

RICHARD BAXTER AND THE SAVOY CONFERENCE OF 1661

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OF 1661

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## ABSTRACT

The object of this study is to call into question the well established assumption that Baxter was entirely responsible for the failure of the Savoy Conference and that his combativeness and "overdoing" kept the non-conformists out of the Church.

So vital an aspect in the history of the English Church and the history of non-conformity merits a thorough re-evaluation.

In order to attempt a full discussion of the Conference and Baxter's role in it, it has been necessary to survey the historical background in which he developed. Thus the material in the thesis has been arranged in such a way as to reveal the relationship between the topics discussed and Baxter's personality, teaching and influence. In Chapter I we discover the general context in which his character was shaped and the marked influences in his early life and young manhood. It is shown how fully he embodied Puritan ideals which made him its [Puritanism] most notable representative. Chapter II presents Baxter's political thought. This is of enormous importance, because only as one understands how theology and politics were related in his mind, and how he viewed the function of the Pastor, the Magistrate or Governor and the paterfamilias, will one get a conscious appreciation of his role at the time of the Conference.

Chapter III takes up the political and ecclesiastical conflicts which contributed to the degeneration of the Puritan

forces into differing groups, and which led to the emergence of Presbyterianism as a dominant political and ecclesiastical power; the rise of Oliver Cromwell and the Independents and Baxter's influence in practical politics during the period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate.

Chapter IV deals with Charles II and the Presbyterians. Attention is given to the causes which once more gave control of the Church and Parliament to the Presbyterians, and the reasons for restoring the monarchy. At this time also one notices that with the restoration of the throne came the re-establishment of Anglican authority in both Church and State. Baxter's part in the negotiations for and restoration of the King is carefully discussed because it was at this time (1660) that many of the disputes between him and some of the leading bishops began--disputes which greatly affected the Conference.

Chapters V and VI discuss in detail some vital issues which had not been discussed in previous studies and which throw greater light on the study of English Church history in this period. For example much attention is given to the Worcester Declaration of 16 October 1660, the King's Warrant of 1661 and to Clarendon's influence prior to and during the Conference. The view is taken that the bishops did not conform to the requirements in the Declaration and the Warrant and thus frustrated the plans which both the King and Clarendon had hoped would bring about a compromise for a Church settlement.

For the first time special study is given to the bishops in an attempt to identify the leaders among them and to isolate as far as possible the different factors which influenced them in their dealings with the non-conformists. For this reason it is maintained that the bishops were so controlled by political circumstances and the supposed rightness of their position that these prevented them from seeing their opponents point of view, or any reasons or necessity for comprehension.

Chapter VI also discusses in detail the proceedings of the Conference. The various original documents are presented and analyzed with the hope of providing as clear as possible the issues at stake and the manner in which these were dealt with.

Finally in a concluding chapter VII an attempt is made to assess the reasons for the outcome of the Conference and to refute the charge that Baxter was responsible for its failure. The chapter ends with an evaluation of his contribution and his relevance for our time.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

B.M.	British Museum
F.C.	Forbes Collection, University of Toronto Archives
<u>D.N.B.</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
D.W.L.	Doctor Williams' Library, London (for Baxter's MSS)
<u>R.B.</u>	<u>Reliquiae Baxterianae</u>
<u>C.R.</u>	<u>Calamy Revised</u>
<u>Works</u>	<u>Orme's Practical Works of Richard Baxter</u>

## INTRODUCTION

### Richard Baxter and the Savoy Conference

No less an authority than Dr. F. J. Powicke once remarked to Dr. Geoffrey Nuttall:

Read Baxter; read Baxter; read Baxter. He touches every point at issue in the seventeenth century, and you will never regret time spent on him. He has a flowing, easy style which makes him pleasant to read, and you will find he grows upon you, until you come to know him and to love him.<sup>1</sup>

Richard Baxter (1615-1691) lived at a time which was conspicuous for its changes. His life spanned that period in which the principles and theories of social and political, as well as ecclesiastical, relations that were to prevail in the English speaking world were articulated. Although he experienced periods of severe illness through life, yet he was an active and influential minister, adviser and writer who contributed significantly to the formation and development of events.

Among Baxter's more famous contemporaries were Laud, Cromwell, Hobbes, Milton, Lilburne, Locke. Out of this group he emerged as perhaps, the most articulate and forceful champion of conservative Puritanism at the time when the movement flourished and then began to disintegrate as a cohesive force. His pastoral ideals and

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<sup>1</sup>Geoffrey F. Nuttall, The Puritan Spirit (London: Epworth Press, 1967), p. 104. Since then Dr. Nuttall has placed all scholars and students of Baxter in his debt through his outstanding works on Baxter and on Puritanism. And Professor Powicke's two volume biography of Baxter is still invaluable.

achievements, notwithstanding the many interruptions, his sense of mission as an advocate for Christian unity, his moving piety, strike the modern Christian with a strange contemporaneity. There is an enormous corpus of Baxter's works which reflect profoundly and clearly his sincere and painstaking efforts to resolve the existential predicament of man and to give some meaning and significance to his life now and eternally. The vision of God was a constant preoccupation of Baxter's thought.<sup>1</sup>

It is not difficult, then, to understand the popularity of his practical writings through the centuries. Indeed, the fascination which one finds in his many-sided personality, and his success in making viable compromises between old and new ways of thinking contribute greatly to his enduring relevance.

Just as Locke and Newton achieved immense popularity because they ably enunciated statements of new insights and discoveries, while holding fast to that part of the old which not many men could then have discarded, so Baxter, earlier and in a more conservative way, appealed to Christians who wanted the traditional faith with such adjustments to contemporary thought as every sensible man had then to make.

There is enough evidence to show how greatly Baxter affected the lives of many important men. Bishop Burnet confessed that "if he had any acquaintance with serious, vital religion it was owing

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<sup>1</sup>Nathan Mair, "Christian Sanctification and Individual Pastoral Care in Baxter," an unpublished Thesis presented for the Degree of Th.D., Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1967, p. 4. Permission has been granted by the author for the use of his work.

to his reading [Baxter's practical works] in his younger days."<sup>1</sup> And Dr. Samuel Johnson succinctly remarked in a comment on Baxter's works, "read any of them for they are all good."<sup>2</sup> In addition, the influence of Baxter on many ordinary pastors is incalculable. Many great tomes have been written on him. A number of biographies exist, the most notable of which is the critical two-volume study by Powicke.<sup>3</sup>

In our own day, a succession of studies still draws attention to his immense influence on several eminent scholars. Writers on the social thought of the period such as Max Weber, R. H. Tawney, Ernst Troeltsch, Richard Schlatter, make frequent reference to his thought and consider him as perhaps the age's ablest exponent of social ethics.

Several dissertations have been written on different aspects of his thought. But no study in depth has been done on the Savoy Conference in which he was a key figure. Thus a full reconsideration of the Savoy Conference and Baxter's role in it is not only desirable but would seem to be amply justified on the grounds that the Conference embraces a critical and creative period in the development of the religious forces which have shaped the English-speaking world.

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<sup>1</sup>Clarke and Foxcroft, The Life of Bishop Burnet (Cambridge: 1907), p. 398.

<sup>2</sup>William Orme, Works (London: James Duncan, 1830), Vol. I, p. 773.

<sup>3</sup>F. J. Powicke, Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter, 1615-1691 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924).

Baxter's leadership at the Conference has been a battleground for the critics ever since his death as well as in his own lifetime. In the eyes of many leading Anglicans there can be no doubt that the failure for the Conference must rest on Baxter's shoulders. Some modern writers on this period of English Church history have contributed their share of criticisms and concluded that without his presence the Conference would have succeeded in reconciling the Anglicans and Puritans and bringing about some form of settlement.

It is time to call into question the justice of these assumptions and criticisms. Thus the object of this study is to furnish a full and critical re-evaluation of the Savoy Conference and Baxter's influence upon its outcome. It is hoped that such a study will correct some of these long-standing misrepresentations and result in a better understanding of the Savoy Conference and of Baxter, while at the same time making a fresh contribution to the study of the history of the English Church in the seventeenth century.

The arrangement of the thesis has been dictated by its aim and subject matter. Part I consists of two studies designed to fix Baxter's place in the seventeenth century in general and within Puritanism in particular. A summary examination of his political thought in the light of contemporary theories of the relationship between Church and State or as he phrased it "Divinity and Politics" forms a part of these two studies. This was desirable for at least two reasons: Scholars have not always agreed on

Baxter's attitude toward these issues and in the Savoy Conference politics were an essential part of ecclesiastical and religious affairs.

Baxter lived at an age before the modern compartmentalization of religion and politics. So intricately intertwined were these that even Hobbes could not avoid discussing both at great length. Essentially Baxter believed in the concept of the Christian state, but rejected the scholastic view of the hierarchical, organic and teleological structure. He defended the position that political government was necessarily rooted in the divine constitution of the world.

The social "creatureliness" of man, says Baxter, presupposes that the Creator wanted him to live in a society under the control of government. Man's rationality and ultimate responsibility to God strongly support the theory that government (including ecclesiastical government) by law is not only desirable but consistent with man's nature.

Thus Baxter's respect for law and duly constituted authority was rooted in his theological understanding and exposition of the absolute Sovereignty of God, of the nature of man and the hierarchical structure of society. He therefore saw the relationship of political theory and practice and divinity as one of mutual dependence.

Baxter fully embodied these principles, and a knowledge of how these affected him as a pastor, a consistent supporter of monarchy and yet a non-conformist will help to make more intelligible his role at the Savoy Conference.



In Part II we study the political and ecclesiastical problems which led to the crisis of the civil war, the decline of Anglican authority in both Church and State, the rise of sectarianism and the divisions within Puritanism which accelerated the movement for the Restoration of Charles II.

Perhaps Baxter's continuing significance for our day is most clearly revealed this time in his effort to achieve peace and concord when the Church of England was being divided into different denominational positions and groups. Baxter declared:

I cannot be so narrow in my principles of Church Communion as many are; that are so much for a liturgy or so much against it; that they can hold communion with no church that is not of their mind and way.<sup>1</sup>

Baxter's model for England was the establishment of a comprehensive national Church, and godly civil rulers whose singleness of purpose was the promotion of the theocratic holy society. In this part of our study also careful attention is given to the negotiations for the Restoration of Monarchy in England.

These two studies form the immediate background for the Savoy Conference and it will be seen in what way and why the events of this period affected the outcome of the Conference.

In Part III we come to a thorough and critical examination of the Savoy Conference. Fortunately the recent coming to light of some vital original papers gives to this investigation a great

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<sup>1</sup>F. J. Powicke, Richard Baxter under the Cross (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927). A more recent biography of considerable worth is G. F. Nuttall's Richard Baxter (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1966).

advantage over any other previously undertaken. These original documents are found among Baxter's MSS in Dr. Williams' Library, Gordon Square London, and the Egerton MSS 2570 in the British Museum.

The new material is crucial because it helps to reveal for the first time the identity of the leaders among the bishops and shows in what way they dominated the management of the Conference. On the basis of these MSS it will be argued that the crucial question at the Conference as both sides saw it was one of Church government and discipline even though the agenda was restricted to the liturgy and ceremonies.

The question may be put thus: Must the Church be ruled only by bishops? Or should authority be exercised by bishops along with pastors and synod in which bishops and clergy acted in concert?

The argument will be carried further to show that the Conference was a struggle for power and authority between the ruling ecclesiastical and political Anglicans and the Puritans. Each contending party sought to gain political support and royal approval for its cause and it can be shown that the bishops outmaneuvered the ministers. It will be maintained that in the Savoy Conference we get a spontaneous and unconscious revelation of the Puritan mind through Baxter, as it wrestles with its problems, practical and theoretical, in an effort not merely to justify a policy and to battle down opposition, but to arrive at truth and concord.

Baxter's immediate and ultimate concern at the Conference was to find a faith that would satisfy both the spiritual and

moral welfare of the people. He feared more and more the tendency to divorce faith from the daily life of the people, and looked upon this as the harbinger of the disintegration of religion into secularism. His role may be seen to display a creative tension which is characteristic of responsible faith in every age.

In the final section of this part of our study a conclusion will then be reached regarding the causes for the outcome of the Conference. This it is hoped will add greatly to our knowledge of the history of the English Church in the period of the seventeenth century and of the significance of Richard Baxter for our times.

There will be an appendix to this work consisting of a collection of the original papers in part, hitherto unidentified. Hopefully, this will provide a convenient guide for future work on English Church history in the seventeenth century.

PART I: THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

CHAPTER I

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF RICHARD BAXTER

Looking at the religious and political climate in England at the time of Baxter's birth (1615) one could hardly have forecast the tremendous changes which were to come before his death, seventy-six years later (1691).

Undoubtedly, the events which shaped the development of the period (17th century), greatly affected the formation of Baxter's personality and work. As Leonard Bacon has indicated:

The writings of Baxter are distinguished even above those of his contemporaries, by the peculiarities of the men and the age in which he lived. Those only who know what the author was, what were the vicissitudes through which he passed, what were the changes and commotions of the times in which he lived, and what were the men with whom he had to do, can enter fully into the spirit of his writings.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the changes and commotions, one modern historian speaks of the seventeenth century as "one of the great watersheds of modern history."<sup>2</sup> So far-reaching and profound were its

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<sup>1</sup>Leonard Bacon, Select Practical Writings of Richard Baxter (2 Vols. 2nd ed. New Haven: Durrie and Peck, 1835), I, 3.

<sup>2</sup>Sir George Clark, The Seventeenth Century (2nd ed., Galaxy: New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. ix.

revolutionary consequences, particularly in the field of science, that no less an authority than Herbert Butterfield describes it as the greatest landmark since the rise of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

It is worth remembering that the events of the seventeenth century, in some respects, had their antecedents in the sixteenth century amidst the several issues which the Reformation left unresolved and vague.

From the time of Elizabeth's refusal to support a thorough reformation on the model of the continental reformed churches, there was an increasing cleavage in the Church of England between those who strove for an Elizabethan settlement, that is, an Erastian ecclesiastical settlement with a theology substantially reformed and a liturgy substantially Catholic, and those who insisted on reforms beyond that which Elizabeth and her successors were willing to initiate.

So, in one sense, the Church settlement which was conceded at the time of Elizabeth had been a cautious compromise in which Calvinist and Catholic elements were blended.<sup>2</sup>

When Elizabeth's successor, James I, became King of England (1603), the problem of dissenters and the proliferation of sectarianism were already evident. Among the different religious groups, three only were at that time powerful enough to contend

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Butterfield, Origins of Modern Science (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Maurice Ashley, The Seventeenth Century (London: Wyman and Sons Ltd., 1958), p. 25.

for James' support. The Puritans, who already had a reputation for advocating renewal in worship, submitted to the King the Millenary Petition which embodied the essentials of their most immediate reform measures. For almost thirty years before this, the Puritans had been agitating for a renewal of church life both in worship and discipline. They vigorously urged more and better preaching by competent ministers, and insisted on a simplification of ritual and vestments.

There were not wanting men of sufficient breadth to articulate and defend the Puritans' position against the established Church. But their representations and expectations did not bring the King to their side. Indeed, James himself had no deep affection for the Puritans mainly because of his speculations on their political persuasion and the harsh treatment which he and his mother had received from the Scottish Presbyterians with whom, he assumed, the Puritans now shared a similar political philosophy.

But neither did the Roman Catholics fare any better with the King than their Puritan rivals. They of course, looked forward to a change in attitudes. However, they were soon to discover that once the King was able to rule from a position of strength he no longer needed "the Papists."<sup>1</sup>

Then there was that group who came into royal favour by showing their willingness to support the crown. This group represents virtually the whole official class in England who acknowledged James I's indefeasible hereditary right to the throne of England. It was to these

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<sup>1</sup>Loc. cit.

that the King looked and along with them reaffirmed his intantion to maintain the Elizabethan settlement.

At the Hampton Court Conference (1604), the King dealt very cautiously with the Puritans. He conceded only a few of their requests because he feared that an ecclesiastical form of government which makes power or authority reside in the hands of the people, was threatening to his absolute power. "No bishop, no King" he uttered to their faces and declared that he would "harry them out from the land." It must be pointed out that the King did in fact exaggerate the democratic element in Presbyterianism although there was some basis to his fear that if the reins of government had slipped from his hands into those of the Presbyterians, his supremacy would undoubtedly be in jeopardy.

Thus, it was the studied plan of the King to subdue as far as possible, the influence of the Puritans. Within a year he issued a proclamation demanding that all curates and unbeneficed preachers sign a statement that the Prayer Book contained nothing contrary to the Holy Scripture, and that all beneficed clergy must obey the black rubrics in every detail.<sup>1</sup>

There arose an unsettled state of affairs among the Puritans. There were many who signed the statement, but many more did not, and consequently lost their livings. However, with the translation of Abbot to the Archbishopric of Canterbury in 1610 the Puritans' hopes were raised but these did not long survive the removal of Abbot. James always supported and appreciated Abbot against

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<sup>1</sup>G. M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p. 74.

his rival William Laud. In James I's opinion Laud was not a man to be trusted and the King had no preference for him. But with the death of James I (1625) Abbot lost influence and Laud's rise really began, because the new King Charles I had a wholly different attitude toward religion from that of his father. Early in his reign the extreme high-church wing of the Church of England achieved ascendancy. Abbot's rival and successor to the See of Canterbury, Laud, demanded absolute conformity, and rigorously prosecuted those, who for reasons both public and private chose not to conform. It was Laud who forced the separatists away from the Established Church, and the consequences of his action had an important bearing on the life and work of Baxter.

Within five years the separatists had increased their number, and side by side with this growth were the persecutions against them. In 1633 the new Archbishop became the dominant figure. He demonstrated in his personal life and through legislation, a marked preference for a sacramental rather than a doctrinal approach in religious matters. His rule is described by some as notorious and high-handed, but one scholar does not fully agree with such a criterion and tries to be more charitable in his general estimation of Laud. Tawney presents Laud as a man who was possessed by a fundamental conviction that the oneness of the Church and State must not be sacrificed to any personal motive or divergent religious or social movements.<sup>1</sup>

The events of this period could not but be influential on Baxter as he developed. Laudian rule and the consequent hardships

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<sup>1</sup>R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (Toronto: The New American Library of Canada Ltd., 1937), pp. 143-45.



and persecutions of the Puritans did make their impressions on a young, intelligent and sensitive lad, and these were to find expression in his more mature years.

While Laud ruled the Church, Charles I ruled the country for eleven years without Parliament. However in 1640 a chain of circumstances forced him to summon Parliament in order to provide money to carry on his conflict with the Scots. This situation forced upon the King the bitter results of his eleven years of unaided rule. He now saw the danger of the divorce between religious and political theory and economic realities.

During those years, the Puritans had become increasingly apprehensive of the rule of Charles and Laud. Now they would seize this opportunity for advocating a programme for the Church which was calculated to break out into an administrative revolution with far-reaching consequences for the State. With the King in need of money Parliament decided to force him to yield to their demands. By this time, of course, the Puritan influence in Parliament had increased. And by a combination of religious and political causes, the crisis of the first civil war broke out in 1642.

During the war years the Presbyterians were clearly the dominant group. As will be seen, they set forth a programme of reform for the Church in which the central issue was the form of Church government. Thus the problem of episcopacy became a decisive issue both in the Church and Parliament. Parliament soon decided to summon the Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643) to deal with the question of a suitable form of Church government.

But the presence of certain Scottish Presbyterians helped to place the balance of power in the hands of their English counterparts.

In the same year 1643, the Solemn League and Covenant was signed by a group of English Parliamentarians acknowledging and pledging to maintain the Church of Scotland as an established institution, and to bring about a reform of religion in England that would accord with the Word of God and the pattern set by the best reformed Churches and root out prelacy and popery.<sup>1</sup>

However dissension was now beginning to weaken the ranks of the victors. For example, those Puritans with an Erastian outlook were as apprehensive of presbyters as they had been of bishops. Then there were the Independents who were against strict Presbyterianism on the one hand, and a thorough-going Erastianism on the other. This last group rapidly grew in number and importance, partly because of their emphasis on decentralization of Church government and institutions, and their advocacy of toleration and liberty of conscience.

This ideal was of course not amenable to the closely integrated Genevan system of synods.<sup>2</sup>

The Independents fought shy of having authority given to presbyters because it could be easily used against those who did not agree with their ecclesiastical policy of individual congregations

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<sup>1</sup>W. A. Shaw, History of the English Church 1640-1660 (3 Vols., London: Longmans Green, 1900), Vol. I, 118-21; see also Vol. II 204-13.

<sup>2</sup>George Yule, The Independents in the English Civil War (Cambridge: University Press, 1958), p. 11ff.

and churches. In their view discipline could better be administered on the local level if churches were given their independence to admonish, and where necessary, break off from offending churches.

But the Presbyterians were alarmed by the Independent view and saw it as a much greater danger which could very easily lead to anarchy if authority did in fact reside with the individual congregation.

Notwithstanding the suspicion and opposition to the Presbyterian view, Presbyterianism was theoretically established by ordinances of 1645 and 1646. The Directory was substituted for the Book of Common Prayer, and many Episcopalian ministers were expelled from their livings. Laws were proclaimed against sectarian ideologies and lay preaching. Through these measures, it was hoped that there would be a suppression of Independent movements and differences of opinion.

The rapid march of events in both Church and State soon found Oliver Cromwell emerging as the new and dominant leader of an army in battle against the King and the Presbyterians. So effective was his influence and so unstable was Presbyterian rule that he was able to lead his New Model Army to a victory over the combined forces of the Royalists and their Presbyterian supporters.

Thus in 1649 the King was executed and four years later, 1653, the government of the country passed into the hands of Cromwell the Lord Protector. With his rule came liberty of worship to all excepting Papists and supporters of prelacy, or those suspected of blasphemy against the teaching and name of God.

