

Grounds of Exceptions against the Etcaetera Oath (1640)

Northamptonshire Clergy

Transcript

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

56r

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 sweare 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 [the]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 sweare 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 sweare to, & [tha]t for these causes.

- 1 Because we iudge it unlawfull to sweare 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 furdere 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 beleieve 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 errorrs 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

57r

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