en]t of the Church then that w[hi]ch is given [the]m by Law, mea- a divine right, as we are induced to beleiu because
 - 1 Many B[isho]ps haue so declared [the]mselues.
 - 2 In the 1st Canon they haue not given the King any power in Eccl[esiastic]all Causes saue only to call, & dissolue Councells. 2. nor over Eccl[esiastic]all Governm[en]t, disclaiming only Papall, & Popular coactiue, & independant power, but not Episcopall, wheras the Controversies of this time did require a more precise, & open declaration of the point.
- 3 It seemes to make more account of the Discipline, then of the Doctrine of the Church, for in [tha]t we abiure consent to any alteration, in this we abiure only endeavour to induce Popish errours only.
- 4 This Clause is administred w[i]th an (&c) w[hi]ch we conceiue was never tendered in any Oath till now.
- 5 We There are some things in the Discipline of the Church, w[hi]ch we haue iust ground to desire, & endeavour the alteration of, & [the]r[e]fore dare not abiure an^{the} ac-cepting of an alteration, shold it be offerred, as that of [th]e B[isho]p delegates his power to be officiated by his Chauncallour, wherby it comes to passe [tha]t the sentence of Excom w[hi]ch is incompatible w[i]th a meere lay-man (as o[u]r Church teacheth ag[ains]t [th]e Presbyterians) is devolved upon a meere lay-man, & the plaister provided by the 13th Canon is too narrow for the sore, For the graue minister, to whom the pronouncing of

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the sentence belongs, is but the Chauncellors voice to speake what he decrees, and so the power of Excommunication is still in him.

[*Left margin: 5.*] The whole Oath is filled with so many ambiguities, as that we dare not take it.

[*Left margin: 6.*] The taking of it makes us approue of the synod, by w[hi]ch we^{there} are induced, & tolerated diuers Ceremonies contrary to the booke of Com[m]on prayer, w[hi]ch we haue subscribed unto, & must in this Oath (if we take it) abiure.

[*Left margin: 7.*] It is required That we take it Heartily, & Willingly, & yet they that refuse it are threatned w[i]th severe punishm[en]t, by w[hi]ch meanes it is to be feared many [tha]t are weake, may forswear [the]mselves.

Other manuscript witnesses

- British Library, Harley MS 1219, ff. 149r–154r
- Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.1.29, reversing the volume, 132v–134r
- Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, XII.B.12
- The National Archives, SP 16/461, /86 [ff.174r–179r]

Manuscript Pamphleteering in Early Stuart England

- The National Archives, SP 16/461, /87 [ff.180r–181r]
- Trinity College, MS O.1.35, Part II, 2r

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/NorthamptonshireClergyAgainstEtcOath1640.html>