Why was Presbyterianism supplanted by Independency?

Professor Haller makes an important point which helps to explain the fate of Presbyterianism between the years 1650 and 1659. He observes that English Puritanism

did not develop in the way Presbyterianism had done in Scotland as a concerted endeavour by the ministerial order to take control of the Church away from the crown but as a government for setting forth a conception of spiritual life in the pulpit.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that many of the English Puritans did not at all grasp the full implications of Scottish Presbyterianism, but in embracing it they certainly did not want simply to supplant bishops by presbyters.

There is another reason for the failure of the Presbyterian during those years, which Dr. Anne Whiteman brings to view. It was the rise of the Independent--and Sectarian-dominated army to political rivalry with, and finally control over Parliament.<sup>2</sup>

It was this that prompted Baxter to become a chaplain in the Parliamentary Army. He had hoped to prevent the further proliferation of sectarianism and to preserve the unity of the Church and the Truth as he conceived it is given in the Word of God.

The state of affairs under which Baxter lived during the civil wars were difficult indeed. He felt keenly the tension and conflict of ruling authorities throughout his life.

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<sup>1</sup>William Haller, Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>Anne Whiteman, "The Restoration of the Church of England," From Uniformity to Unity 1662-1962, Geoffrey F. Nuttall and Owen Chadwick (eds) (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), p. 28.

baxter was the son of a "mean freeholder", who was called a gentleman for the sake of his ancestry. His father, also named Richard, was of Eaton-Constantine near Shrewsbury, but it was in his mother's home town at Rowton, near High Ercall in Shropshire, that Baxter was born. There he lived for the first ten years of his life with his maternal grandfather, Richard Adeney. His mother, Beatrice, always showed a deep affection for her son and her death on May 10, 1634, was a decisive event in his life.

In the Reliquiae Baxterianae Baxter speaks of his father's addiction to gambling and the prodigality of his young manhood. But his father's conversion was an important step which had a marked influence on the formation of his character. The transformation came through a reading of Scripture. This is of crucial significance precisely because from this point on Baxter grew up in a family where the teaching of the Word was primary.

In recounting the religious condition in England during his early years, Baxter speaks of the derision against the piety of his father, who was called a Puritan even though at that time he was a conformist. Judging from his father's godly life, he became suspicious of the sincerity and credibility of those who disparaged the men who were called Puritans. He said: "But when I heard them call my father Puritan it did much to cure me and alienate me from them."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae (London: Matthew Sylvester (ed.) 1696), Iii (p. 2). Hereafter cited as RB.I or II.

Baxter's early education began with instruction from his father. He remembered the serious speeches his father frequently made to him about God and the hereafter and this created in him an acute religious consciousness and a fear of sinning.

From his youth he was passionately devoted to truth and was tireless in the pursuit of it. "I never discover a truth in my studies, but it is as sweet to my mind as a feast to my body."<sup>1</sup> His industry was almost incredible in his studies, and his intellectual character is revealed in the fact that as early as 1653 he was able to write with reference to theology:

Though I have not read all that hath been written for so many hundred years (since the Apostolic age) yet I have read most of the Writers of great note.<sup>2</sup>

Twenty years later he could have made the statement with reference to almost any subject. The love of analysis and "method" was born in him:

I could never from my first studies endure confusion! Till equivocals were explained and Definitions and Distinction led the way I had rather hold by tongue than speak. . . . I never thought I understood anything till I could anatomize it, and see the parts distinctly and the conjunction of the parts as they make up the whole.<sup>3</sup>

It was his passion to know things as they are that led him to the painstaking exactness which his readers and leaders of the Savoy Conference found so tiresome. But he was ready to stand alone if truth so led.

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, Scripture Proofs, (1650), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Baxter, Answer to Blake in Apology, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup>RB II.5 (p. 6).

One can appreciate more fully Baxter's natural intellectual ability when it is known that he had no formal university training and that his general education was from men who quite often were "poor ignorant readers, and most of them of scandalous lives."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter was indeed a careful scholar whose closeness of thought has been authenticated by the researches of many Baxterian scholars.

His scholarly achievements are even more remarkable when we remember that from his youth his life was frequently interrupted by severe illness.

From the age of twenty-one till near twenty-three my weakness was so great that I expected not to live above a year; and my own soul being under the serious apprehensions of another world, I was exceeding desirous to communicate those apprehensions to such ignorant, presumptuous, careless sinners as the world abounded with. . . . I resolved that if one or two souls only might be won to God it would easily recompense all the dishonour which for want of titles I might undergo from men.<sup>2</sup>

He was also stricken with periods of depression, which sometimes left him in great anguish and doubt. Quite often the depression was caused because of his preoccupation with his religious life. Being unable at times to feel the warmth of his religious fervour and the distinct impression of the Hcly Spirit on his life, he felt greatly distressed.

Such striving after God and the certainty of salvation reflects the seriousness with which Baxter, even as a youth, took

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<sup>1</sup>RB Ii.4 (p. 4).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Ii.16 (p. 12).

his responsibility to God. It was a characteristic of the Puritan faith that one must bear witness in visible ways to the experience and work of the Holy Spirit in one's own life.

By this time Baxter had accepted the Puritan ideal of a holy godly life, and as will be seen in the next chapter, this was of vital importance for his theological outlook and concept of a disciplined life.

In 1638 he was ordained as a deacon by Bishop Thornborough of Worcester, and began his work in Dudley. From that day until his death the ministry was his chief preoccupation.

Baxter at the time of his ordination was still a conformist. But he did in fact share the sympathy and concern for non-conformity. He remained in the Established Church because he was convinced that the Church's unity and peace must take priority over differences in ceremonies and liturgy. This explains his acceptance of the Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Ordination and the Book of Homilies, at his ordination.

Baxter's ideal for England was a united Protestant Church based on the essentials of primitive Christianity--Love, Truth, and Justice. But when he saw the persecutions of the non-conformists he began to raise questions about his allegiance to conformity. He found it exceedingly difficult to reconcile his understanding of Christian love with the attitudes of the conformists. This troubled him greatly because in his own mind he had a clear understanding of those whom the common people called Puritans and whom he in fact, knew the Puritans to be. To encourage the persecution



of these godly people was for him clearly inconsistent with the principles of true Christianity.

A vital change took place in his connection with conformity, as he became more convinced that the English Diocesan Prelacy "was guilty of the corruption of churches and ministry, and of the ruin of the true church discipline and substituting a heterogeneal thing in its stead," while the Et Cetera Oath and its terror awakened him and others who remained aloof from the growing political tension "to look about us and understand what we did."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter would not be influenced by any blind and narrow dogmatism. He was against imposition on other men's consciences whether he agreed with them or not. His real concern at this time was to save the Church from divisions. But he could not endorse the Laudian policy of enforced conformity. He became concerned that he would be in danger for his convictions. Thus when he was called to Bridgnorth to be the assistant pastor he accepted with great eagerness.

Bridgnorth was one of the pastorates that was exempt from episcopal supervision, except for a triennial visitation.

Baxter and many others like him, saw conformity as a painful alternative and earnestly desired that this burden would not be placed on them. But the perpetuation of despotic authority and the determination of large numbers of Puritans not to conform soon clashed and erupted into violent debates and battles which greatly hindered the effectiveness of the church and weakened its defences.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., II.22 (p. 16).

In the heat of this struggle the people of Kidderminster were seeking to bring about the removal of their vicar and his two curates, who were accused of incompetence and immorality. A group of fourteen from their number was commissioned to choose a preacher in order to assist the Vicar who was retained in his living after some compromise.

In March 1641, Baxter received two invitations from the people to become the preacher in the parish church of Kidderminster. This is how he remembered the event:

. . . And thus was I brought by the providence of God, to that place which had the chiefest of my labours and yielded me the greatest fruits of comfort. . . .<sup>1</sup>

As the country moved closer to the outbreak of the civil war, it divided the loyalty of the people of Kidderminster. There were those who supported the King and those who joined with the Parliamentary forces. Baxter took a decisive step when he joined the Parliamentary forces in their struggle against the King. Although he sought to explain why he took such a step, the King's supporters in the parish labelled him a Roundhead and his life was threatened with physical harm.

Thus "the Warre was begun in our streets before the King and Parliament had any armies."<sup>2</sup> In view of this danger to his life, he was forced to leave Kidderminster and find refuge in Gloucester.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Ii.29 (p. 20).

<sup>2</sup>Baxter, A Holy Commonwealth (London: Thomas Underhill and Francis Tyton, 1659), p. 457.

When he returned to the town conditions had not changed so again he was forced to escape. This time (1643) he found security in Coventry where he remained for a few years.

Baxter opened himself to even greater attacks when he became a chaplain in Cromwell's Army. But what is quite often overlooked is the fact that this action was not dictated by any particular admiration for Cromwell. Even amidst the turmoil Baxter still clung to his ideal of a united church seeking the truth of God as revealed in Holy Scripture. But conditions in Cromwell's army were threatening to further the divisions and destroy completely the peace of the Church, through the infiltration of sectarian opinions into the Army. Baxter was sure that if the sectaries were allowed to go unchecked, the consequent revolution would result in chaos that the nation never dreamed of.

But his efforts as chaplain were somewhat frustrated and his experience with the Army embittered his whole attitude toward any popular movement for social change.

This whole account is of extreme importance, for it removes all doubt regarding Baxter's reason for becoming a chaplain. It was not a question of disloyalty to the King because when he discovered the sinister intentions of the radicals towards the King, he expressed his grievance in these words: "I perceived that they took the King for a tyrant and an enemy, and really intended absolutely to master him or to ruin him. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>RB II.74 (p. 51).

Not only the plot to ruin the King troubled Baxter, but also the determination of those radicals to get rid of bishops, liturgy, ceremonies and everything that stood in their path. Thus "I thought the public good commanded me to go into the army."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter was still deeply concerned about his flock in Kidderminster. These were closest to him. So despite his sad experiences he decided to return and this time he remained there for fourteen years. The people did not only welcome him, but without his consent appointed him as Vicar under the Commonwealth. It was not long before a great religious revival took place among the people of Kidderminster. Under his awakening ministry he successfully made religion a part of their daily life.

Baxter's model ministry in this place was such a phenomenal success that it has been regarded as one of the greatest efforts in the pastoral ministry in the history of the church.<sup>2</sup>

Along with his duties as a pastor, Baxter was very active in promoting projects in the interest of the Church's peace and unity. Beyond any doubt, the Worcestershire Association was one of his greatest achievements. Through this body he encouraged many ministers to become more sensitive to their pastoral responsibilities. It was one of his strong points that "there would not be many found notoriously ungodly amongst our people," if only ministers would serve with a commitment commensurate to their high calling.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Kemp, A Pastoral Triumph: The Story of Richard Baxter and His Ministry at Kidderminster (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946), p. 3.

Baxter practiced what he preached. He was a strict disciplinarian, but was full of compassion and love for the erring and the weak.

The famous Worcestershire Association became the model for similar associations in different parts of the country. One of the most vital issues discussed in the formation of the Worcestershire Association was the problem of episcopacy. Baxter, (along with Usher), opted for some form of modified or reduced episcopacy after the pattern set forth in the primitive church.<sup>1</sup>

For the last thirty years of his life, his public ministry was interrupted, and it was his writings which occupied an important portion of his life during this period, and which give us a comprehensive view of his mind and the extent of his usefulness.

Baxter was a responsible, sober writer. He maintained that his writings were for the benefit of mankind and the pursuit of truth. And these "were my chiefest daily labour which yet went the more slowly on that I never had an amanuensis to dictate to and especially because my weakness took up so much of my time."<sup>2</sup>

In another passage, he speaks of his "much beloved Library" and expresses great bitterness when his books were taken away from him.

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<sup>1</sup>The question of episcopacy will be discussed more fully in the appropriate chapter in the thesis i.e. "The Savoy Conference." However it would be helpful to keep in mind that this was the issue over which Baxter and the bishops were at great odds.

<sup>2</sup>BB I.i (p. 78).

A word should be added about Baxter's marriage to Margaret Charlton. From the time of their marriage (1662) until her death (1681) they lived a very happy life even though he was twenty-one years her senior. She possessed a great strength of character. Her husband's respect and devotion are expressed in the following passage taken from his Breviate of her life.

If I carried (as I was apt) with too much neglect of ceremony or humble complement to any, she would modestly tell me of it; if my look seemed not pleasant she would have me amend them. For these 19 years that I have lived with her, I think I never heard her thrice speaking a doubting word of her salvation, but oft of her hopeful persuasions, that we should live together in Heaven.<sup>1</sup>

As Baxter approached the end of his life, he encountered many sad experiences because of his non-conformity. At the age of seventy, sick and tired of many years of controversies and hard work, he had to face the indignity and mockery of a trial before the notorious Judge Jeffreys.

It is indeed a tribute to Baxter that the courage he showed at the hour of trial and imprisonment made him a hero for truth and righteousness.

Baxter spent a year in prison and was released. But he continued his ministerial work as best he could. He was a part-time assistant to Matthew Sylvester until his death. Sylvester wrote about Baxter's last years with him in the following manner:

When after he had continued about four years and a half with me, he was then disabled from going forth anymore to his

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. G. F. Nuttall, The Puritan Spirit (London: Epworth Press, 1967), p. 108.

ministerial work; so that what he did he performed it all the residue of his life, in his own hired house, where he opened his doors morning and evening, everyday, to all that would come to join in family worship with him. . . . But alas his growing distempers and infirmities took him also off from this. There, through pain . . . and sickness, his body wasted; but his soul abode rational, strong in faith and hope. . . . On Tuesday morning, about four of the clock, December 8, 1691, he expired.<sup>1</sup>

"A man strong in faith and hope," aptly characterizes the life and work of Richard Baxter. In his pursuit of peace and unity he was misunderstood and sometimes abused, but this did not deter him. He suffered abuses quite often for the sake of the common good that others might benefit. He was a "mere catholic," not in any hypocritical or perfunctory manner, but in the profound sense of seeking truth in all things and in assiduously trying to bring unity and accommodation in the Church and the Brotherhood.

Indeed he was a "meer non-conformist," but it was a painful alternative, and he chose that path precisely because to conform along Laudian lines and in the style of the Restoration meant a violation of "tender consciences", and a radical departure from the diversity which he saw as characteristic of the Primitive Church. He felt impelled by an inner power to remain committed to the cause of peace and unity. This is how he phrased it:

God hath possessed my heart with such a burning desire after the peace and unity of the churches that I cannot forget it, or lay it by. I feel a supernatural power forcing my strongest zeal and thoughts that way.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>RB I.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. G. F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge-- A Study in a Tradition (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 6.

To understand Baxter's role at the Savoy Conference, the depth and power of his religious convictions must be recognized. His Christian faith permeated and illumined his life. Its foundation was his unfaltering belief in the sovereignty of God, and this was what he sought to present as an all encompassing faith for all human activity. Baxter, in all humility, saw himself as God's instrument. This it was that, as a steel framework, sustained him through incredible hardships and gave him patience and endurance in his pursuit of peace and unity, which nothing could divert.

His participation and involvement in political affairs were motivated by his concern to preserve and present that unique combination of politics and theology. And since at the Savoy Conference politics were an essential part of ecclesiastical affairs and did in fact greatly affect the development of events, it would not be amiss to consider Baxter's political thought without which his influence and aims at the Conference would not be fully intelligible.



## CHAPTER II

### "POLITICS AND DIVINITY" IN THE THOUGHT OF BAXTER: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR HIS ROLE AT THE SAVOY CONFERENCE

The foundation of Baxter's political philosophy is his theology. This is how he phrased it:

He that understandeth not the divine dominium et imperium, as found in Creation and refounded in Redemption and man's subjection to his absolute Lord, and the universal laws can never have any true understanding of the polity of laws of any Kingdom in particular.<sup>1</sup>

Central to all his teachings, theological and political alike, was the conviction that Christianity was a way of life and not merely an ideology. He speaks of it as a religion, meaning by this that it is the integrating portion of the whole of life. Upon this premise, Baxter proceeds to build his system of political theory. He views the whole spectrum of theological knowledge from the perspective of both the theoretician and the practitioner,

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Baxter, Christian Directory (1673), IV.104. Hereafter cited as CD.

Because of the proportions of our study we have to deal summarily with Baxter's political thought. Nevertheless an attempt will be made to bring out the essential characteristics of his thought, taking care not to destroy the continuity or context in which he articulated it.

Perhaps the most known treatment of Baxter's views on politics is Professor Schlatter's book, Richard Baxter and Puritan Politics (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957). Schlatter's treatment is however different from the approach taken in this thesis. His discussion is partial, though appropriate to his purpose.

and carries the point further by affirming that the theoretical arises out of the practical.

Precisely for this reason, Baxter places strong emphasis on the biblical and medieval background, although from the latter there are some important differences which must be noted. However, this background is essential for an understanding of Baxter's principles of Christian practice, which includes politics.

The modus operandi of Baxter's world-view is the whole of Biblical revelation. In several places in his writings he refers to the Bible as his Statute-book.<sup>1</sup> From this source he develops his conceptions of the sovereignty of God, of His creative authority and rule by law, of the human instruments as ministers of God and of a people whose primary purpose for existence is to glorify God in the purity of their religion and in the justice of their social relationships. These conceptions reflect the extent to which Baxter was influenced by the theocratic ideal of the Old Testament.

To be sure, the metaphorical language which is largely used in the Old Testament to speak of the relationship of God to man, including political relationship, may make it appear that in Old Testament times there was a radical separation of religion and politics; but this was inconceivable from the perspective of the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. James I. Packer, "The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter," (1954), p. 332. An unpublished thesis presented for the Degree of D. Phil., Oxford, 1954. Permission in writing has been granted by the author for the use of his work.

Old Testament. For its demand is precisely a recognition of the total sovereignty of God which extends to the whole of life.

In the New Testament, the problem of the relation of the State to Divine government Baxter evidently saw as more complex. The complexity lies in a comparison of the teachings of Jesus with the Old Testament. We believe that Baxter thought that the words of Jesus seem to create a more indirect relationship between human government and God's rule. But the locus classicus of this tension of relationship in the New Testament is revealed in the command in Romans 13 to be subject to the civil powers for conscience's sake since in ultimate terms the civil rulers exercise jurisdiction because of God's supreme power. On the other hand the Roman state was personified as the beast in Revelation 13.

It will become clear how Baxter dealt with this problem as the discussion develops. In the medieval period this tension was largely overcome. For though Augustine continued the tension in his dualism between the civitas Dei and the civitas terrena, he put "beyond question for many centuries . . . the conception that under the new dispensation, the state must be a Christian state, serving a community which is one by virtue of a common Christian faith, ministering to a life in which spiritual interests admittedly stand above all other interests and contributing to human salvation by preserving the purity of the faith."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>George H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory (3rd ed., New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1962), p. 191.

It is particularly in scholastic political and theological thought that the idea of the Christian state--respublica christiana, is most fully developed. The Christian theologians and philosophers of that period articulated with exceeding firmness their acceptance of the fact that God is man's true ruler and sovereign. Following from this they proceeded to develop the further theory that the constitutive principle of the cosmos is the "divinely-willed Harmony of the universe."<sup>1</sup> "It is a system of thought which culminated in the ideas of a community which God Himself had constituted and which comprised All Mankind."<sup>2</sup>

The background for the formation of the concept of the world as divinely ordered cosmos is traceable to both Greek and Christian ideas. As is well-known, medieval political ideas were strongly influenced by this synthesis of Greek thought and the Bible.

In the development of this whole system of beliefs there is a noticeable emphasis on the rational and teleological view of the constitution of reality. God is reckoned as the Divine Logos or reason whose sovereignty pervades through a hierarchical arrangement of reality in which reason is the means of universal harmony. Not only is God the divine arranger of the universe, but He is also absolute being and timeless perfection and the final good

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<sup>1</sup>Otto Gieke, Political Theories of the Middle Ages, translated with an introduction by Frederick W. Maitland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), p. xviii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

of man. The proper function of all government political and ecclesiastical alike, is to lead man towards the fulfillment of that good and so to an experience of genuine happiness.

Baxter's political philosophy was in effect an attempt to re-state in seventeenth-century Protestant England the basic premise of the medieval ideal of the world as a divinely constituted monarchy. He uses models that were characteristic of the medieval times: law, conscience and the divine orders or powers of the imperium and the sacerdotium. With these he expresses his philosophy of the administration of God's government.

But because Baxter's seventeenth-century Protestant understanding of God and His relationship to man differed in some important respects from the medieval conceptions, his explication of law, conscience and the powers also differed. We can speak of his views as Reformed Medievalism. Another point not unconnected with this is the fact that though one can trace strong teleological and rationalistic elements in Baxter's thought, yet his concept of man's relationship to God was notably deontological rather than teleological.

The fundamental point that emerges from all this is that in Baxter's thought the question of sovereignty is a key doctrine and this is carefully worked out in his effort to combine theology and political theory.

Baxter takes as his point of departure in his doctrine of Church and State, the concept of the Corpus Christianum rather than the concept of the duality of Church and State. His Protestantism,

and in a narrower sense, his Puritanism had taught him that God can be experienced first as will and not as reason or perfection of being. He believed that experience was relatively more immediate than the hierarchically and sacramentally mediated experience of God which was characteristic of medieval Christianity.

Another point must be noted regarding Baxter's principle of interpretation. We have indicated in the previous chapter how fully Baxter embodied Puritan ideal and how well he understood and interpreted its history. Now in terms of political affairs the Puritans' attitude towards and exposition of political questions was dictated largely by the conception of the "Covenant". This was the ordering principle of the Puritans' whole world.

One recent writer notes:

The covenant was not for the Puritans, one idea or concept among others. It was the fundamental motif running throughout the whole of their life to shape their understanding and their feeling for existence. It pervaded and held together their views of religion, politics and ethics; it shaped their whole approach to marriage, church and society.<sup>1</sup>

While it is indisputable that Baxter in some of the essentials of his political philosophy, reflected the medieval ideals, the dominant interpretative pattern of his thought is covenantal, rather than the hierarchical, organic and teleological pattern of medieval thought. In his method of interpreting law, conscience and the sovereignty of God in the light of the covenant, he opposes

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon Harland, "American Protestantism: Its Genius and Its Problems," The Drew Gateway, XXXIV (Winter, 1964), p. 71f.

such thinkers as Hobbes who championed the mechanical pattern of interpreting nature and political government and thus placed the nature of man and God's government in an unfortunate light.

According to the covenantal philosophy of history, the history of man's relationship to God reveals God's successive covenants with man by which He makes known to man on what conditions He would govern him.<sup>1</sup> The Biblical record is a part of this revelation.

Baxter vigorously maintains that God's Word determines man's duty, and that he must firmly accept it though he may not always see the reason or wisdom behind it. Again, this emphasis brings to our attention Baxter's voluntarism.

In fact, Baxter's theological voluntarism was reinforced by contemporary political thought. As Figgis remarks, in the context of the time, the central political questions were put in terms of right. Authority was established on the concept of right, and the primary political question was: who has supreme right or authority to rule, that is sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

In all his exposition on political matters therefore, Baxter never failed to combine politics with theology in order to bring

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day Proved, Cf. Orme Practical Works, 23 vols, 1830 XIII, p. 484. Hereafter cited as Works.

<sup>2</sup>J. N. Figgis, The Divine Right of Kings, p. 177ff.

out as clearly and forcefully as possible the fundamental question of God's sovereignty. God's rule is universal in its scope and nature.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is always God's right to rule and man's duty to obey. Baxter never weakened his position on this point. Following from such firm conviction are two very vital considerations. The first relates to Baxter's attempt to establish political government in divine government. The second concerns his doctrine of law.<sup>2</sup>

In a larger context, the whole Biblical revelation is included in the law by which God governs the world. "Law" declares Baxter, "is a signification of the Ruler's will constituting the subjects Due."<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere he speaks of law as "the governing Will of a Rector signified, constituting or confirming Right (or Dueness) from and to the subjects," and as a "sign or signification of the reason and will of the rector as such to his subjects as such, instituting or antecedently determining what shall be due from them, and to them."<sup>4</sup> That law obliges is the effect of authority upon the recipients of the command. For Baxter, obligation which rests upon the authority of a right to command, is the essence of

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<sup>1</sup>Packer, op. cit., p. 333.

<sup>2</sup>We cannot deal here in any detail with Baxter's exposition of Law, but a summary treatment will help to establish his view on this question.

<sup>3</sup>Baxter, A Holy Commonwealth (London: Thomas Underhill and Francis Tyton, 1659), p. 320. Hereafter cited as HC.

<sup>4</sup>Baxter, Catholick Theologie, (in three books; London: Hoxton and Highbury 1675), p. 52. Hereafter cited as CT.



morality and law. Not the appropriateness of an act to an end, although as we have already mentioned the teleological framework is often present in Baxter's thought, but obedience to an obligation is the norm of action. Such obedience must reflect God's glory and graciousness. Baxter asserts:

All that God commandeth us to do is both a duty and a means; it is called a duty in relation to God the efficient Lawgiver, first; and it is a means next in relation to God the End, whose work is done, and whose will is pleased by it. And we must always respect it in both these notions inseparably.<sup>1</sup>

God is therefore the Great All in human affairs, spiritual as well as temporal. This fact must evoke from the creature respect and obedience, love and reverence, for all these are involved in the notion of God as both Beginning and End.

A summary treatment of law will help to bring out more fully his whole philosophy on this important question. Baxter comes out very strongly in asserting this principle. "Whereas some say that if there were no Law, sin would deserve punishment, it is an error. For it is due only by law."<sup>2</sup> In other words, whatever God commands cannot be thought of as unlawful, for God knows what is best and determines what will redound to his glory. Here Baxter insists on maintaining the supreme sovereignty of God. Man is required to accept and obey God's law implicitly. At times such obedience may seem to defy all the canons of logic and rationality, but this is precisely the reason why he must obey.

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<sup>1</sup>CD V.306. This insistence on combination and inseparability is peculiarly characteristic of Baxter. See G. F. Nuttall, Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), see end of Chapter II.

<sup>2</sup>CT, p. 54.

Thus, Baxter laid the foundation of his political philosophy by affirming that all right to govern, and therefore all law is necessarily derived from, and serves God's sovereignty.

It is certainly not to be assumed that Baxter is anti-rational. He has in fact given a high place to reason, but it is regenerate reason. When the law addresses man, it first addresses him as fallen man, removes the mask and exposes his ignorance. However, there is another vital function of the law; it rehabilitates man, and in this process produces true rationality. Man is given back his dignity, and a sense of worth. He now possesses a vision which helps him to see God's glory, and enables him to become a rational being who can now rule by moral means. Through this rational process God communicates and seeks to govern. Man's mind thus becomes the ground through which God's will can be known and man can find good reasons for his actions.

In this light Baxter's statement about God's authority can be fully understood.

No human authority is above God's, nor can bind us against him; but it is all received from him, and subordinate to him.<sup>1</sup>

Whenever Baxter discusses politics systematically, he provides clear evidence that his a priori point of departure is the absolute sovereignty of God.<sup>2</sup> His system consisted of at least three

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, Life of Faith (undated), p. 388.

<sup>2</sup>R. B. Schlatter, op. cit., p. 61. Here the author quotes from a letter written by Baxter to John Swinfen. The original letter is among Baxter's correspondence in Dr. Williams Library.

basic points: God is Creator, and therefore has absolute dominion or ownership; God alone has a moral right to govern man because He alone is qualified by his fulness of wisdom, goodness and power to fulfill such a task; God has the highest right to govern man because he is man's greatest benefactor. In particular, He holds this right over man through the redemption of Christ.

Correspondingly, there is a threefold conception in Baxter's exposition of man's relationship to God. First of all, God is related to man as our absolute Lord (or Owner), our sovereign, Ruler (or King), and our most bountiful Benefactor; and man stands related to God as His own, His subject (as to obligation) and His Beneficiary.<sup>1</sup>

Having described the ways in which God and man are related, Baxter concludes that God has not only the Jus Imperii but also the Jus Domini that is, the world is not only a monarchy, but an absolute monarchy. This is how Baxter expresses it: "The World then is a Kingdom where God is the King, and the form of Government is Monarchia absoluta ex pleno Dominio jure creationis; an absolute Monarchy from or with a plenary Dominion or propriety [property] of persons and things, by Title of Creation."<sup>2</sup>

At this point we must draw attention to perhaps one of the most vexing problems Baxter encountered in the development of his political philosophy, and specifically, in terms of God's sovereignty.

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<sup>1</sup>HC, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

We may put it in the form of a question: How does God exercise his sovereignty over man? As he wrestled with this question one central concern dominated his thought, namely, the vindication of God's moral government. For unless this could be maintained, both God and man would be debased and all morality undermined.

Baxter again reverts to his argument of an orderly universe which necessarily requires a good and omnipotent God. But man is not omnipotent, how, then, does he count in this grand plan? Baxter deals with this by declaring that man is a rational free agent, and goes on to argue that God governs him as such. Again the pattern of interpretation is the Puritan covenant.

The second approach he chose in dealing with this problem was what may be termed his theory of mediate government. From this premise, he calls attention to the fact that God could rule the world directly so that there is really no necessity for mediate government. But He in fact has elected to rule mediately, that is to say, to use some parts of the creation to rule other parts. To say this, Baxter argues, is to agree that God had created a natural inequality in the cosmos, a hierarchy of administration, in which some parts mediate His Government over other parts.

Out of this arises, at least in part, his principle that man himself should be governed. Man is a microcosm and the

relationship of his faculties illustrates the universal principle<sup>1</sup> of mediate ordered government.

However, Baxter was moved to issue the following caveat:

Take heed of those mistakes which confound sovereignty with subjection, and which delude the people with a conceit, that they are the original of power, and may intrust it as they please. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Baxter was reacting to three contemporary theories that threatened to deny God's moral government: the mechanical theory; absolutism; and antinomianism. Against each Baxter argued that the only form of government appropriate to man as a rational, free, and therefore moral agent, is moral government by law.

Baxter is willing to grant that God exercises his sovereignty over the world and man, by a determining necessity, but he shies away from any suggestion that tends to impute the same necessity to man. Man is a free rational creature, therefore God's government of him does not infallibly determine, and objects necessitate the will.

Because we know there is a true contingency in the world. . . . We know there is a Will in man that is a self-determining Principle, and naturally free, and that this is part of the Natural Excellency of man, that is called God's Image, and maketh him capable of moral proper Government, which Brutes are not.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Packer notes that Baxter showed a very modern awareness of the pitfalls attendant upon all attempts to abstract universals from particular and to communicate the results in words. See Packer, *op. cit.*, p. 6. Therefore it is with some care that he draws his illustrations from the universals and the particulars.

<sup>2</sup>CD, IV, p. 23. See also *Works*, VI.

<sup>3</sup>HC, p. 22.

Baxter criticized those who maintain the opposite view and cast doubt upon God's right to govern. Moreover, they undermine all morality by making God the author of sin and man not responsible because he is not free.

Man must be ruled by his Rector's Will, not merely as operating physically by a secret influx, but as knowing. And we cannot know God's Will immediately. . . . Only by signs can we know God's Will concerning our duty; and those signs are laws.<sup>1</sup>

Here again can be detected the underlying theological concept implicit in Baxter's argument.

Man, because of his social creativeness, desires to be governed. Baxter presents this viewpoint in the following passage:

The intellect in man is made to guide and the will to command, and all the inferior faculties to obey: showing us that in societies the wise should guide, the good should command, and the strong and all the rest should execute and obey. An ungoverned man is a mad man or a bad man.<sup>2</sup>

The same argument holds in an ungoverned society. This type of society is incongruous with God's universal mediate ordered government of the world. "The great disparity" wrote Baxter, "that is among all creatures [including the angels that did not sin] in the frame of Nature intimateth the beauty of Orderly Political disparity."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Since man is rational, moral and ultimately responsible to God, government by law is the only government consistent with his nature.

The questions which we must ask now are: What are the practical implications of Baxter's political philosophy? How may these be applied to man and society?

All government of men, is subservient to the government of God, to promote obedience to his laws.<sup>1</sup>

Baxter rejected a purely utilitarian social contract theory of the origin of the State. Political government is rather part of the divine constitution of the cosmos. He showed great admiration for political theoreticians who defended this view.

They convinced me how unfit we are to write about Christ's Government, and Laws and Judgement, etc., while we understand not the true nature of Government, Laws and Judgement in the general, and that he that is ignorant of Politicks and of the Law of Nature will be ignorant and erroneous in Divinity and sacred scripture.<sup>2</sup>

Baxter with great care tried to draw out the practical implications of the relationship between theology and practical politics. In order to understand how this was done his theory of the structure of society must be examined. Baxter maintains that in its basic structure, society is hierarchical and theocratic. In ultimate terms there could be no authority independent of God. Authority then resides in three main spheres within society: the Church, the State and the family. In each of these the one who exercises authority receives his right to do so from God. Once this is

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<sup>1</sup>CD, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>RE II.156 (p. 108).

acknowledged, his command to rule must then be respected and obeyed. But neither is the ruler himself free from obedience. His divinely delegated duties impose upon him a discipline and a responsibility which make him answerable to God. Baxter never ceases to emphasize that man in every situation of life is somehow dealing with God. This is the presupposition with which he discusses the function of the Pastor in society. The pastor's authority, Baxter asserts, encompasses both private and public guidance and discipline within the Church. His emphasis on the Pastor's right to exercise authority and discipline is not purely utilitarian. He sees it as a divine command, it is his obligation to society. Therefore whenever this right was usurped or threatened either by a bishop or civil magistrate, Baxter fearlessly wrote and spoke against such practices.<sup>1</sup> This was consistent with his teaching that the minister, being the Shepherd of the Flock, had the moral authority to make known the wisdom and knowledge of God to the people. And this includes discipline and catechizing. Hence this prerogative could not be shared by any from among the laity. On this point Baxter was at odds with his Presbyterian colleagues.

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<sup>1</sup>It will be seen that, although the question of the Liturgy was the reason for the Savoy Conference, the real issue was precisely the problem of authority. Baxter saw this quite clearly and because he feared that the rights of the pastor were being usurped by the bishops, he endeavoured to preserve these rights by working through the reformation of the Liturgy.

Until now this question has escaped many of the writers who have undertaken a discussion of Baxter's place at the Savoy Conference, and thus they have been led to unfair and erroneous conclusions.



This represents a fundamental difference between Parliamentary and Baxterian Presbyterianism.<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Presbyterianism, says Packer, followed the Scottish system, while Baxterian Presbyterianism was inspired by the English Puritan tradition and Usher's Reduction of Episcopacy.<sup>2</sup>

In his own ministry, Baxter jealously guarded his divinely delegated authority. He considered his congregation as the class which "Christ hath committed to my Teaching and Oversight, as to an unworthy Usher under him in his Schoole."<sup>3</sup>

Baxter frequently employed this figure in his exposition of the prophetic office of Christ and the ordained ministry. "Christ's setting Ministers under him in his Church, is no resigning it to them: We are but Ushers, and Christ is the only Prophet and chief Master of the School."<sup>4</sup> The minister's chief preoccupation must be to teach and exhort, and the people's part is to obey and learn from the teachers whom Christ has appointed over them. No one is exempt. The civil magistrate is a church member and the minister is truly his teacher.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See A. Gordon, Heads of English Unitarian History, (1895), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., note 2. Dr. Nuttall notes that Baxter showed more admiration for Usher than for any other of his contemporaries.

<sup>3</sup>Baxter, Aphorisms of Justification. To the Reader. Cf. The Worcestershire Petition to the Parliament for the Ministry of England Defended, (March 28, 1653), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Works, XVII, 408.

Regarding the second sphere, that is the State, Baxter says that the ruler should exercise his duty to the glory of God. Thus the connection between the civil authority and the minister must be complementary and must demonstrate a feeling of mutual respect. Ministers must learn that magistrates are their governors. Despite their divine appointment they are still citizens of society and as such must be subject to the jurisdiction of the magistrate.

But it is also the duty of the minister to discipline the magistrate if this becomes necessary.

Our [ministers] power is but Perswasive. It is but, By the Word; It is but on the Conscience; It is under the Magistrates coercive Government. . . . But . . . God hath described our office, and limited the Magistrate's office, so that he hath no power from God to hinder the Ministry.<sup>1</sup>

But Baxter warns against the use of the keys or "minister's power", to trespass on the prerogatives of the magistrates'. It was his deep conviction that the rulers in both are to work harmoniously for the good of the Church and the Commonwealth.

This is how he expresses it:

The King and Magistrates have curam animarum, though not in the sense that the Pastors have. They have charge of Government . . . in order to men's holy, sober, and religious living, and to the saving of men's souls. . . . The same points of Religion, the same sins and duties, come under the judgement of the Magistrate and the Pastor . . . the Magistrate is to Judge, who are to be corporally punished for Heresie and Murder, and Adultery, etc. And the Pastors are Judges of who are to be excommunicated as impenitent in such guilt.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, The Difference between the Power of the Magistrate and Church Pastor, (1671), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Works, XVIII, p. 43.

The role of the civil governor in ecclesiastical affairs includes the seconding of church censures by civil penalties. This was the secret of keeping away heresy.

The remedie for Heresie is not to impose another Rule of Faith then Scripture (as if this was insufficient and we could mend it) but to exercise Church Government carefully and if any be proved to teach any Doctrine contrary to the Scripture, that Magistrates and Pastors do their parts to correct such and restrain them.<sup>1</sup>

The magistrate is to be a guardian of the Church in protecting it from scandalous and incompetent ministers. His modus operandi in this respect is the Word of God, for as Baxter remarked, "all human laws are but by-laws, subordinate to God's".<sup>2</sup> Within the sphere in which his competence can be proved from Scripture, the magistrate must be implicitly obeyed.

We now pass on to the third sphere of authority within society, namely the family. Baxter begins by assuming that the family belongs to both the Church and the State. The paterfamilias exercises patriarchal government within the limits lawfully set by the rulers in each of the other two spheres. His rule in ultimate terms must lead to the same end. He has to exercise both spiritual and material authority. Indeed he functions as both pastor and magistrate and his house is both church and state.

In view of these responsibilities, the ruler in the family must not only rebuke and discipline, he must guide and instruct

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, The Judgement and Advice of the . . . Ministers of Worcester-shire Concerning the Endeavours of Ecclesiastical Peace . . . which Mr. John Durey doth present . . . (1658), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Baxter, The Difference Between the Power of the Magistrate and Church Pastor, (1671), p. 7.

his family in the true worship of God, so that in the home as well as the Church and Commonwealth, God will be glorified.

This is how Baxter phrased this point:

Families are societies that must be sanctified to God as well as Churches; and the Governors of them have as truly a charge of souls that are therein, as pastors have of the Churches. . . . But while negligent ministers are (deservedly) cast out of their places, the negligent masters of families take themselves to be almost blameless . . .<sup>1</sup>

Baxter further laments that too often fathers neglect the government and instruction of their families not recognizing the indissoluble tie between the stability of the home and the security of both Church and Commonwealth. Such neglect consequently has adverse effects on the children. Baxter's reputation as a pastor in Kidderminster was due not only to his preaching but to his close connection with rulers of families instructing them on the proper way of caring for their household.<sup>2</sup>

It is now clear that Baxter's political philosophy fought shy of any attempt to divorce theology from politics. Indeed his respect for law and duly constituted authority was rooted in his conception of the interdependence and interrelationship of these concepts and their practical application in an ordered governed society.

His determination to preserve this drove him to challenge and refute Hobbesian materialism. He insisted that a theory which locates the origin of political government in the surrender

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Packer, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>2</sup>See RE Ii (p. 84f).

of an absolute right that each man naturally has over himself to a human sovereign, is not only artificial but challenges the Christian premise of the sovereignty of God. Political government, reiterates Baxter, is an order of existence by divine ordination, and not a matter left to human choice.<sup>1</sup>

In his criticism against thinkers such as Hobbes and Harrington, he declared:

I must begin at the bottom and touch these Praecognita which the politicians doth presuppose because I have to do with some that will deny as much, as shame will suffer them to deny.<sup>2</sup>

From Baxter's perspective, Hobbes' mistake was that in his doctrine of "absolute impious Monarchy", he gives priority to man by making the will of man sovereign rather than the will of God. Baxter deplored any attempt to draw criteria for right and wrong from man's will.<sup>3</sup>

As for Harrington, his great fallacy consisted in denying God's sovereignty by making "God the Proposer, and the people the Resolvers or Confirmers of all their laws."<sup>4</sup>

If his doctrine be true, the Law of nature is no Law, till men consent to it. At least where the Major Vote can carry it, Atheism, Idolatry, Murder; Theft, Whoredome, etc., are no sins against God. Yea no man sinneth against God but he that consenteth to his Laws. The people have greater authority or Government than God.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>HC, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>See R. B. Schlatter, op. cit., p. 15ff.

<sup>4</sup>HC, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

In Baxter's view such conceptions of politics and its practice are suited to atheists and heathen and such theoreticians are "proud Pretenders to Politicks, that opposing the Politician to the Divine, acquaint us that their Politicks are not Divine, and consequently none or worse than none."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter raised his voice against Hobbes and Harrington because they had discarded a theological foundation of political theory for a theory which traced the origin of government to purely utilitarian motivations. In this theory men are first viewed as isolated naturally free individuals. Baxter stated:

. . . Those that make the Will as much necessitated by a train of natural second Causes, which is Hobbs his way, (and, alas, the way of great and excellent healing Camero). . . . I now deal with none but those who confess, that God made man's will at first with a natural self-determining power suited to this earthly state of government.<sup>2</sup>

Baxter refutes the argument that when men enter into a political relationship they do so out of the inconveniences and violences of that naturally free but insecure state. The pre-supposition that man possessed sovereignty over himself and does not need to depend upon God, was, as we have said, at radical variance with Baxter's fundamental affirmation, the absolute sovereignty of God. The social contract theory is therefore not consistent with the Biblical revelation about the nature of man, and the structure of society.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>CT II p. 4f. A reference to Camero.

"And so", declares Baxter, "if there were no God (and yet man could be man) and if the world had no universal King, that had instituted offices under him by Law, and distinguished the world into Rulers and Subjects, then indeed the people might pretend to give the power as far as they have it to give, and be the Original of it: But when God hath given it already by a stated Law, to those that shall be lawfully nominated the peoples claim comes in too late."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter enunciates doctrines of inalienable human rights which are necessarily grounded in inalienable duties, constitutional limits on rulers and a right of resistance to abuses of power to make effective his ideal of limited government under law.

It is not to be presumed however, that Baxter was a "liberal". To be sure, he steadfastly maintained that the reason and end of political as well as ecclesiastical governments are the promotion of the common good and the exaltation of the sovereignty of God. For this reason he felt that rulers should be given fairly broad powers in order to fulfill these aims.

Baxter pointed to an ascending scale of ends to which political government must tend. The most immediate, he asserts, is the good order of the body procured by the administration, or "the orderly state and behaviour of the society which is the exercise of Government and subjection, and the obedience to God, and just

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<sup>1</sup>HC, pp. 194-95.

behaviour unto men that is manifested therein."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the immediate end of political government is order and justice. But this is only a means to the intermediate and final end. The intermediate end is the common good. The final end is the everlasting happiness of men and the eternal glory of God.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently men's striving must not be for power and property, but holiness and goodness for these constitute the good life, and lead to the enjoyment of God in eternity.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Nuttall has succinctly expressed Baxter's political position by pointing to the fact that "in politics as well as ecclesiastical matters Baxter constantly adhered to a 'moderate' position which from both sides would bring him charges of betrayal or insincerity. . . ."4

Perhaps at no other time in his whole career was he the object of these charges, more than during the period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, amidst the political and ecclesiastical conflicts over the questions of relationship between Church and State, the problem of authority and the search for peace and concord.

These same questions form the subject matter of our next chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-80.

<sup>4</sup>G. F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1966), p. 31. Italics are mine.



## PART II: PROBLEMS OF CHURCH AND STATE

### CHAPTER III

#### PRESBYTERIANS AND INDEPENDENTS: IDEAS IN CONFLICT

In the Puritan Revolution the religious problem may not have been--was not, in fact--more important than the civil; but in itself it was certainly the more difficult of solution, and it so combined with the civil problem as to render it, too, well-nigh insoluble.<sup>1</sup>

After the overturn of the established order by the Parliamentary forces, the question of the shape that the new social and political order would take became acute, and disagreement on the matter had divided the victors into contending camps.

The Settlement of the Church loomed large in the minds of many, since it was assumed that whatever form the Settlement did take would almost inevitably involve the whole structure of society. The distemper of the nation grew worse as the victors battled for their own characteristic view of the right settlement for the Church.

Baxter, a prophet of moderation, took a mediating position and pleaded with the leaders of the different groups to bury their differences and work together for a united Protestant England based on simple Christianity.

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<sup>1</sup>A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Introduction", Puritanism and Liberty (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1938), p. 14.

Dr. Jordan's researches have shown that Baxter's position

. . . represents a principle of order which appealed to sober and responsible men, harassed by the steady deterioration of Protestantism into extreme and bickering sects. . . . It appealed particularly to responsible elements of lay opinion that were seeking to coalesce on some orderly, systematic and disciplined National Establishment which would do a minimum of violence to traditional religious conceptions.<sup>1</sup>

In the scramble for the control of Church government, the Presbyterians were clearly the dominant force, but their strength was chiefly in the support from Scottish Presbyterianism on the one hand, and their influence in Parliament and in London, on the other.

The task undertaken by the Presbyterian-controlled Parliament was difficult indeed. Now they had to bring some semblance of order into a church that was, in their view at any rate, sadly disorderly. The Reformation had now to begin again in earnest. The Church had to be reformed in harmony with the Word of God and after the example of the most Godly Reformed Churches.

Parliament appointed committees for removing "scandalous ministers" and for dealing with plundered ministers. The ruling party did not forget the distractions and ejection which many of its clergy experienced under diocesan rule. Now the tables were turned and the human spirit of revenge was manifested against many Anglican clergymen in the form of ejections. These vacancies were filled by the appointment of Presbyterian ministers,

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<sup>1</sup>W. K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England (3 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), III, 317.

a number of whom had not been episcopally ordained. So sure were the new leaders of the strength of their regime, that very shortly there developed the practice of presbyterian ordination which did in fact receive the approbation of Parliament.

There was growing apprehension in the minds of many that the trend of events indicated that the country had not yet been freed from intolerance as one form of enforced conformity to authority replaced the other.

Officially, Laudian prelacy had been abolished in 1643 and the Presbyterian-dominated Westminster Assembly began its proceedings to advise the Government on a settlement of the Church in terms of doctrine, worship and government. The results of these meetings took the form of a series of recommendations to the Presbyterian-dominated Parliament, and undoubtedly the most drastic one was the replacing of the Book of Common Prayer with a Directory of Worship. The recommendations included a basically Presbyterian form of government in 1644, a confession of faith in 1646, and two catechisms in 1647. The composition of the Westminster Assembly is revealed in Baxter's description and is of enormous importance:

Those who made up the Assembly of Divines, and who through the land were the honour of the Parliament party, were almost all such as till then had conformed and took ceremonies to be lawful in cases of necessity, but longed to have that necessity removed. . . . The matter of bishops or no Bishops was not the main things, except with the Scots, for thousands that wished for Good Bishops were on the Parliament side. Almost all those afterwards called Presbyterians, and all learned and pious synod at Westminster, except a very few, had been conformists, and kept up an honourable esteem for those Bishops that they thought religious; as Archbishop Usher, Bishops Davenant, Hall, Morton etc. Those would have been

content with an Amendment of the Hierarchy. . . . The Assembly at Westminster were all save eight or nine conformable.<sup>1</sup>

Through the Solemn League and Covenant, which in fact was the means of binding the English and Scottish Presbyterians together, the Scots sought to bring the English Church into conformity with the Scottish Presbyterian model. The "dissenting brethren" of the Assembly, Philip Nye, Henry Vane and others, had, in some measure, anticipated the Scottish design and worked to reduce the conditions of the Solemn League and Covenant.

Parliament eventually ordered that the Covenant be subscribed throughout England and failure to take the oath of subscription resulted in penalty or fines. Yet Baxter informs us that he persuaded his people at Kidderminster against taking the Covenant, for fear it should ensnare their consciences. Sometime later he wrote about this in the following way:

Above all, I could wish that the Parliament and their more skillful hand, had done more than was done to heal our breaches, and hit upon the right way either to unite with the Episcopals and Independents (which was possible as distant as they are) or at least had pitched on the terms that are fit for Universal Concord, and left all to come in upon those terms that would.<sup>2</sup>

These are revealing words. They indicate how far the Presbyterians had copied the Laudians in their determination to bring the whole country into conformity.

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, A Treatise on Episcopacy (1681) II, 211.

<sup>2</sup>RB I i 117 (p. 73).

One of the most remarkable events of the period under Presbyterian rule, was the ordinance passed by the Parliament on 3rd of January 1645, which repealed certain statutes of Edward VI and Elizabeth I, and ruled that the Book of Common Prayer should no longer be the official service book and forbade its use in any church, chapel or place of public worship in England or Wales.

Thus, after 85 years of use the Prayer Book was abolished and replaced by "A Directory for the Public Worship of God."

Because there was not a ready acceptance of Presbyterian conformity, and Presbyterian leadership in some areas, Parliament passed measures reinforcing the Ordinance against the Prayer Book, by attaching penalties or fines to its use. It was now an offense to use the Book in a private place or a family.

The Directory consisted of general instructions for the conduct of worship rather than set forms of service. The principal services consisted of prayers, two lessons, psalms and a sermon. The Holy Communion followed the morning Sermon with the people seated round the Table. Provisions were also made for Baptism, Visitation of the Sick and Marriages, but burials were to be conducted without ceremony. Feast days, except Sundays, were abolished.<sup>1</sup> The freedom for extempore prayers did not make the Directory any less compulsory.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Liturgical Tracts 1644-1661: A Directory for the Public Worship of God Throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. Together with an Ordinance of Parliament for the Taking Away of the Book of Common Prayer (London: Evan Tyler et al 1661), p. 9ff. Hereafter cited as Liturgical Tracts.

<sup>2</sup>A. H. Wood, Church Unity Without Uniformity (London: Epworth Press, 1963), p. 42.

The imposition of the Directory was repugnant to all constitutionally minded conformists and royalists. They could not accept it as being legally substituted for their Prayer Book even though Parliament did destroy the legal foundations of the Book.

Opposition against Presbyterian rule, particularly the proposed form of discipline, did not come only from conformists and royalists. The Erastians, Independents, and the left-wing Puritans had come to look upon Presbyterian rule with the same distaste and bitterness with which they, only a short time ago, regarded Laudian prelacy, and had now begun to contrive new plans for a "settlement of the Kingdom", which were wholly inconsistent with the temperament and aims of the Scots and Presbyterian Puritans. In the Army debates during the summer of 1647, the left-wing Puritans vigorously advocated liberty of conscience and a democratic government based on a proper constitution called The Agreement of the People.<sup>1</sup>

The Erastian members of Parliament were equally suspicious and consequently opposed to the Presbyterian measures. In their view, Parliament, and not the Presbyterian clergy, should control the Church in England.<sup>2</sup>

Baxter's cogent statement that "Overdoing is undoing" aptly describes the fate of Presbyterianism for the next few years.

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<sup>1</sup>Woodhouse, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>For a good and full discussion of this Erastian position Henry Parker's study, The True Grounds of Ecclesiastical Regiment (1641), is most useful. The Parliamentary Erastians differed from the Royalist Erastians in maintaining that Parliament rather than the King, was the supreme head of Church and State.

England was not prepared for the overdoing of Presbyterianism whether of the Scottish or English type. So when attacks were made on the Prayer Book thousands were willing to bleed for it, who would not lift a finger to defend the bishops.<sup>1</sup> Such indeed is the ambiguity and uncertainty of human nature. The Book which the English people had accepted for so many years and in many ways had placed little estimate upon, now became the object of their special regard once its use was restricted and finally banned.

Abolition of the Book gave a new impetus to anti-Presbyterian feelings and at the same time placed a new value on it in the eyes of many. Its quality was made apparent by contrast with the system of worship which had superseded it.

In the meantime the Independents had increased their strength in the Army and as a centre party were strongly supported by the left-wing Puritans and the more politically conservative Erastians who, as we have already mentioned, were against the imposition of Presbyterianism.

It was within a relatively short time that Cromwell and his army were able to take away the reins of control from the Presbyterians, and sought in their own way to achieve their vision of the properly ordered society. These new leaders were aware that the fallacy of their predecessors was the latter's insistence upon a form of Government too exact in discipline and one which placed the use of power and authority in the hands of clerics.

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<sup>1</sup>Wood, op. cit., p. 76.

Edward Cardwell focuses on the cause for Presbyterian downfall when he asserts that:

They [the Presbyterians] succeeded in obtaining an ordinance that all parishes should be brought under the government of congregational, classical provincial national assemblies; but when they demanded that the spiritual authority of the Keys should be supported by the power of suspending from the Lord's Supper and excommunicating, with a view also to the imposition of civil penalties, they exposed themselves on all sides to suspicion and jealousy, and laid a certain train for their own destruction.<sup>1</sup>

From the summer of 1647 on Baxter was displeased with the development of events. After the defeat of the King's forces in 1646, he thought that there would be some form of negotiations to bring the dissenting and factious groups together, and to restore authority to the King. But Cromwell and the Army were not thinking along the same lines, and thus prevented this as well as the imposition of Presbyterian discipline.<sup>2</sup>

On December 6, 1648, the Presbyterian members in Parliament who had been hostile to the new leaders were thrown out, in what came to be known as Pride's Purge.<sup>3</sup> Cromwell and the Army felt that negotiations with the King were not going to achieve the aims which

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Cardwell, A History of Conferences and Other Proceedings connected with the Book of Common Prayer from 1588-1690 (Oxford: University Press, 1841), p. 243.

<sup>2</sup>E. C. Ratcliffe claims that Cromwell was more in favor of toleration than the Presbyterians. See E. C. Ratcliffe, "The Savoy Conference," From Uniformity to Unity 1662-1962, G. F. Nuttall and O. Chadwick (eds.) (London: S.P.C.K., 1962).

<sup>3</sup>For the most recent full discussion of this see David Underdown's, Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).



they held for a rightly ordered society. But the Presbyterians were insisting on some form of compromise that would save both monarch and monarchy. Thus Colonel Thomas Pride, with a strong contingent of soldiers marched up to the House of Commons and arrested or turned away the majority of the Presbyterian members of Parliament who were trying to enter the House.<sup>1</sup>

The Rump Parliament had now removed whatever major obstacles that might have averted or frustrated their plans for the execution of the King, the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of Independent rule.

In the face of these measures, Baxter still leaves the distinct impression that there was a greater measure of tolerance under Cromwell than was experienced under Laudian prelacy and Presbyterian rule.

Now the Independents could have full liberty of worship and it is believed that their free proceedings were calculated to enhance traditional Anglican Liturgical order as well as their own particular interests and concerns.

In the turmoil that resulted from the abolition of the Prayer Book, under Presbyterian rule, Cromwell had perceived that the people had now developed a new attachment, indeed a fascination for the Book and in his wisdom, he refrained from strictly enforcing the laws against its use. The Book was now openly used in many city churches. There is good reason to believe that the proscribed

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

services of the Anglican Church were used in many country places too. Part of the evidence for this may be seen in the fact that many of the ejected clergy who, for conscience' sake, could not feel any kinship with their moderate Anglican brethren, who had sought a compromise with the Puritan Church, now found warm welcome and friendship in the homes of many Cavalier landowners, and many of them lived in country manors with these families, as chaplains and tutors.

The proscribed services were performed with new devotion, and friendship and sympathy, at a time when these human qualities were most needed, achieved the work which Archbishop Laud's discipline had signally failed to do.

Cromwell grew increasingly apprehensive about this new alliance. This is revealed in his complaint that the Royalists had "bred and educated their children by the sequestered and ejected clergy . . . as if they meant to entail their quarrel and prevent the means to reconcile posterity."<sup>1</sup>

However, in spite of this apprehension, Cromwell still maintained a tolerant attitude towards religious practices. It was not until the abortive Royalist uprising of 1655 provoked him to take action, that he did in fact announce stern measures of repression against the sequestered clergy and the usage of the Prayer Book. On October 4, 1655, he issued an order against

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<sup>1</sup>Robert S. Bosher, The Making of the Restoration Settlement 1649-1662 (London: Dacre Press, 1957), p. 40.

harbouring of sequestered clergy, and Royalists were warned that they would be heavily fined for violating the order.

The clergy were prohibited from keeping schools for the children of these families and from functioning as chaplains. This meant that it was illegal for them to preach in public or private, and to administer the Sacraments, solemnize marriages and use the Prayer Book.

On November 24, a proclamation from the Lord Protector confirmed the order. But the ordinance was slightly mitigated and promised some tenderness "toward such . . . as shall give a real testimony of their godliness and good affection to the present government, so much tenderness shall be used as may consist with the safety and good of the nation."<sup>1</sup>

Those Anglicans who persisted in resisting the government found life more difficult. But they were willing to suffer hardship and deprivations for the worship and observances of the Church which they had grown to cherish with deep affections.

One such Anglican was John Evelyn who wrote in 1656 that the Church of England was reduced to a Chamber and Conventicle, so sharp was the persecution. The continued existence and use of the Prayer Book, was due largely to such men who despite the threats held steadfastly to it.

Baxter was bitterly disappointed by the development of events in both Church and State. All along, amidst the political clashes

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<sup>1</sup>S. R. Gardiner, History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate (London: 1901) III, 190-91.

between the King and Parliament and between the Presbyterians and Independents, he had nursed the hope that some form of comprehension might be forthcoming. His activities during this period were calculated to encourage the speedy realization of this hope. When the Presbyterians were in control he advised many of the leaders to devise a scheme of unity with the other groups, particularly the Independents and Episcopalians.<sup>1</sup> But Presbyterians, particularly of the Scottish mentality, would hardly accommodate Episcopalians and Independents and the latter found a defender in Cromwell.<sup>2</sup>

The reason for this assertion may be seen in the Presbyterian programme for the nation and the Church. Two things are to be noted. In the first there was the insistence on the establishment of the Presbyterian Church, and in this found it difficult to join with or accommodate Episcopalians because of their rejection of episcopacy as being the esse of the Church. A further point in this connection relates to the presence and influence of the Scots. There is good ground to believe that the Scots dealt more sternly with the question of Episcopacy than the old English Puritans required or would have approved.

In the second essential part of the programme they alienated the Independents through their persistence on the maintenance of the ancient throne. If they refused to join with the King and the

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<sup>1</sup>RB I i 117, (p. 73).

<sup>2</sup>Geo. Gould (ed.) Documents Relating to the Settlement of the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity of 1662 (London: W. Kent and Co., 1862), p. 72.

Episcopalians unless they abandoned their theory of Episcopacy, they remained intransigent in their opposition to the Independents and Cromwell who wanted the expulsion of the Stuarts and the abolition of the Monarchy.

The Presbyterians' attachment to Monarchy was deeply grounded. They never really accepted the Cromwellian leadership, because shortly after Charles I laid his head on the block, his son Charles II was proclaimed King by the Scottish Presbyterians.

Once more Cromwell and the Presbyterians clashed in a death struggle over the Crown. Many Presbyterian ministers were deprived of their livings, sequestered, forced and threatened by the Army radicals because these ministers had opposed the execution of the King and had called those who did it "murderers and the like."<sup>1</sup>

Certainly Cromwell had little sympathy with a party whose sole conception of the glorious Reformation, symbolized by the Covenant, was the substitution of a domineering Presbyterianism for a domineering Episcopacy. This was how the Protector saw the issue. And one writer, in commenting on this, justifies Cromwell's action by affirming that his Puritanism "had been from the first, what the best of English Puritanism was, not a preference of one Church government to another, but a life of spiritual, personal religion, and intense realization of the presence of God, a devotion of the entire being to him."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>ibid., p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>ibid., p. 78.

Yet the fact must not escape notice that Cromwell himself declared that "Religion was not the thing first contested for", although he added "but God brought it to that issue at last."<sup>1</sup> He was undoubtedly interested in the peace and unity of both Church and State. It had become quite apparent to him that there were many Englishmen who were against bishops but who had no thought of destroying the Monarchy. Here was the nub of the problem. It was the Presbyterians who had resisted the overthrow of the Monarchy at the price of their own political destruction.

They might have accepted Cromwell but only on their own terms. How then could he, (Cromwell) allow them to assemble in synods or to exclude Independents from Church preferments?

Thus partly through force of circumstances, and partly through a logical development of their own basic doctrines, the Independents became known as the party of toleration.

This new image gave them an immense advantage outside Parliament, for it enabled them to draw support from the Parties of the Left, who were almost unrepresented in the House of Commons, but were very strong in the Army, on which in the last analysis, the Independents relied.

The rift between the Presbyterians and Independents widened on the question of a civil settlement. If, said the latter, new Presbyters were old priests writ large, new Parliament also bore a striking resemblance to old King. Hence they became more and more

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<sup>1</sup>Underdown, op. cit., p. 9.

suspicious of the notion of the effectual sovereignty of Parliament and of its tyranny. They argued for the kind of settlement that would put definite limits to Parliament's life, and provide measures that would deal not only with the power of the restored King, but also against the self-perpetuating tyranny of Parliaments in the future.<sup>1</sup>

They would be ready to support the King on the condition that he accept their policy of ecclesiastical liberty and their principle of biennial Parliaments from whose power as well as from the King's, certain basic rights should be reserved and whose institution should be preceded by certain electoral reforms. These were some of the proposals presented by the Independents as a means of settlement.

It was now quite clear that any attempt at enforced uniformity whether of the Laudian or Covenanting types, could only widen the hiatus between contending religious and political parties. The way out of the impasse seemed to be precisely what Baxter had been advocating. Unity in essentials, diversity in forms and charity for all. Such indeed was the plan that was now agitating the minds of many Englishmen, among whom one might include Cromwell.

Why then did not the Lord Protector succeed? There are many important reasons one could offer. To begin, Cromwell was not himself free. Even as Lord Protector he was in some measure forced to move cautiously in order to protect himself from the

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<sup>1</sup>Woodhouse, op. cit., p. 17.

radical and left-wing elements in the Army. Furthermore, as we shall soon see, Baxter was one of his severest critics and charged him with deliberately filling the Army with radical or left-wing Puritans, uniting them under the banner of liberty of conscience and using them to promote his own interest.

Clarendon says that Cromwell was resented by the three nations. His actions were always fresh in their memories. The fact is, Cromwell by sheer military force had taken control of the government and turned out of doors a large number of the representatives of England. The people never forgave him for using the Parliamentary instrument, adapted of course to his purpose, to bring about the condemnation and execution of the King.

So despite his attempt to moderate between the differing factions in order to bring them into some form of reconciliation, and despite his further, and one might add sincere, efforts to win the goodwill of the English people, he was still considered a usurper, and was despised. And at the time of his death in 1658, the nation was still in its state of general confusion and dissatisfaction both politically and ecclesiastically. The heart of the distempered nation now yearned towards Charles II. The years of the Protectorate rolled slowly to their close, till at last a state of temporary composure was reached and the wish of the people could now be clearly expressed. Whereupon an invitation was sent to the exiled King and his Court, to return to the throne of his father and continue the reign which he had begun eleven years before.



But before we enter upon a discussion of the Restoration a word must be said about Baxter's political influence during the periods of the Commonwealth and Protectorate.

Professor Schlatter's researches have shown that quite apart from Baxter's theoretical writings on politics, he was in fact a notable figure in practical politics who was greatly respected by his friends and feared by his enemies. "He was without doubt" says Schlatter, "the ablest theoretician of the polity which many Saints wanted to pursue in Old England and which they did pursue for some fifty years in New England. Finally, although Baxter was no Hobbes or Locke, his political writings have at least as much intrinsic merit as those of Harrington and Milton."<sup>1</sup>

On December 17, 1654, Baxter had occasion to preach before the Lord Protector and Parliament at Westminster. Here was his opportunity to declare in public much of what he had been advocating to many of his influential friends. In his discourse before Parliament he spoke out

. . . against the Divisions and Distractions of the Church, and showing how mischievous a thing it was for Politicians to maintain such Divisions for their own Ends, that they might fish in troubled waters, and keep the Church by its Divisions in a state of weakness, lest it should be able to offend them and the Necessity and means of Union.<sup>2</sup>

Cromwell and his policies were clearly the target of Baxter's sermon, and he did not miss his target. But Cromwell's self-

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<sup>1</sup>R. B. Schlatter, Richard Baxter and Puritan Politics (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 57 (p. 205).

restraint was due in part to the fact that he knew of Baxter's influential force and tried in two personal conferences to solicit his support for his policies. Baxter's account of one of these meetings is revealing.

A while after Cromwell sent to speak with me! And when I came, in the presence only of three of his chief men, he began a long and tedious speech to me of God's Providence in the change of government, and how God had owned it and what great things had been done at home and abroad. . . . When he had wearied us all with speaking thus slowly about an hour, I told him, it was too great condescension to acquaint me so fully with all these matters which were above me, but I told him we took our Ancient Monarchy to be a Blessing, and not an Evil to the land, and humbly craved to ask him how England had ever forfeited that Blessing, and unto whom the forfeiture was made? . . . Upon that question he was awakened into some Passion and told me it was no forfeiture but God had changed it as pleased him, and then he let fly at the Parliament . . . and especially by name at four or five of those Members which were my chief Acquaintance; and I presumed to defend them against his Passion; and thus four or five hours were spent.<sup>1</sup>

Baxter's devotion to monarchy was too strong for Cromwell to break and both meetings proved abortive because Baxter found himself defending Parliament against Cromwell's attack.

The principal subjects on which the two men were irreconcilable were the legitimacy of Cromwell's authority and Cromwell's ecclesiastical policies.

Throughout the long and bitter conflict between the King and Parliament, and his eventual defeat, Baxter held high hopes that the King, after learning the bitter lesson of despotism, would be given back his rule and respect, that negotiations between the two parties would lead to reconciliation based on a limited monarchy and

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 58, (p. 205).

on a broadly based and comprehensive but united national Church. When this ideal proved untenable, Baxter laid the blame squarely on Cromwell's shoulders. He was convinced that for his own interest Cromwell had executed the King and usurped the government. This is how Baxter expressed his conviction:

I thought then that both sides were faulty for beginning the War; but I thought the Bonum Publicum or Salus Populi, made it my duty to be for the Parliament, as Defensive against Delinquents, and as they professed to be 'only for King, Law and Kingdom'. When at the New Moddle they left out [for the King] and changed their cause, I changed from them and was sent by two Assemblies of Divines to do my best, though to my utmost labour and hazard, to dissuade them. Cromwell having noticed of it would never let me once come near him or the Head-Quarters. I continued on all occasions publicly and privately to declare my judgement against him as a rebellious usurper till he died.<sup>1</sup>

On the second issue, Baxter accused Cromwell of promoting his own ambitions by uniting the radicals and left-wing under the cry of religious liberty. This accusation is based largely on his teaching of religious liberty and his view of the State.

We believe that he was so profoundly influenced by his theological understanding of the end of the State and of political government (which as is already stated was for the happiness of man and the everlasting glory of God), that in order to be consistent, he felt compelled to write that men should have "liberty for true religion, true faith, and true worship of God. For these have more than liberty. But whether there should be liberty for false

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, A Third Defence of the Cause of Peace (1681), p. 101f. This reference was first brought to my attention by Dr. Nuttall, taken from his personal notes on Baxter.

religion, false faith, and false worship, if the persons do but think them true,"<sup>1</sup> is a question the answer to which is self-evident. Sectarianism was without doubt an affront to the glory of God and the good of the Commonwealth.

It was well-nigh impossible for Baxter and Cromwell to come to any understanding since he did not disguise his feelings for the Protector. He indignantly remarked:

The intelligent sort by this time did fully see that Cromwell's design was, by causing and permitting destruction to hang over us, to necessitate the Nation whether they would or not, to take him for their Governor, that he might be their Protector; Being resolved that we should be saved by him, or perish: He made use of the wild headed Sectaries then barely to fight for him: They now serve him as much by their Heresies, their Enmity to Learning and Ministry, their pernicious Demands which tended to Confusion, as they had done before by their Valour in the Field. He can now conjure up at pleasure some terrible apparition, of Agitators, Levellers, or such like, who as they affrighted the King from Hampton Court, shall affright the People to fly to him for refuge; that the hand that wounded them may heal them. For now he exclaimeth against the giddiness of these unruly Men, and earnestly pleadeth Order of Government, and will need become the Patron of the Ministry, yet so as to secure all others of their Liberty.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Powicke is quite correct in describing Baxter's dislike for Cromwell's policies as the "warping effect of an inveterate prejudice."<sup>3</sup> Baxter would never endorse nor forgive Cromwell the "usurper", because he had pulled down "our lawful English Monarchy" against the will of almost the whole Kingdom, and had reviled

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<sup>1</sup>CD IV, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup>RB I i 114 (pp. 70-71).

<sup>3</sup>F. J. Powicke, Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924), p. 115.

many of the worthiest members of Parliament, some of whom were Baxter's dearest friends.<sup>1</sup>

Among the leading politicians on whom Baxter's ideas had strong influence, were Baron Broghill, Colonel John Bridges, Major Thomas Grove, Sir Thomas Rous, Sir Edward Harley, etc. These men have been described by Schlatter in the following manner:

His [Baxter's] political friends were men who had supported the Long Parliament against Charles I and who had generally opposed Cromwell's seizure of power, but who had come to think that Cromwell was their protection against radicals who would destroy the whole traditional fabric of English society. In religion they were Puritans who wanted a state church governed by orthodox ministers and respectable lay elders; socially, they were men of substance who distrusted absolutism, whether of King and Court, or of Cromwell and Major-Generals, but who preferred either of these to radical democrats and levellers who advocated a separation of Church and State and full religious liberty. Their ideal was a limited monarchy, with a Parliament in which the majority of M.P.'s would be Puritan men of property, devoted to the welfare of a reformed Church of England.<sup>2</sup>

And the same author asserts that Baxter's recommendations to Parliament, summarized in a letter to Sir Edward Harley of 15 September, 1656 closely coincided with the Humble Petition and Advice, which in May 1657 replaced the Instrument of Government as the "Constitution" of the Commonwealth. Parliament did not grant all that Baxter requested, "but in general purpose, Baxter was at one with conservative Puritan politicians of 1656."<sup>3</sup>

But Baxter's political influence was not confined to only a small group of propertied men active in politics. Dr. Nuttall

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, A Third Defence etc., p. 101.

<sup>2</sup>Schlatter, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

has shown that Cromwell's own chaplain, John Rowe, had written to Baxter soliciting his advice on "the main evils of the nation that you would judge capable of redress by the present Governors."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter had now the influence and respect to assume the role of a leading spokesman for conservative Puritanism both on religious and political matters.

Yet it seems a paradox that he never gave his support to any plots against Cromwell or for the restoration of Charles II. Neither did he advocate resistance to the Lord Protector. On the contrary he was active in public life under Cromwell and was chosen as a member for the Parliamentary committee to draw up a list of fundamentals of Christianity which were to be the basis for toleration.

The question may be raised, why did not Baxter advocate resistance to Cromwell's rule if he thought that his rule contravened God's absolute authority and threatened the welfare of the Commonwealth? The reason Baxter provides is very revealing. He claimed that he did not advocate disobedience, because in his view such a course of action would not be in the best interest of the common good. He felt that submission and obedience were to be preferred of any feasible alternatives, such as the alternative of a civil war in order to restore Charles II, or the establishment of a leveller, sectarian democracy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G. F. Nuttall, "Richard Baxter's Correspondence: A Preliminary Survey", Journal of Ecclesiastical History (1950), I, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>RB I i 114 (p. 71).

The errors and corruptions of the Army radicals which posed a danger to the Church and State were those of "State Democracy," "Church-Democracy" and "Liberty of Conscience."<sup>1</sup>

It is only fair to point out that Baxter did not consider Cromwell to be the incarnation of evil, despite his denunciatory attacks against his policies. He did in fact show some regard and appreciation for him, because "he kept up the approbation of a godly life in general . . . and I perceived that it was his design to do good in the main, and to promote the Gospel and the Interest of Godliness, more than any had done before him."<sup>2</sup>

Baxter after his great disappointment with the course of events as they affected both Church and State, took up once more with great enthusiasm the ministry which he loved so much. Here in Kidderminster, he remained, preaching, teaching, exhorting and writing, with only occasional visits to London, until the Restoration again forced him to leave in 1660.

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<sup>1</sup>RB I i 73 (p. 53).

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

### CHARLES II AND THE PRESBYTERIANS: AN ATTEMPT AT CONCORD

The religious situation in England in 1660 was far more complicated than it had been two decades earlier. The desire for revenge ran high, and the memory of the execution of Charles I prolonged the division and hostility between the Laudian clergy and those who in any way opposed the King.

With the re-establishment of Presbyterianism as the dominant party in 1660, the situation became infinitely more intricate. It mattered nothing to the Royalists that the Presbyterians in 1649 had expressed the utmost abhorrence at the tragic death of the King, and that in fact many of them had remained intransigent in their dislike and opposition to Cromwell. It was enough for the Laudian clergy that the Presbyterians had supported Parliament against the King at the outset, and also agreed with Parliament in abolishing the use of the Prayer Book to which the King had been so loyal. Further, the deliberate and at times systematic ejection of Anglican clergy with unpopular religious views or who were believed to be hostile to Parliament or the revolutionary governments was of considerable importance. These ejections had set an unworthy precedent which, in the minds of the Anglicans, justified the ejection of Puritan ministers between 1660 and 1662. This



complicated all negotiations for a future re-establishment of a comprehensive church.

When the Convention Parliament assembled on the 25th of April, 1660, it was generally "Presbyterian" in character. With renewed confidence in their strength and political influence, they (the Presbyterians), continued the negotiations with Charles II and his ministers for his return. Parliament received letters from the King with the famous Declaration of Breda which Charles had issued on the 4th of April. The terms of this declaration were received enthusiastically, and an invitation was sent to the exiled King to return to the throne of his father.

We may recall the words of Charles II in this connection:

When we were in Holland we were attended by many grave and learned ministers from hence, who were looked upon as the most able and principal assertors of the Presbyterian opinions; with whom we had as much conference as the multitude of affairs, which were then upon us, would permit us to have, and to our great satisfaction and comfort found them persons full of affection to us, of zeal for the peace of the Church and State, and neither enemies, as they have been given out to be, to episcopacy or liturgy, but mostly to desire such alterations in either, as without shaking foundations, might best allay the distempers which the impositions of the time, and the tenderness of some men's consciences had contracted.<sup>1</sup>

The King's return was unconditional. In their exuberance for the monarchy, the Presbyterian leaders spent no time in building up any checks and balances against the return of arbitrary power and ecclesiastical deprivations. They evidently overlooked the fact that the exile court included many Anglican clergymen who had

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<sup>1</sup>RB i ii. p. 260.

been ejected and forced to find refuge away from their own land, and that the promised freedom in the declaration depended on an Act of Parliament. The King's words in the declaration relating to the promise of liberty to tender consciences were:

Because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other . . . we do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the Kingdom; and that we shall be ready to consent to such an Act of Parliament as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered to us, for the full granting of that indulgence.<sup>1</sup>

Matthew Hale, one of the Presbyterian leaders, cautioned his colleagues to move carefully in their negotiations, and suggested that a committee be appointed to consider the propositions regarding Church government once offered to Charles I at the Isle of Wight in 1648 (this was Usher's scheme of Church government). Hale realized that it was dangerous and foolish to overlook setting up some guarantees for the future of Presbyterianism in England. However, there was little disposition in Parliament toward Hale's proposal and none of the crucial issues he presented were considered by the Presbyterian leaders. In fact, when there arose some men who were articulating republican ideas, they were quickly suppressed and Parliament now became insensitive to all considerations, except the desire for a strong and permanent monarchy envisaged in the immediate return of Charles II.

Thus, without any assurance beyond the vague promise in the Declaration of Breda, the King was restored and with him a form of

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii. p. 260.

Church government that was quite likely to be the full episcopacy for which the exiled Anglican clergy had prepared.

Among the commissioners sent to the Hague by the Lords and Commons to negotiate with the King were Dr. Manton, Mr. Calamy, Mr. Bowles and many other Divines.<sup>1</sup> Baxter, who was not a member of this delegation, claimed that the ministers realized that episcopacy must be expected but they wanted promises that it would not be the restoration of the old prelacy. The King was gracious in his dealings with them, and assured them that it was his desire to relieve them in matters of "tender consciences". However, in order not to displease his Royalist and Anglican supporters, he quite shrewdly avoided giving his promise of indulgence any immediate attention. Parliament, he asserted, must determine the scope of the indulgence and toleration since it would know better how to judge in these matters. But Parliament was not to be outdone. It too saw behind the reason for the King's reluctance and refused to decide on the questions. Notwithstanding the vagueness of the promise of liberty to "tender consciences," the Presbyterians with renewed optimism, presumed to tell the King in some private audiences some of the changes they anticipated and would like to see initiated. Among other matters of great concern, they advised the King that it would be better not to restore the Prayer Book in public worship, since it had been a chief cause for the distemper of the nation and the divisions in the Church. They further declared that many

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii p. 82, (p. 218).

people had grown familiar with another form of liturgy in public worship and that the Prayer Book had lost the veneration with which many more once looked upon it. Thus His Majesty's action in not restoring the ancient form of liturgy, would be entirely consistent with the hopes and expectations of the people.<sup>1</sup>

This was a brave attempt on the part of the Presbyterians to influence the King in favour of their form of worship. But such action in a manner of speaking, betrays the intolerance with which Presbyterianism had been associated. There is no doubt that the reason underlying their argument was the fear that the Prayer Book would inevitably become the order of public worship upon the restoration of the Royal Government.

Charles II's rejoinder to the Presbyterians was:

. . . that while he gave them liberty, he would not have his own taken from him; that he had always used that form of service, which he thought the best in the world, and had never discontinued it in places where it was more disliked than he hoped it was by them; that when he came to England, he would not severely enquire how it was used in other churches, though he doubted not he should find it used in many; but he was sure he would have no other use in his own chapel.<sup>2</sup>

The Presbyterians tried another strategy. This time they besought the King not to permit the use of the surplice by his chaplain, since it had proved to be an offense to the people. Still Charles was not persuaded and resisted any restriction being made on his liberty.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Hyde, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641 (Oxford: 1731). Hereafter cited as Clarendon's History.

His promise of indulgence to tender consciences by no means suggests that he had an intention of repudiating the old practices which formed the background for his development. The inexorable attitude of His Majesty on these vital matters was disappointing to the restorers of his throne, for their expectations of reward led them to believe that he would be far more ready to grant their requests.

The defeat of the Presbyterians in their effort to persuade Charles to accept their point of view, was at the same time a triumph for the Anglicans. The moment for which they had suffered, waited and worked had almost arrived. Through the influence of Clarendon and other Anglicans at the Royal Court, these Anglican leaders kept abreast of the progress in the negotiations between the King and the Ministers.

When Charles expressed his allegiance to the old liturgy and the ancient form of Church government, Clarendon informed the Anglicans that the King was decidedly favourable to their cause. The episcopal clergy acted without delay. Dr. Barwick, later Dean of St. Paul's, was sent with an address to the King, expressing their uncompromising devotion to him and their deepest gratitude for the great mercies he had shown to them. From now on they assumed that with the restoration of royal government came also the return of the episcopal constitution with its laws, ceremonies and usages. They were now the recognized clergy of the national Church and began to negotiate with the King regarding the time and place for his safe

return. They too looked forward with great eagerness for the rewards of their constancy in support of the throne and their close connection with it even during the exile.

The development of events moved cautiously but surely in favour of the Anglican leaders. It was becoming more and more apparent that the spirit of revenge was beginning to assert itself in the actions of many of the episcopal clergy. The Presbyterians were looked upon as intruders and disrupters of the Church's peace and is those who should therefore be cast out. As for the sectaries, there could be no toleration, for this would encourage further proliferation of antiepiscopal teachings and perpetuate the divisions in the Church.

Such an attitude at a time when the Anglicans were not even yet in full control, caused great consternation among the King's ministers at Breda. In order to avert conflict and physical danger these men found it expedient to caution their colleagues in England about rash and intemperate actions.

Clarendon, who never really wanted to see the Presbyterians cast out completely from the Church, moved quickly to advise the Anglicans about the inevitable outcome of their revengeful spirit. On April 16th, 1660, he wrote to Barwick:

You will find Dr. Morley a very worthy and discreet person, and fit to keep company in allaying the too much distemper which some of our friends are in this unseasonable conjuncture, very much accused of, in so much that this very last post hath brought over three or four complaints to the King of the very skillful passion and distemper of some of our divines in their late sermons, at which they say that both the General [Monck] and the council of state are highly offended, as truly they have reason to be, if, as they report, there have been such menaces

and threats against those who have hitherto had the power of doing hurt, and are not yet so much deprived of it that they ought to be undervalued.<sup>1</sup>

The Chancellor proceeded to warn them about the King's attitude towards the reports and how apprehensive he was about the inconvenience and distractions to the Church and himself. Thus he exhorted them not to increase the anxieties and hardship of the Church, for these could only work against their cause and destroy all their efforts.

These were indeed hard issues with which Charles and Clarendon had to deal. The sentiment entertained by the King and Clarendon towards the Presbyterians, is revealed in a letter written by the latter. In this correspondence with Barwick, the writer noted that the King wanted Morley, (who was now the chief negotiator with the Presbyterians for the King's return) to meet as often as possible with them in order to remove the obstacles that militated against the peace and unity of the Church.

Both Charles and Clarendon have been criticized for double dealing and the reason for this suspicion lies in the fact that they at this time instructed Morley and Barwick that

. . . it would be no ill expedient to assure them of present good preferments in the Church. But . . . you should rather endeavour to win over those who, being, recovered, will have both reputation and desire from the Church, than be over solicitous to comply with the pride and passion of those who propose extravagant things. . . .<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Barwick, Life of John Barwick (London: 1721), pp. 517, 525.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 325.

Despite the appeals by the King and his Chancellor to the Anglicans not to be revengeful toward the Presbyterians, the latter became progressively more fearful over the development of events. So it was of utmost importance for the King to treat the Convention Parliament, which had recalled him, with such a degree of confidence as to consider them competent for matters of permanent legislation and not to create feelings of jealousy and displeasure.

It was then of urgent necessity for the King and Clarendon to provide immediately some methods that would give greater guarantee to the non-conformists and to remove the suspicion of encroaching upon their liberty.

In conformity with this royal design, there were three options any one of which could be effectively used by the King.

In the first place, he could choose to issue a warrant for a conference between the Anglicans and Presbyterians. Secondly, he might address injunctions to the bishops instructing them as to their conduct in their respective dioceses. Thirdly, he could appoint a commission with broad powers of revision and amendment to deal with the questions of ecclesiastical affairs.

The King chose the first of the three. Thereupon he advised the Presbyterians that it was well-nigh impossible to have comprehension or coalition without concessions and abatements on both sides. He therefore encouraged them to present their plans for church government and the reformation of the public worship, in the form of written statements, imploring them to allow possibility for concessions to the Anglicans. This is how Baxter reported the event:



The King required us to draw up and offer him such proposals as we thought meet, in order to Agreement about Church Government; for that was the main difference: if that were agreed there would be little danger of differing in the rest: And he desired us to set down the most that we could yield to.<sup>1</sup>

To the Presbyterians this seemed quite sensible only if the Bishops were required to do the same. To this the King gave his assurance. So in a few weeks the Presbyterian representatives, Reynolds, Wroth and Calamy, in agreement with some of their brethren in London, drew up their address and presented it to the King. But the Bishops did not follow the conditions of the agreement, and thus embarrassed the King.

Despite this inconsistency the Ministers did submit their proposals in June, 1660.

They had met together every day for three weeks at Sion College discussing their requests and these meetings produced what came to be known as the "First Address and Proposals" in which the Presbyterian ministers argued for certain changes in liturgy and ceremonies and in the matter of church government they proposed Archbishop Usher's scheme of modified episcopacy.

In the preamble the ministers asserted that it could be taken for granted that

. . . there is a firm agreement between our brethren (meaning the Anglicans) and us in the doctrinal truths of the reformed religion; and in the substantial parts of divine worship,

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii p. 92 (p. 231).

and that the differences are only in some various conceptions about the ancient form of Church government, and some particulars about liturgy and ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>

Since the problem of Church government was of crucial importance and in view of the fact that Usher's model occupied such a prominence in the deliberations and negotiations for some form of settlement, it would not be amiss to set forth the salient features of Usher's model, before we proceed to discuss other aspects of the "First Proposals".

About discipline we designedly adhered to Bishop Usher's model without a word of alteration; that so they might have less to say against our offer as being our own; and that the world might see that it was Episcopacy itself which they refused . . . and that we pleaded not at all with them for Presbytery, unless a moderate Episcopacy be Presbytery.<sup>2</sup>

The Reduction of Episcopacy unto the Form of Synodical Government received in the Ancient Church, proposed in the year 1641, as an Expedient for the Prevention of those Troubles which afterwards did arise about the matter of Church Government. In this document Usher proposed:

A. Episcopal and Presbyterial Government Conjoined.

I. By the Order of the Church of England, all presbyters are charged to minister the doctrine and Sacraments and the discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded, and as this realm hath received the same . . . Of the many elders, who in common thus ruled the Church of Ephesus, there was one President, whom our Saviour, in his epistle to the Church, in a peculiar manner styleth

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<sup>1</sup>Two Papers of Proposals Concerning the Discipline and Ceremonies of the Church of England. Humbly Presented to His Majesty, by the Reverend Ministers of the Presbyterian Persuasion (London, 1661), p. 4. Hereafter cited as Ministers' Proposals.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 96 (p. 232).

the angel of the Church of Ephesus; and Ignatius, in another epistle, written about twelve years after, to the same church, calleth the Bishop thereof . . . by the Presbytery understanding the company of the rest of the Presbytery or Elders who then had a hand, not only in the delivery of the Sacraments, but also in the administration of the discipline of Christ. . . .

- II. For with the Bishop who was the chief President (and therefore styled by Tertulian Summus Sacerdos for distinction sake), the rest of the dispensers of the Word and Sacraments were joined in the common government of the Church. And therefore in matters of ecclesiastical judicature, Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, used the received form of gathering together the Presbytery.

The presence of the clergy being thought to be so requisite in matters of episcopal audience that, in the fourth Council of Carthage, it was concluded that the Bishop might hear no man's cause without the presence of the clergy. True it is, that in our Church this kind of Presbyterian government hath been long discussed, yet seeing it still professeth that every Pastor hath a right to Rule the Church (from whence the name of Rector also was given at first unto him) and to administer the discipline of Christ, as well as to dispense the doctrine and Sacraments . . . And how easily this ancient form of government, by the united suffrages of the clergy, might be revived again . . . the reader may quickly perceive by the perusal of the ensuing propositions.

- III. In every Parish the Rector or the incumbent Pastor, together with the church wardens and sidemen, may every week take notice of such as live scandalously in that congregation, who are to receive such several admonitions . . . and if by this means they cannot be reclaimed, this may be Presented unto The Next Monthly Synod, and in the meantime be Debarred By The Pastor from access unto the Lord's table.

- IV. Whereas by a statute in the 26th of King Henry VII (revived in the first year of Queen Elizabeth), Suffragans are appointed to be erected in 26 several places of this Kingdom, the number of them might very well be conformed unto the number of the several Rural Deaneries into which every Diocese is subdivided, which being done, the Suffragan (supplying the place of those who in the Ancient Church were called Chorepiscopi) might every month assemble a Synod of all the Rectors,

or Incumbent Pastors within the precinct, and according to the Major Part of their voices conclude all matters that should be brought into debate before them.

To this Synod the Rector and church wardens might present such impenitent persons, as by admonition and suspension from the Sacrament, would not be reformed; who, if they should still remain contumacious and incorrigible, the sentence of Excommunication might be decreed against them by the Synod, and accordingly be executed in the Parish where they lived. . . . Also the censure of all new opinions, heresies, and schisms which did arise within that circuit, with liberty of appeal if need so require unto the Diocesan Synod.

V. The Diocesan Synod might be held once or twice in the year . . . therein all the Suffragans and the rest of the Rectors or incumbent Pastors (or a certain select number out of every Deanery within that Diocese) might meet; with whose consent, or the major part of them all things might be concluded by the Bishop or Superintendent (call him whether you will) or in his absence by one of the Suffragans whom he should depute in his stead to be Moderator of that Assembly. . . . And if here also any matter of difficulty could not receive a full determination, it might be referred to the next Provincial or National Synod.

VI. The Provincial Synod might consist of all the Bishops and Suffragans, and Such Of The Clergy as should be elected out of every Diocese within the Province. The Primate of either Province might be the Moderator of this meeting. . . . This Synod might be held every third year, and if the Parliament do then sit . . . both the Primates and Provincial Synods of the land might join together, and make up a National Council.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of episcopal authority became a crisis and eventually brought into the open the important question of the identity of the Church of England. Robert Sanderson, who later became one of the prelates of the Church, had maintained that a modified episcopacy would not lead to schism from the Church since a divergence of

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii, 96 (p. 238ff). The text of Usher's scheme can be found in RB I ii, p. 238ff; Cardwell, op. cit., pp. 277-286.

practice was the result of necessity and not of intention. Along with John Hacket and Edward Rainbow, he had concluded that by adopting a modified position they could accomplish more for Anglicanism than by an outright rejection of the leading Presbyterians' view of modified episcopacy. Sanderson also expressed similar feelings about the Prayer Book and argued for a modified use of it.

There were some among the episcopal clergy who were still arguing in 1660 that episcopacy was not just the bene esse, but the esse of a true Church. One of the most articulate defenders of episcopacy among the Anglicans was undoubtedly Henry Hammond. He was irrevocably opposed to Sanderson's views and although he died just shortly before the Restoration he had already established himself as the leading theologian of the Anglicans. Hammond was strict and unyielding in many of his views, but his life was so clearly above reproach that even Baxter, despite his disagreement with him did show some admiration for his qualities. Hammond, along with Sheldon and others, was concerned to keep the episcopal authority alive. It was a matter of crucial significance for Anglicans in England and those who were in exile to feel that episcopal government was intrinsically bound up with the promulgation and success of their cause. Dr. Norman Sykes' study<sup>1</sup> on the development of Anglican ideas on episcopacy from the Reformation onwards, and

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<sup>1</sup>Norman Sykes, Old Priest and New Presbyter (Cambridge: University Press, 1955).

the controversy it engendered, provides us with a better understanding of the problems during the Interregnum and Restoration.

His research has thrown great light on Baxter's contention that:

. . . there were at that time [in the Interregnum], two sorts of Episcopal Men, who differed from each other more than the more moderate sort differed from the Presbyterians. The one was the old common moderate sort, who were commonly in Doctrine Calvinists, and took Episcopacy to be necessary ad bene esse Ministerii and Ecclesiae, but not ad esse; and took all those of the Reformed that had not Bishops, for true Churches and Ministers, wanting only that which they thought would make them more complete. The other sort followed Dr. Hammond, and . . . were very new, and very few: Their judgment was . . . that all the Texts of Scripture which speak of Presbyters, do mean Bishops and that the Office of Subject--Presbyters was not in the Church in Scripture Times . . . but that the Apostles planted in every Church only a Bishop with Deacons, but with this intent . . . that in time, when the Christian multiplied, these Bishops (that had then but one Church a piece) would ordain Subject--Presbyters under them, and be the Pastors of many Churches: And they held that Ordination without Bishops was invalid, and a Ministry so ordained was null, and the Reformed Churches that had no Bishops, nor Presbyters ordained by Bishops were no true Churches, though the Church of Rome be a true Church as having Bishops.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is only fair to say that the position of the "New Prelatists" had a longer and more complicated history than that of which Baxter was aware. For their position or opinions in fact went back, in embryo, to Elizabeth's reign.

In any event when the Presbyterian Ministers presented their "First Proposals" to Charles II they recalled what in their view were the evils of prelatical government before 1640. They complained that the size of the twenty-six dioceses in England and Wales made it impossible to have effective supervision by the bishops. They

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 29, (p. 149); cf I i 109, (p. 68), (p. 97), 140; I ii 66 (p. 207).

then pointed out that bishops neglected their responsibility by passing on the administration of much of their duties, including matters of spiritual cognizance, to commissaries, chancellors, and officials. One of the major complaints was that the bishops conducted ordination and exercised jurisdiction without any co-operation or consultation with presbyters, affirming that their episcopal office by divine right was distinct from that of presbyters. And finally the Ministers charged that the government of the prelates was arbitrary as seen, for example, in imposing additional ceremonies not required by law.

It is against this background that the Ministers opted for Usher's model "as a groundwork towards an accommodation and a fraternal agreement in this point of ecclesiastical government."<sup>1</sup>

In the estimation of one authority, Usher's model could be defined as Presbyterian Episcopacy or Episcopalian Presbytery; or even more correctly as Presbytery with an Episcopalian organization.<sup>2</sup> In principle it exhibited more of the fundamentals of Presbyterianism, insofar as it argues that all Presbyters are equal, and that there is no church ruler superior in kind to the presbyters. The bishop is to be president of the Synod of presbyters, but he must have no power that is distinctively his own. Not the bishop alone, but the bishop and the presbyters are to confer holy orders; and the right to administer discipline and to dispense ordination belongs as much to every presbyter as to the bishop.

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 92 (p. 231).

<sup>2</sup>G. Gould, op. cit., p. 106.

Nothing could better express the Presbyterian Ministers' wishes for Church government than this "usherian" scheme. Thus they declared that they were not opposed nor even wished to repudiate "the true and ancient primitive episcopacy or presidency as it was balanced and managed by a due commixtion of Presbyters therewith."<sup>1</sup>

On the question of the liturgy the Ministers declared:

We are satisfied in our judgments concerning the lawfulness of a liturgy or form of worship, provided it be for matter agreeable to the Word of God, and suited to the nature of the several ordinances and necessities of the Church; neither too tedious, nor composed of too short prayers or responsals not disonant from the liturgies of other reformed churches, not too vigorously imposed, nor the minister confined thereunto, but that he may also make use of his gifts of prayer and exhortation.<sup>2</sup>

The Ministers expressed their desire for a new liturgy to be drawn up by "learned, godly and moderate divines of both persuasions." And if no agreement could be reached on this matter, then at least the Prayer Book should be revised, with alternative forms provided.

In connection with ceremonies the Ministers expressed a deep concern that these be not allowed to perpetuate contentions and disputes. They argued that ceremonies being at best indifferent, ought sometimes to be changed, "lest they should, by perpetual permanency and constant use, be judged by the people as necessary as the substantial of worship themselves."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ministers' Proposals, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 8.



They then made the following requests:

(i) Those ceremonies, which had been imposed by prelates to the satisfaction of the Papists, but contrary to all law, be absolutely Prohibited: along with the erecting of altars and bowing towards altars.

(ii) Those which even their defenders could plead to be only "indifferent and mutable" to be abolished: the use of the surplice, the use of the Cross in Baptism, and bowing at the name of Jesus.

(iii) Others, of human institution, to be made optional: Kneeling at Communion and the observance of holy days.

These then were the essential points presented by the Ministers as a means of reducing the distemper of the nation and making conditions more consistent with the peace of the Church.

When the Ministers took their proposals to the King, the bishops were not present as Charles had led them to expect. In the meantime more of the new prelatical clergy were being restored to their livings by order of the bishops. Moreover, in many dioceses bishops were requiring reordination and the observance of the liturgy. For the "New Prelatists" among the Anglicans, there was no alternative to reordination; they could never acknowledge that presbyters could do a work which in their view was specifically and historically reserved for bishops. It was assumed that if the Church of England did not follow the practice of reordination for those who were not

episcopally ordained it would be separating itself from the whole Catholic tradition.<sup>1</sup>

The bishops therefore seemed convinced that if the "First Proposals" were adopted and either a new liturgy drawn up or the Prayer Book reformed, or that reordination was by-passed, the result would be distasteful to Anglicans who would not relinquish their inherited forms of worship.

They found support for their view from the Cavalier Parliament which succeeded the Convention Parliament. It may be recalled that the Convention Parliament had passed an Act for Confirming and Restoring of Ministers which received the Royal assent on 13th September 1660. In its essential, this Act stated that every Minister presented had to be a benefice since 1642 and in possession at the end of 1659 would be declared to be the legal incumbent, and any Minister, who was formerly ejected and not having declared the execution of Charles I and not having opposed infant Baptism, would be restored to his benefice before the 25th December 1660. But when the Cavalier Parliament was elected, it rejected this settlement.

This took place five months after the Bishop's Answer to the "First Proposals" was received by the Ministers. And in their Answer they maintained that the liturgy was Scriptural and less boring and tedious than the extempore prayers of Puritan Ministers. They obviously intended to make the Prayer Book the main battleground,

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii, 291 (p. 389).

rallying to their support the sentiment of all who cherished its use and who had suffered for it during the Civil War and since.

The Answer suggested further that any changes in ceremonies might be left to the King, the bishops being well aware that there would be no alterations if that course were pursued.

One might argue that the bishops' attitude in the earlier stages of the negotiations was more conciliatory than it was in the later stages. For example they had said earlier "Nor are ministers denied the use and exercise of their gifts in praying before and after sermon", and "If anything in the established Liturgy shall be made to appear to be justly offensive to sober persons, we are not at all unwilling that the same should be changed."

Yet they refused extempore prayer and resisted all demands for changes (except insignificant changes), in the liturgy less than a year later. One must accept the reason as being their uncertainty about the situation in July 1660, as contrasted with the developments that followed the election of the Cavalier Parliament and the rise in favour of the Royalist clergy.

In their Answer the bishops took a firm stand on episcopacy as being more than a presidency, although they might concede that presbyters be associated with the bishops in ordination and censures.

In the Laudian system the diocesan bishop was the "only governor" and the parish clergy were merely his curates. This was diametrically opposed to the principles which Baxter enunciated. The bishops also doubted whether Usher's scheme had

been endorsed by him as a groundwork for accommodation and for coalition. Against this argument Baxter pleaded his personal discussions with Usher not long before his death in 1655 and the unmistakeable evidence that his model had never been withdrawn. But the bishops' Answer denied all that the Presbyterians asserted, asserted all that the Presbyterians denied, refused all that the Presbyterians offered and offered the Presbyterians nothing to refuse.<sup>1</sup>

This is how Baxter phrased his feelings of the outcome of this attempt at a settlement:

Here we leave it to the notice and observation of posterity, upon the perusal of your Exceptions, how little the English Bishops had to say against the Form of Primitive Episcopacy contained in Archbishop Usher's "Reduction", in the day when they rather chose the increase of our divisions, the silencing of many hundred faithful ministers, the scattering of the flocks, the affecting of so many thousand godly Christians, than the accepting of this Primitive Episcopacy, which was the expedient which those called Presbyterians offered, never once speaking for the cause of Presbytery; and what kind of peacemakers and conciliators we met with, when both parties were to meet at one time and place, with their several concessions laid by all their cause, and proposed an Archbishop's Frame of Episcopacy; and the other side brought not in any of their concessions at all, but only unpeaceably rejected all the moderation that was desired.<sup>2</sup>

The expectations which the Ministers had formed for a meeting to be conducted on terms of equality with the bishops undoubtedly arose out of the sense of their own importance. Since they played a vital part in the Restoration they expected special support and respect from Charles II for their ecclesiastical views. Possibly

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<sup>1</sup>Gould, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii, p. 258.

they had hoped also that the Anglicans' apprehension of Independent republicanism and insurgency would drive them to accept Presbyterian proposals, once they had conceded in principle the need for a reformation of Church government and liturgy. In both cases the Presbyterians' hopes proved false. By mid-June 1660 the Anglican reaction was manifested against them. We get knowledge of what the situation was at that time, from a letter written by James Sharp, a representative of the Scottish Kirk at the Court in London. On June 26, he wrote to the Ministers in Edinburgh:

Petition came up from counties for episcopacy and liturgy. The Lord's anger is not turned away. The generality of the people are dotting after prelacy and the Service Book.<sup>1</sup>

The rules were changed and the ball now played in the Anglicans' court. The men who had been sequestered and exiled were the ones who now triumphed, and in their hour of triumph they would yield nothing to their opponents. It was of no great importance to them that their restoration to power in the Church had been made possible by the Presbyterians' commitment to monarchy. They were not affected by the fact that authority was not yet entirely out of the hands of their opponents. The Convention Parliament had not yet been dissolved, and had the Presbyterians' patriotism not been so deep, the result of this long struggle might have been different.

When it became clear that the bishops were not prepared to concede anything, they (the Ministers) could have turned to the Parliament and the King. It was futile to expect any support from

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<sup>1</sup>R. Woodrow, The History of the Suffering of the Church of Scotland, (1827), I, p. 44.

Sheldon and M'ley. Clarendon and his courtiers would support the bishops, therefore their only chance was with the Convention Parliament and the King whose return was not yet fully secured.

But this was not to be, and the tide of High Church and Royalist feelings was swollen by the hatred of clergymen anxious to take revenge of those who had before this kept them out of the Church.

Yet there were many collateral influences which worked to the disadvantage of any successful rapprochement between Presbyterians and Anglicans and their eventual comprehension within the same church.

The importance of Baxter's influence in the King's Restoration must be noted. Still holding firmly to his idea of a national Church established on the essential truths of Christianity while permitting its congregations to worship God as each interpreted conscience and Scripture, Baxter viewed the Restoration and the Breda Declaration as an opportunity for forcing the issue of a Church Settlement. Indeed many of his contemporaries were aware of his enormous influence politically as well as ecclesiastically and tried to secure his support.

In particular, the Presbyterian Royalist the Earl of Lauderdale, with whom Baxter had been in correspondence for some time, was working to gain his assent to the King's return. In 1660, Baxter travelled to London for a meeting with Lauderdale. The latter tried to clear away all doubts about Charles II's religious beliefs and about prelatical tyranny. He of course, knew of Baxter's commitment to monarchy and how he had scathingly rebuked Cromwell for the execution of Charles I and the disruption of the Stuart rule.

Thus Lauderdale hoped that through his effort he would persuade Baxter to use his "utmost interest that the King might be restored by means of the Presbyterians etc."<sup>1</sup>

Powicke suggests that "altogether, one figures Baxter at this juncture, as in a state of distraction--drawn between loyalty to the King which he thought his first duty, and a dread of the evil consequences to things of greater price which his loyalty might entail."<sup>2</sup>

However, Baxter did assent to the King's return, and it is pointless to argue whether he did so from his loyalty to monarchy, or whether he reckoned that assent or not, the restoration was inevitable.

What is of far greater importance is the role he played once he consented. On April 29, only two days before the vote was taken to invite the King back to the throne, Baxter preached to the House of Commons one of his most important sermons. In it he delineated the differences between the non-conformists and Episcopalians and noted that the issue was not really one of loyalty to the King, for in that they all agreed. But the problem was Church polity and liturgy. He recalled his conversation with Usher on this subject, and stated that there was no disagreement between them. Thereupon, "many moderate Episcopal Divines came to me to know what those Terms of our agreement were."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii, 69 (p. 215).

<sup>2</sup>Powicke, Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924), p. 191.

<sup>3</sup>G. F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1966), p. 86.

Again, on May 10, Baxter preached before the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London at St. Paul's Cathedral. He spoke of the goodness and mercy of God in restoring the King without any unfortunate or regrettable occurrences. It was a Day of Thanksgiving.

Baxter was not among the Ministers who greeted the King on his entry into London. While he willingly supported the return he was nevertheless deeply concerned about the subsequent development of events. There was a realism with which he viewed the whole proceedings, a realism which had escaped many of his non-conformist colleagues.

Powicke is quite correct to remind us that we shall never understand Baxter unless we bear constantly in mind that the conditions of the Church were agony to him, the more so since he was strongly convinced that if the leaders in Church and State, especially State, would be amenable to certain proposals the long hard struggle could come to an end.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of existing conditions, Baxter could not share the enthusiasm of those who "thought that if we were the means of the King's restoration, the Prelates would not for shame deny us such liberty as the Protestants have in France."<sup>2</sup>

After the King's return Baxter was sworn in as a Royal Chaplain on June 25, 1660. Such preferment provided him with the

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<sup>1</sup>Powicke, Richard Baxter Under the Cross (London: Jonathan Cape, 1927), p. 185.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 73 (p. 216).



chance of working with greater determination to bring about some form of Church concord. In his negotiations with the King at the Lord Chamberlain's lodging, Baxter spoke plainly and forcefully about what needed to be done. He was not unequivocal or inarticulate in expressing the conditions which would be necessary to achieve a happy union. This is how Baxter reported the event:

We exercised more boldness at first, than afterwards would have been born: when some of the rest had congratulated His Majesty's happy Restoration, and declared the large hope which they had of a happy Union among all Dissenters by his means, etc. I presumed to speak to him of the concernments of Religion, and how far we were from desiring the continuance of any Factions or Parties in the Church and how much a happy Union would conduce to the good of the Land, and to his Majesty's Satisfaction, and though there were turbulent Fanatick Persons in his Dominions, yet that those Ministers and Godly People whose Peace we humbly craved of him, were no such Persons but such as longed after Concord and, were truly Loyal to him and desired no more than to live under him a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.<sup>1</sup>

After assuring the King that his concern transcended all denominationalism he stated that he was speaking for the religious people of the nation who "had their eyes on him [the King] as the officer of God, to defend them in the possession of their helps of their salvation."<sup>2</sup>

Cromwell and his party, Baxter reminded the King, had "so well understood their own interests, that to promote it they had found the way of doing good to be the most effectual means," but the King should outdo them "in doing good."<sup>3</sup> Particularly should

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<sup>1</sup>RE I ii 90 (p. 230).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

his Majesty not be persuaded to "discountenance a faithful Ministry because his Enemies had set them up, neither should he intrude unworthy men upon the people."

To encourage unity, says Baxter, the King should require only things necessary as a basis for union, thereby avoiding imposition and oppression of men's consciences. To enforce discipline against sin is to be encouraged and every care taken to avoid separatism.

Baxter said that although he spoke so plainly the King was gracious in his answer "professing his gladness to hear our inclination to agreement, and his resolution to do his part to bring us together."<sup>1</sup>

As an outcome of his meeting with the King, it was arranged for Baxter and his party to meet first among themselves and then with the bishops to try once more to arrange the terms of a Church settlement.

The leaders among the Ministers were Baxter, Calamy, Reynolds and "old Mr. Ash." This meeting, like the other, was to prove fruitless as far as negotiating with the bishops was concerned. It was at this time that many of the Ministers began to sense the hopelessness of the whole question of accommodation for tender consciences and thought that rapprochement was an illusion. All, except Baxter, were ready to give up. But he warned them that:

It will be a great Blot upon us if we suffer as refusing to sue for Peace; and it will be our Just Vindication when it shall appear to Posterity that we humbly petitioned for and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., I ii 91 (p. 231).

earnestly pursued after Peace, and came as near them as for the obtaining it as Scripture and Reason will allow us to do, and were ready to do anything for Peace, except to sin and damn our souls.<sup>1</sup>

This indeed is a very strong appeal. It reveals to what extent Baxter was prepared to pursue peace and unity and to encourage his brethren to do the same. But the two parties seemed unlikely to come together for any fruitful negotiations.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

### PART III: THE SAVOY CONFERENCE

#### CHAPTER V

##### THE WORCESTER HOUSE DECLARATION 1660

##### AND THE KING'S WARRANT 1661

The period immediately following the return of Charles II was certainly the most decisive in the negotiations for a church settlement. The Laudian bishops were beginning to reassert their power and influence in the Church, and both Parliament and Convocation were soon to be dominated by Royalists, many of whom had received their early training from sequestered Anglican clergymen.

The Presbyterians on the other hand, were soon to discover that power had slipped from their hands. They had neither the political nor ecclesiastical strength needed so greatly for any successful and just compromise with the Anglicans. Their only hope at this time was in Charles II and in some measure, Clarendon.

In view of the past failures of the two parties to reach any compromise for a settlement of the church's "distempers," both Charles and Clarendon decided to issue a Declaration, the terms of which would be the basis for discussion among the two groups jointly. There is good ground for believing that Clarendon was sympathetic to the Presbyterians while remaining a loyal supporter of the bishops, and that he truly wanted them (the Presbyterians) to be

comprehended within the Church. To be sure, as a statesman he had to be cautious so as not to alienate Royalist support but he wanted the Presbyterians to have a fair deal.

According to Sir Edward Nicholas, Clarendon was the author of the preface and the section on religion in the Declaration,<sup>1</sup> which represents the most effective attempt at comprehension made between the Restoration and the Revolution. It was indeed the last great hope for unity between the Anglicans and the non-conformists. There was still a near possibility for both groups to face each other as equals, but each side was seeking to secure as much and to concede as little as the circumstances and hard bargaining would allow. The success of the Worcester House meeting was still largely dependent on whether the terms for unity were acceptable to the bishops and clergy.

The first draft of the Declaration yielded very little that could have affected seriously the character of the Church of England. The terms of this first document were:

- I. Only learned and pious men were to be chosen as bishops.
- II. If any Diocese should be thought too large, Suffragan Bishops were to be appointed.
- III. Ordination: Ordination and jurisdiction (censures) by the bishops to be undertaken by the advice and assistance of the presbyters.

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<sup>1</sup>See Nicholas Papers in the British Museum. Egerton MS 2542. fols. 328-339.

- IV. Jurisdiction and Confirmation: A number of presbyters should be selected by the bishop to assist him and the dean and chapter in ordinations and in the exercise of jurisdiction.
- V. Profession of Faith before Communion: Confirmation was to be performed on the advice of the minister of the place. Regarding scandalous persons the first draft provided only vaguely that "as great diligence be used for the instruction and reformation of notorious and scandalous offenders as is possible." On the question of Church government with special reference to Usher's model, the Declaration is silent.
- VI. "No bishop shall exercise any Arbitrary Power or do or impose anything upon the clergy or the People, but what is according to the known laws of the land."
- VII. Liturgy: "Since we find some exceptions made to many obsolete words, and other expressions . . . which upon the reformation and improvement of the English language, may well be altered, we will appoint some learned divines, of different persuasions, to review the same, and to make such alterations as shall be thought most necessary, and some such additional prayers. . . ."
- VIII. Ceremonies: The King's experience abroad where the disputed ceremonies had not been used had convinced him of their value. Objectors would have supported the ceremonies if they had been abroad; and many ministers who

objected did not consider these ceremonies unlawful. Every national church had the right to adopt ceremonies which of themselves "indifferent" ceased to be indifferent after being "once established by law." Nevertheless, conscientious difficulties would be considered-- for example, kneeling at Communion would be optional until "a national synod" considered it. The use of the cross in baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, and the use of the surplice were all to be optional.

IX. Oaths and Subscription before Ordination: "Institution and Induction" to be permitted "without any other subscription until it shall be otherwise determined by a Synod."

X. Re-Ordination: The subject was not dealt with in the Declaration. And this is regrettable, because Baxter did in fact ask for the acceptance of non-episcopally ordained ministers.

The first draft of the Declaration was a disappointment to Baxter. In his "Petition to the King upon our sight of the First Draft of the Declaration," he protested against some of the terms in the document. From the beginning he deplored the expulsion of godly ministers who had not been episcopally ordained, or were accused of not taking the oaths of obedience to bishops, and the substitution of ignorant and scandalous ministers. Once again Baxter succinctly stated the terms for healing the distemper of the Church and nation. These were: pastoral discipline; associated

synod; and the primitive presidency or primitive episcopacy. These three "needful points" for a reformed Church of England were all to be found in Usher's model.

Some of Baxter's colleagues, while disagreeing with the plainness of his "Petition" agreed that some of the terms in the Declaration needed amendment. Whereupon Clarendon, although he found Baxter's Petition quite unacceptable, did in fact ask the ministers to present their suggested alterations of the Declaration. It is of some importance to note these alterations which the ministers proposed, and the actual amendments made to the original document. The ministers declared: "Our purpose is . . . to promote the power of godliness" and observance of the Lord's Day.

They also claimed that inefficient ministers were not to be permitted. Thirdly, they suggested that "because the Dioceses, especially some of them, are . . . too large . . . appoint Suffragan Bishops."

These three suggested alterations were acceptable to the King and Clarendon.

With regard to ordinations, the ministers suggested that ordination and jurisdiction should be conducted and exercised with the advice and consent of the presbyters. The King found this objectionable because he felt that consent gave the ministers a negative voice.



The ministers also stated that lay officials would take no part in excommunication, absolution, or other pastoral matters. This was accepted by the King.

They also proposed that archdeacons must be assisted by six ministers (three nominated by the bishop, three elected by ministers). This alteration was also accepted.

Concerning Jurisdiction and Confirmation, the ministers suggested a number of presbyters equal to the number of the chapter and "annually chosen by the major vote of all the presbyters of that diocese" should assist in all ordinations and acts of jurisdiction. "Nor shall any suffragan bishop ordain . . . but with the advice and assistance" of such elected presbyters, nor exercise jurisdiction without them. This alteration was accepted. Regarding confirmation on the advice of the minister of the place, the ministers substituted the word consent for advice. And this was accepted.

On the question of Profession of Faith before Communion, the ministers suggested the following:

The minister shall admit none to the Lord's supper, till they have made a credible profession of their faith . . . and that all possible diligence be used for the instruction and reformation of scandalous offenders, whom the minister shall not suffer to partake of the Lord's table, until they have openly declared themselves to have truly repented and amended.

This alteration met the approval of the King and like the rest was included in the Declaration.

On the question of the liturgy the ministers suggested that the original statement should be changed to read:

Since we find some exceptions made against several things therein, we will appoint an equal number of learned divines of both persuasions, to review the same; and to make such alterations as shall be thought most necessary, and some additional forms (In the Scripture Phrase . . . ) . . . And That It Be Left To The Minister's Choice To Use One Or The Other.

This suggested alteration was approved by the King and Clarendon.

On the matter of ceremonies the ministers requested that certain items in the Declaration should be deleted and this request for deletion was granted. When they discussed the question of kneeling at communion, they suggested that "none shall be denied the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, though they do not use the gesture of kneeling in the act of receiving." This addition was accepted. But the observance of Holy Days became optional. The ministers proposed regarding oaths and subscription before ordination, that "Oaths of ceremonial obedience" be inserted as well as subscription, and that "Ordination" be added to "Institution and Induction". There was no reference to decision of a national synod, but an absolute dispensing with subscription to the liturgy and oath of canonical obedience.

On the difficult problem of re-ordination, the ministers suggested the following:

Lastly, that such as have been Ordained by Presbyters Be Not Required To Renounce Their Ordination Or To Be Re-Ordained, or denied Institution and in Induction for want of ordination by Bishops. And moreover, that none be judged to forfeit their presentation or benefice, or be deprived of it, for not reading of those of the Thirty-nine Articles that contain the controverted points of Church-government and Ceremonies.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For the full Text of the First Draft of the Declaration in September 1660, see RB I ii, 105 (pp. 259-264). For the Text of the Declaration as issued see RB I ii 107 (pp. 276ff).

The actual amendment which was made in the Declaration  
read:

Lastly, that none be judged to forfeit his presentation or benefice, or be deprived of it, upon the Statute of the 13th of Queen Elizabeth, chapter the 12th, so he read and declare his assent to all the Articles of Religion, which only concern the confession of the true Christian faith, and the doctrine of the Sacraments comprised in the Book of Articles in the said statute mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

When the revised Declaration was published on 22nd October 1660, the Presbyterians greeted it with an overwhelming sense of joy. It revived their hopes and some of their leaders even accepted high ecclesiastical offices.

Baxter first heard of the revised Declaration from a news-boy. Whereupon he secured a copy and slipped into a nearby shop to read it with great eagerness. He was surprised and delighted by the concessions granted to the Presbyterians. Now he felt there was a strong basis for unity. And he expressed his hope to Clarendon by suggesting that the doors of the church could be kept open for most of the ministers if the Declaration was established by an Act of Parliament. It is on this occasion that the Lord Chancellor offered Baxter the bishopric of Hereford with the hope of winning the support of one of England's most influential divines. But Baxter refused it, giving what he regarded as a most sensible answer in the context of the times. He could best serve the Church by not being bound to a bishopric. But he generously recommended other men who might be appointed.

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<sup>1</sup>Gould, op. cit., p. 77.

The See of Coventry and Lichfield was offered to Calamy, who had been closer to orthodox Presbyterianism than the other leaders, so it was felt that his acceptance would have been quite inconsistent. Manton, Bates and Bowles refused deaneries. Reynolds accepted the bishopric of Norwich, on "a profession directed to the King . . . that he took a Bishop and presbyter to differ not ordine but gradu and that a Bishop was but the chief presbyter, and that he was not to ordain or govern but with his presbyters' assistance and consent, and that thus he accepted of the place and as described in the King's Declaration."<sup>1</sup>

Although it would appear that the offer of such high ecclesiastical offices to leading non-conformists was an attempt to weaken the Puritan forces, there is really no solid evidence to support this interpretation. In the same way it would be groundless to argue that the refusal of Baxter, Manton and Bates of these offices reflects their polemical stance and indicates their desire to foster the struggle between the Anglicans and Non-conformists. Even Baxter's severest critics could not dispute his moral earnestness and uprightness in seeking the peace and unity of the Church. And Bates' reputation as a reconciler could be allowed to speak with its own integrity.

The Presbyterian divines tried on two occasions to give some stiffening to the revised Declaration. In their conference at Worcester House their first effort was unsuccessful. In

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii, 125 (p. 283).

Parliament their political counterparts attempted to do the same but failed to achieve any great success. The debates on the Declaration in the House of Commons convinced the Puritan leaders that the document was not going to be of effective and lasting use. They fought to have it legalized because without a Bill the Declaration was without effect. But those who opposed it claimed that it was unparliamentary and therefore without precedent to turn a Royal Edict into an Act of Parliament.

So the intricacies of Parliamentary procedures, and the dissatisfaction of Roman Catholics and Anglicans with the terms of the Declaration, were rewarded in that they effectively prevented it from passing into law and thus ascribed to it the status of a temporary expedient.

It is significant that two of the bishops, Sheldon and Morley, who were at the Worcester House Conference, openly exerted their influence to prevent the legalizing of the Declaration. The significance of this fact will come into clearer focus in our discussion of the proceedings of the Savoy Conference in which these two bishops were among the leaders on their side.

"For all its concessive tone," says Ratcliffe, "the Declaration could not have been other than ominous to the Presbyterians and other dissenters from the Anglican Church. The passages dealing with the Prayer Book and the ceremonies could be taken to intimate that the King and his revisers were contemplating a conservative revision of the Book. Again, the reference to a national synod,

that is to the Convocations . . . and to legislation, that is, to Parliament, strongly suggested that the royal indulgence might not be permanent."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter informs us that none of the promises in the Declaration was implemented. The appointment of Suffragan bishops did not take place. There were no meetings of rural deaneries. No advice or assistance was sought from the presbyters by the bishops when ordaining or exercising or inflicting spiritual censures. No consent of a minister was sought before confirmation. No test was imposed before admitting anyone to Communion.

The Declaration by its very nature exhibited certain weaknesses which must be noted. As is already indicated the document had no effect unless it was ratified by Parliament. Secondly the liturgy and ceremonies loomed larger in the eyes of the Laudian clergy than the most important sections in the Declaration, which dealt with pastoral duties, discipline and Church government in a general way. Any amendments to the liturgy were reserved for the Savoy Conference as is made clear in the King's Warrant. So in this regard, the Declaration gave no guarantees.<sup>2</sup>

The Convention Parliament was dissolved on 29 December and the election of the Cavalier House of Commons brought in men of harder outlook bent on wiping out the years since 1642 and enforcing a rigid conformity to the old Prayer Book and the Old Church.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nuttall and Chadwick, op. cit., pp. 104, 105.

<sup>2</sup>A. H. Wood, Church Unity Without Uniformity (London: The Epworth Press, 1962), pp. 162, 163, 164.

<sup>3</sup>Nuttall and Chadwick, op. cit., p. 194.

On 25 March 1661 Charles issued his Warrant for the calling of a conference which was promised in the Declaration. He commissioned twelve bishops and their assistants to meet together with twelve Non-conformist ministers and their assistants. The King's Warrant gave no more authority to any one party. There was to be no distinction between the two groups.

The Episcopalians were represented by Accepted Frewen who was then the Archbishop of York, Gilbert Sheldon, John Cosin, John Warner, Henry King, Humphrey Henchman, George Morley, Robert Sanderson, Benjamin Laney, Bryan Walton, Richard Sterne and John Gauden. The coadjutors were: Dr. Earle, Dean of Westminster; Dr. Heylyn; Dr. Hacket; Dr. Barwick; Dr. Gunning; Dr. Pearson; Dr. Pierce; Dr. Sparrow; Mr. Thorndike.

The Presbyterian side consisted of: Edward Reynolds, Bishop of Norwich; Dr. Tuckney; Dr. Conant; Dr. Spurstow; Dr. Wallis; Dr. Manton; Mr. Calamy; Mr. Baxter; Mr. Jackson; Mr. Case; Mr. Clark; Mr. Newcomen. The assistants were: Dr. Horton; Dr. Jacomb; Dr. Bates; Dr. Cooper; Dr. Lightfoot; Dr. Collins; Mr. Woodbridge; Mr. Rawlinson; Mr. Drake.

The two groups were required by the King's Warrant to:

Advise and review the said Book of Common Prayer, comparing the same with the most ancient Liturgies which have been used in the Church in the primitive and purest times; and to assemble and meet together from time to time within the space of four calendar months . . . to take into your serious considerations and rules, forms of prayer, and things in the Book of Common Prayer contained, and to advise and consult upon and about the same, and the several objections and exceptions which shall now be raised against the same. And if occasion be make such alterations; corrections, and amendments therein as by and

between you the said archbishop, bishops, doctors and persons hereby required and authorized to meet and advise as aforesaid shall be agreed upon to be needful or expedient for the giving satisfaction to tender consciences and the restoring and continuance of peace and unity in the churches under our protection and government.<sup>1</sup>

The wording of the Royal Warrant in several places seems deliberately ambiguous. Its ambiguity we believe was due to the influence of Clarendon, who had hoped that the restored Church would resemble the pre-Laudian Church in which serious Anglicans and Puritans had lived in communion with each other. Admittedly this was an ideal, and perhaps Clarendon was unrealistic in his expectations, especially in view of the recent failures of the two parties to reach any meaningful agreement. But this was the Chancellor's last great effort to keep the door open for such a possibility.

The ambiguities in the King's Warrant increased the possibilities of its interpretation in terms of the presuppositions of both parties as each side was determined to secure as much and concede as little as possible and as a result the chance of any successful compromise was made more remote. But it is a reasonable assumption that this result was contrary to the intentions of both the King and his Lord Chancellor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>An Accompt, op. cit., Preface.

<sup>2</sup>According to Sir Edward Nicholas, Clarendon had a part in writing the Warrant. See Nicholas Papers in the British Museum, Egerton MS 2542 fols. 328-339. Clarendon had both the interest and the learning to accomplish this task.



Clarendon's motives are revealed in his own statements about the Restoration. There is no doubt that one of his primary concerns in ecclesiastical affairs was the preservation and perpetuation of Anglicanism. But what is seldom noticed is the fact that he did not wish to exclude godly sincere people from the Church simply on the basis of religious differences. For this reason he not only opposed many laws against dissenters, but his statements on ecclesiastical affairs lack the doctrinal dogmatic authoritarianism with which he has wrongly been associated.

Clarendon has often been represented as an inveterate persecutor of non-conformists. Yet it is only fair to mention that much of the material for this kind of image is taken from his own writings. Recent scholarship has revealed the untrustworthiness of much of the sources of criticism including Clarendon's own account of his conspicuous churchmanship and his religious preoccupations in the search for a religious settlement during the period of the Restoration.<sup>1</sup>

Clarendon's Anglicanism, quite apart from his exaggerations, was reinforced by the King's Restoration and the episcopal assumption that the Church of England was necessarily restored to its authority as the National Church.

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<sup>1</sup>One of the best recent studies done on Clarendon is by B. H. G. Wormald, Clarendon: Politics, History and Religion, 1640-1660 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1951). A more recent study, but certainly not of the standard of Wormald's, is by George Abernathy, Jr. "The English Presbyterians and the Stuart Restoration 1648-1663". This work is printed in Transaction: American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia: 1965). Parts of this study were published in Journal of Ecclesiastical History (London: Faber and Faber, 1960-61), Vol. II. Hereafter cited as JEH.

Wormald has shown with some care that Clarendon's renewed zeal for the ecclesia anglicana was dictated not simply by political interests but by his firm confidence that the Restoration was a miraculous display of Providential intervention in the religious affairs of the Church.

The Restoration "was such a prodigious act of Providence as God hath scarce vouchsafed to any nation since he led his own Chosen People through the Red Sea."<sup>1</sup> Its miraculous character could not be missed for it was effected by such "an extraordinary influence of divine providence, that there appears no footsteps of human power in the deliverance."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed "no man living had of himself either wisdom enough to foresee, or understanding to contrive, or courage to attempt and execute it." It was accomplished "by a union of contradictions, by a concurrence of causes which never desired the same effects, making those the instruments of our recovery who had destroyed us."<sup>3</sup>

With understandable impatience Clarendon resisted the radicals who wanted to undo the work which Providence had so miraculously wrought. But he was certainly not intransigent or unrelenting in his relationship with the Presbyterians. Like Baxter, Clarendon believed that godly pious men should not be driven out of the

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641 (Oxford 1707) Vol. VI, p. 143. Hereafter cited as Clarendon's History.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. See also Wormald, op. cit., pp. 238-39.

Church simply because their consciences would not allow them to conform to certain forms of ceremonies and liturgies.

The renewed effort to understand Clarendon's religious policy is of great importance. His connection with the leading bishops during the Savoy Conference has led some critics to accuse him of complicity with them in their efforts to keep the Puritans out of the Church. His part in the writing of the Declaration, his offer of high ecclesiastical offices to leading non-conformist ministers, including Baxter, and his opposition to certain measures against dissenters, have been interpreted by some as insincere double-dealing by which he sought to promote the cause of the bishops and his own personal interests.<sup>1</sup>

Bosher states:

. . . Conclusive evidence of Hyde's state of mind in October, 1660, is not available; since human policy is always subject to inconsistency and unpredictable deviations, some historians have believed that the Chancellor and even the Laudian clergy were at that moment genuinely desirous of a comprehensive church settlement. But a considerable body of indirect evidence suggests strongly that never at any time was the government prepared to give security for its generous proposals. . . . Nor is there reasonable ground, during this period, for distinguishing between the policy of Hyde and that of the Laudian clergy . . . to all appearance Hyde and Sheldon were in full accord.<sup>2</sup>

But bishop Burnet states a contrary position.

The first point in the debate [on a comprehensive establishment] was ,whether concessions should be made, and pains taken

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<sup>1</sup>Bosher evidently believes that this was true of Hyde's ecclesiastical policy before and during the negotiations for the Restoration. He speaks of Hyde's statesmanship in cloaking the real aim of the religious settlement "with a wise and cautious diplomacy." See The Making of the Restoration Settlement, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

to gain the Dissenters, or not; especially the Presbyterians. The Earl of Clarendon was much for it. . . . But the Bishops did not approve it.<sup>1</sup>

It is fairer to think that Clarendon was not in full accord with the bishops in their attempts to keep the Puritans, and in particular the Presbyterians, out of the Church. Neither is there any strong evidence to accuse him of treachery. The evidence is in his favour regarding his effort to find some form of comprehension.

But his failure to achieve his goal accelerated the movements of his enemies against him, and drove many non-conformists to consider him as their inveterate enemy.

One modern scholar claims, in defense of Clarendon, that even at the Restoration his policy was not as rigidly and consistently Anglican as he himself made it out to be.<sup>2</sup>

We have engaged in this fairly lengthy discussion on Clarendon's role prior to and during the Savoy Conference in order to show the contrast between him and the leading bishops in their religious attitudes and policy towards the non-conformists and also to call into question the fairly established view that the proceedings at the Conference were consistent with his collaborations with the bishops.

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<sup>1</sup>Gilbert Burnet, History of His Own Time, (1724) Vol. I, 176-77. Cf. J. W. Packer, The Transformation of Anglicanism 1643-1660 with special reference to Henry Hammond (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>Keith Feiling, Ecclesiastical History Review, XLII, p. 407; XLIV, p. 289. Cf. Wormald, op. cit., p. 242.

The King's Warrant selected the twelve bishops and their co-adjutors, but certainly there were some among them who were chosen as the leaders for their side. Who were these leaders? Since this question has never been discussed in connection with the Warrant of 25 March and the Savoy Conference, it is crucial for our study to spend some time doing so.

From a careful study of some material recently identified among Baxter's MSS in Dr. Williams' Library and the British Museum, there is good ground for identifying the Anglican leaders as Sheldon, Morley, Cosin, Gunning and Pearson. Who were these men? And what were their dispositions and assumptions regarding the Church and dissenters?

At the opening of the Conference on April 15, 1661, the aged Accepted Frewen handed over the responsibility for the conduct of the Conference to Gilbert Sheldon, bishop of London, because, said Frewen, Sheldon knew more of the King's mind in the matter.<sup>1</sup> This was a highly significant decision.

Quite apart from knowing the King's mind in this matter, Sheldon had already distinguished himself as a champion of conservative Anglicanism and prelacy, and as a hostile opponent of non-conformity. Indeed, it would be absurd to deny this. His involvement in the political affairs of the nation had earned him the reputation of being more a statesman than an ecclesiastic.

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 171 (p. 305).

In 1644 he took a leading part in the negotiations at the Treaty of Uxbridge, and Clarendon observed that his defense of Anglicanism and prelacy was so earnest and determined that he provoked the resentment of the parliamentarians which they made him afterwards sufficiently feel.<sup>1</sup>

During the exile Sheldon strongly supported the monarchy and encouraged many of the Anglican clergy to remain faithful to the throne. It is not surprising that at the Restoration he assumed that Anglicanism was to be re-established and re-constituted. He was singled out for royal favours and considered these as rewards for his constancy in support of the exiled court.

The ambiguity of the man is revealed in the divergences of interpretations of his character. J. H. Overton's estimate of Sheldon is that he was emphatically a strong man, with a firm will of his own, perfectly straightforward and candid. He was more a statesman than a divine, and spiritual-mindedness was to say the least, not a conspicuous trait in his character. Furthermore, he took a leading part in the persecution of non-conformists, and his disgust for hypocrisy led him, like many others in the anti-puritanical reaction of the time, far too much in the opposite direction.<sup>2</sup>

Burnet's assessment is that "Sheldon was a very dextrous man in business. . . . He seemed not to have a deep sense of religion,

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<sup>1</sup>W. H. Hutton, "Gilbert Sheldon" DNB (ed) Sidney Lee, (London: Smith Elder and Co., 1897), Vol. LII, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>J. H. Overton, Life in the English Church 1660-1714 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1885), pp. 19, 20.

if any at all: And spoke of it most commonly as of an engine of government, and a matter of policy."<sup>1</sup>

Feiling declares that "strength, not charity must cover his (Sheldon's) faults, and strength we find in all his actions."<sup>2</sup>

Other writers, such as Bosher, take a more charitable approach in analysing Sheldon's character. "His administrative ability and single minded devotion to the Church", writes Bosher,

have never been questioned; but historians in general have fixed on him the character of a worldly ecclesiastic and callous persecutor. Against such charges must be set the fact that he enjoyed the intimate friendship of some of the noblest men of his time, and that in the days of his obscurity he was much loved and trusted by his fellow clergy.<sup>3</sup>

The picture that emerges from these differing views about Sheldon's character, is one which shows him to be a man with a strong will, lacking in charity in his dealings with dissenters, but whose commitment to Anglicanism is beyond dispute.

A more recent writer claims that he was a rigorist by nature with no conception of the strength of spiritual dissent, but not a man of personal animosity.

"So far as one can speak with certainty, for he seldom betrayed himself, he found protestant Dissent more antipathetic than Roman Catholicism."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Burnet, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>K. Feiling, A History of the Tory Party 1640-1714 (Oxford: 1924), p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Bosher, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>Florence Higham, "A Note on Gilbert Sheldon", JEH (1963), Vol. 14, pp. 209 -212.

Any rational defence of Sheldon's dealing with the non-conformists before and during the Savoy Conference, must be based on the hypothesis that as a shrewd ecclesiastical statesman, he deemed it best for the Church of England to keep the Puritans from her Communion.

A lack of spiritual charity and an insistence on force to bring about the required ends were two of the characteristics of this Anglican bishop. Perhaps these were seventeenth-century characteristics that no-one could alter, but it may be that the direction of the Savoy Conference was in the wrong hands. It may also be that it was this knowledge among other things of Sheldon's dispositions and assumptions, that led Baxter to lament early in the negotiations: "I foreknew and foretold them what they were about to do. . . . I perceived that they intended no abatements."<sup>1</sup>

For us today, this knowledge helps to place in the proper perspective the terms of reference on which Sheldon insisted the Conference must proceed. The bishops were forbidden to do or say anything until the ministers had submitted in writing their exceptions and alterations of the Liturgy. The onus was placed on them since they were the agitators for change and revision. This procedure helped to frustrate the revision Charles II and Clarendon had hoped would be the joint effort of the two parties.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii, 212.

<sup>2</sup>Only Baxter among the ministers was prepared for this strategy and he used it to suit his purpose.



Another outstanding figure was John Cosin Bishop of Durham. Cosin had won the respect and admiration of his colleagues for his liturgical scholarship. Baxter freely admitted that he was one of the most learned among the bishops in his knowledge of the ancient liturgies and the Fathers.

In his early days Cosin was an intimate friend of Archbishop Laud and one of the strongest defenders of Laudian episcopacy.<sup>1</sup> As far back as 1627, he had written against the Puritans in his Collection of Private Devotion, and this work brought him into more hostile confrontation with them.<sup>2</sup>

In his own writings and in the notices that are left to us, the portrait of the man is brought very vividly before us: a plain blunt man, with a definite end in view, and making straight for that end without turning to the right hand or to the left; firm as a rock in his convictions, but by no means cramped or narrow; though a wellread divine, a man of practice rather than theory. . . . No thought ever entered his head of disguising in the very least his principles, and so he was the very first to suffer for them.<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of the Restoration when, owing to the uncertainty of the times, many bishops were still cautious in the use of the Liturgy, Cosin exercised no restraint and openly used it in its entirety. He was always sure of the rights and position of his Anglicanism and was determined at all costs to preserve these rights.

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<sup>1</sup>It may be useful to recall that Laud had maintained that episcopacy was the esse of the Church and that many, if not all Churches particularly the Continental Reformed Churches, were not true Churches if they were non-episcopal.

<sup>2</sup>DNE vol. XII, p. 264.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

In this light his dominating influence at the Savoy Conference becomes easily noticeable. As a devout Churchman he was concerned with unity and was willing to negotiate towards that end so long, and only so long, as the ancient order of liturgy and the authority of bishops were not in jeopardy.

When in 1660, Charles II suggested that the bishops should exercise authority only with the consent of presbyters, Cosin protested. Dr. Bates reports the incident in his funeral sermon for Baxter. He wrote, "this limiting of their [the bishops'] authority was so displeasing, that Dr. Cosin, then elect of Durham, said, 'If your Majesty grants this you unbishop your Bishops.'"<sup>1</sup>

In 1661 he was one of the leading members of the committee for the revision of the liturgy, and his suggestions for alterations were all in the direction of a greater strictness of order and definiteness of doctrine.

The relationship between Sheldon, Cosin and the bishop of Worcester, George Morley, was very close. Like his friend Sheldon, Morley was a complex figure. Shrewd and resourceful, he was highly esteemed among his colleagues and other Anglicans although he is not considered an Anglo-Catholic. In the Royal Court he had the support of his friend Clarendon which brought him to favour with the King.

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<sup>1</sup>William Bates, A Funeral Sermon for the Reverend Holy and Excellent Divine Mr. Richard Baxter who Deceased December 8, 1691. With an Account of His Life (London: 1692), p. 96.

Shortly before the Restoration Clarendon appointed him as chief negotiator for the King's return. He was to begin by assuring the Presbyterians that the King was not a Roman Catholic, which was an opinion held by some Puritans.

During all his discussions with them he projected his Calvinistic opinions and re-asserted his deep concern for peace and unity. He held out promises of an agreement that must have excited many of the Presbyterians and hastened their decision to restore Charles II to the throne.

However, Baxter was apparently not impressed by Morley's terms: "I found that he spake of Moderation in the general, but came to no particular Terms."<sup>1</sup>

Morley had raised the Presbyterians' hopes with his promise of the negative power of the presbyters and the sanction of their office, either by silence or in the case of the latter demand, by a hypothetical reordination.<sup>2</sup>

At the Worcester House meeting Morley was the principal manager of the Conference among the bishops.<sup>3</sup> It was at this meeting that it became quite apparent that Morley was insincere in his promises to the Presbyterians especially regarding the questions of ordination and reordination. Baxter and Morley engaged in bitter

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 81 (p. 218).

<sup>2</sup>Dr. George Morley to Sir Edward Hyde, May 4, 1660. Bodleian Library, Clarendon MSS 72, fol. 199.

<sup>3</sup>Bates, Funeral Sermons, p. 96.

disputes over these two issues because Baxter was suspicious of the latter's professed desire to work for a meaningful comprehension for non-conformists.

Baxter's suspicions were soon to be confirmed at the Savoy Conference when Morley strongly opposed the Presbyterians' demands and was vehement in his attack against Baxter.

Respecting his character, William Hunt remarks that he was sensitive and inflammable and when provoked exercised no self-control.<sup>1</sup>

In ecclesiastical affairs Morley remained firm in his advocacy of full power for the bishops. They alone were to be regarded as the legitimate ecclesiastical rulers. Such a position raises many interesting questions regarding Morley's role at a conference with a group of non-conformists whose main burden was to persuade the bishops to grant greater freedom to the pastors in the exercise of their jurisdiction and who had maintained that authority in ecclesiastical matters should be exercised by both presbyters and bishops.

Another key figure who was to express his opposition to this point of view was Peter Gunning, Bishop-elect of Ely. He was perhaps Baxter's keenest antagonist, and one of the ablest defenders of the royalists' cause.

During the civil war when the Parliamentary force was in the ascendancy, Gunning fearlessly incited the University at

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<sup>1</sup>William Hunt, "George Morley," DNB (1894), Vol. XXXIX p. 77.

Cambridge to take formal action against the Solemn League and Covenant, and later urged the people to collect money for the King's cause.

After the Restoration he rose to high positions in the Church. As one of the keenest debaters at the Savoy he was elected, along with Pearson and Sparrow, as one of the disputants during the last ten days of the Conference.

Baxter remarked:

Dr. Gunning was their forwardest and greatest speaker, understanding well what belonged to a disputant, a man of greater study and industry than any of them; well read in Fathers and Councils, (and I hear and believe, of a very temperate life as to all carnal excesses whatsoever); but so vehement for his high imposing principles, and so over-zealous for Arminianism, and formality and church pomp, and so very eager and fervent in his discourse, that I conceive his prejudice and passion much perverted his judgment, and I am sure they made him lamentably over-run himself in his discourses.<sup>1</sup>

Gunning was a man of decided conviction which won him both the respect and admiration of his friends and the censure of his enemies.

Dr. John Pearson, another of the leaders, was one of the cleverest debaters of his party. He distinguished himself as a man of great erudition and texture of thought. In 1643 he preached a sermon on the eve of the opening of the Westminster Assembly, advocating the importance and necessity of forms of prayer. He deplored with deep passion what he believed to be the downgrading of cherished institutions by men who had neither capacity for

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<sup>1</sup>RR I ii 236 (p. 364).

learning nor respect for tradition. This was the start of a long career for Pearson as an able defender of the Church.

However Baxter showed a marked respect for his learning and courtesy during the meetings at Savoy. As a leader, he showed more restraint and respect for his opponents than any of his colleagues, except Gauden who was once a Presbyterian minister, but had now become a bishop.

"Dr. Pierson" [Pearson] said Baxter,

was their logician and disputant. . . . He disputed accurately, soberly and calmly, being but once in any passion, breeding in us a great respect for him, and a persuasion that if he had been independent he would have been for peace, and that if all were in his power it would have gone well.<sup>1</sup>

It would be reckless to suggest that these five leaders were hypocrites. Certainly not! They were motivated by a vision of themselves as the appointed guardians of the Church and were therefore forced to take measures and defend positions that would safeguard it from any resurgence of dangers which once beset it during the Commonwealth and Protectorate. So assured and self-confident were they of the rightness of their course of action, that this prevented them from seeing the issues beyond their own appointed task. Their commitment to Anglicanism and particularly to the Prayer Book, was happily inspired and supported by many corollary influences.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>It is not suggested that the bishops joyfully endorsed all these influences.

Elected to Parliament were the Royalist and Anglican majority, many of whom were men trained in their childhood and youth by sequestered Anglican clergymen. These new Parliamentarians could not easily forget some of the inconveniences which their bishops and chaplains suffered at the hands of the Puritans.

Now they were determined on their course of action against any compromise to include their opponents in the church. It was Puritans who had replaced their beloved Book of Common Prayer with the Directory, thus forcing it for a while to suffer an underground existence.

The bishops were being perfectly human when they reacted as they did to comprehension or toleration for non-conformists. Yet despite the honesty of their intention and whatever reason one wishes to attribute to them, their passions were so high that it was impossible for them to view the motives and conduct of the Ministers with any genuine objectivity.

But what of the Presbyterian Commissioners named in the King's Warrant? Who were the leaders among them? Although Calamy, Bates, Manton, Jacombe, Spurrow, Clark and Newcomen played very important roles, they one and all recognized Baxter as their undisputed leader and as their most articulate debater and logician.

How did he achieve this distinction among his colleagues who, after all, were themselves men of great, (in some cases greater) erudition, and deep piety? What did Baxter and the Presbyterian Ministers hope to achieve and what in fact was their chief

preoccupation at the Savoy Conference? Was Baxter thoroughly anti-prelatical? What were his feelings toward the Prayer Book?

These questions are of crucial significance in our re-evaluation of the Conference, for it is a well established view that, had it not been for Baxter, the whole history of the relationship between the Anglicans and Puritans after 1661 might have been different.

That Baxter was the undisputed leader of his group was not by his design but by their choice. According to two leading authorities on the history of non-conformity, there is solid evidence to show the enormous influence Baxter exerted on his contemporaries, especially in ecclesiastical affairs. Alexander Gordon claims that Baxter's influence among the religious people was greater than that of the Westminster Assembly; Geoffrey Nuttall declares that "the most cursory examination of his manuscript letters moreover, reveals the remarkable extent to which week by week, his advice was sought by correspondents high and low."<sup>1</sup>

Even Baxter's opponents recognized his great influence with the people and exhorted him to exercise it in persuading them to conform.

Morley and some of the other bishops

told me . . . if I would but teach the People better, they would quickly be brought to obedience, and would need no liberty. I told the Bishop that he was mistaken, both in saying that we put these scruples into their Heads, and in thinking

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<sup>1</sup>G. F. Nuttall and O. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 156. For an excellent presentation and discussion of Baxter's Correspondence: a preliminary Survey," see Nuttall's article in JEM I (1950) pp. 85-95. See also A. Gordon, Heads of English Unitarian History (1895).



that my Power with them was so great, as that I alone could preach them out. He replied with great Confidence, that if I would endeavour in good earnest to falsify them, they would quickly be falsified. I perceived . . . that they mistakingly imagined our Power to be greater with the People than it is, and that they think we could reduce them at our Pleasure to Conformity when it is no such matter.<sup>1</sup>

Such an influential and committed champion of peace and unity, could hardly escape the responsibility of leadership at a Conference which all his colleagues knew to be an important one. To Baxter this period in his relationship with the Church was decisive as it was also in the history of non-conformity. Therefore even though he complained that he should be left out because his previous action had offended many of the bishops and now he feared that his presence at the conference would prejudice the Ministers' cause he accepted his task with consummate zeal.

He was indeed, at times an embarrassment to his party by his love for rational arguments and his confidence in their efficacy. But at no time was the purity of his intention and his love of truth and justice called into question by them.

Baxter's aim at the Conference was not to destroy episcopacy as a doctrine of the Church. There is enough evidence from his writings to show his unvaried high esteem for those whom he called

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 212 (p. 345). Baxter was being modest here. But in so far as he was trying to put the blame for the people's non-conformity on Baxter's shoulders, Morley was certainly wrong. This will become evident later in our study.

This quotation is a particularly striking one because it not only shows the bishops' awareness of Baxter's influence but illustrates the difference in the conception of the way influence should be exercised.

the "Old Prelatical Divines." This point must be developed with some care because it was precisely this whole question of "Episcopacy" not simply the revision of the liturgy that was for him and his party, the decisive issue.

The question Baxter faced was: How at a Conference at which the agenda was restricted to liturgy and ceremonies could he bring to the fore the real causes of division, namely, Church government and discipline?

On the subject of episcopacy and even the liturgy, Baxter was a moderate. Some weight attaches to this, since it has been accustomed to think the opposite concerning his role at the conference.

Baxter did not wish to repudiate episcopal authority. "He clung to his churchmanship; holding that Bishops were the proper ordainers";<sup>1</sup> in his own words, "being known to be for moderate Episcopacy."<sup>2</sup> "It was Episcopacy itself" laments Baxter, that was rejected by the bishops at the Savoy. "We pleaded not at all then for Presbytery, unless a Moderate Episcopacy be Presbytery. . . . Yet was there a faction that called this offer of Bishop Usher's Episcopacy by the name of the Presbyterian impudent Expectations."<sup>3</sup> Baxter insisted "we never put up one Petition for Presbytery, but pleaded for Primitive Episcopacy."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Gordon in his edn of Cheshire Classic Minutes 157. Cf. Nuttall and Chadwick op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 120 (p. 281).

<sup>3</sup>RB I ii 96 (p. 232).

<sup>4</sup>RB I ii 113 (p. 278).

That Baxter's advocacy of reduced or modified episcopacy was greatly inspired by bishop Usher's Reduction of Episcopacie is not open to dispute. He always held Usher in the highest esteem. Writing of his conversations with Usher during one of his visits to London: "He told me" said Baxter,

his judgment that Bishops and Presbyters differ not as two orders but in degree, and that he that hath the order hath intrinsical power to ordain though he is regularly to do it under the Bishop's oversight and therefore it is not invalid and null but only irregular and schismatical when it is done disobediently against the bishop. And he took presbyters to be governors of the flocks, and the Synods of Bishops to be but for Concord and not to have a proper governing power over the Particular Bishops.<sup>1</sup>

This sums up very well what Baxter was trying to persuade the Laudian Bishops to accept. But there were those who misrepresented his position because they "thought it their interest to be our adversaries".<sup>2</sup> He was convinced that if Usher's model could be taken seriously and practiced by the bishops, it would accelerate the movement toward unity and peace because both Presbyterians and Congregationalists would yield to its terms without changing their judgments on the fundamentals of what they considered to be necessary.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Baxter, A Treatise on Episcopacy I (1681) p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 242 (p. 373).

<sup>3</sup>Baxter was undoubtedly much influenced by Usher's Reduction of Episcopacie, which is printed in RB II 96, pp. 238 ff; and perhaps even more by Usher's sermon from Ephesians IV.13 preached at Wanstead before James I on June 20, 1624, "A Briefe Declaration of the Universalitie of the Church of Christ", (1624).

For further reference to Usher's influence on Baxter see G. F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter and Philip Doddridge: A Study in a Tradition, pp. 31, 32, note 73.

So, then, it seems that Baxter's disputes with the Laudian Bishops were all part of his struggle in working toward the ideal of a Comprehensive National Church. Thus his criticism against certain practices of prelacy must not be confused with his attitude toward episcopacy as such.

He saw the function of the pastor as threefold: Prophet, Priest and King, meaning by this that his ministry involves teaching, leading in worship and governing. But the New Prelatical administration of the Church, by its function and authority, had threatened to usurp the rights of the pastor. This Baxter could not allow.

He had written only two years before the Conference his Five Disputations of Church Government (1659) in which he addressed in the Preface, "the Nobility, Gentry and Commons of this land that adhere to Prelacy." This is a vital work because here for the first time Baxter makes very explicit the differences between the Old Episcopal Divines of the English Church and the New Prelatical Divines.

The following points are to be noted:

(i) The Old Episcopal Divines although they maintained that episcopacy was to be desired and preferred before Presbyterian equality, did not support the view that episcopacy was the esse of the Church. But the New Prelatical Divines unchurch the Churches that were non-episcopal.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Some of the Old Episcopal Divines named by Baxter are Usher, Morton, Davenanant. He also mentions Hall, but he seems to be ambiguous [in fact].

(ii) The Old Episcopal Divines recognized as valid presbyterial ordinations without the approval of Prelates, but advised against the continuance of such a practice. But the New Prelatical Divines retrospectively invalidated all ordinations that were done without episcopal sanction, and this gave rise to the whole new problem of re-ordination.<sup>1</sup>

(iii) The Old Episcopal Divines were sympathetic in their views towards Protestant Churches. They recognized these Churches as true, despite the absence of bishops among them. Their Pastors were acknowledged and esteemed as true ministers of Christ and as brothers. But the New Prelatical Divines would have no rapprochement with these non-episcopal communions, while on the other hand they accepted the Church of Rome as a true Church and recognized the validity of its ordination ceremonies.

(iv) The Old believed in, and in fact, participated in inter-communion with ministers and churches that were not Prelatical. But the New resisted such a practice and raised questions about sacramental administration, supposing the ministers to be unauthorized to conduct such a service.<sup>2</sup>

Baxter found no difficulty in accepting the position of the Old Prelatical Divines. He in fact stated that he heartily

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<sup>1</sup>This whole question of ordination and re-ordination in the 17th century, deserves a full study which is beyond the limits of our present work. But it will be a fruitful enterprise especially in this age of ecumenical dialogue.

<sup>2</sup>Baxter, Five Disputations of Church Government and Worship (London: 1659), Preface. Hereafter cited as Five Disputations.

reverenced them and desired union with them. And he was not speaking only for himself, because there were many non-conformists of "my acquaintance" says Baxter "who are fully in accord with some stated form of Episcopacy . . . but they are all agreed that the English Diocesan Frame (meaning the New Prelatical system) of Government . . . is unlawful."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter's failure to reach agreement with the Bishops over the questions of episcopacy and authority created great doubts in his mind regarding a successful outcome of the Conference. These were the fundamental issues that were troubling the church and perpetuating the divisions. If no compromise could be reached on these, then there was very little hope for any serious and lasting results in terms of the reformation of the liturgy and ceremonies of the Church.

Baxter had already stated that he did not consider liturgies and ceremonies of so great importance to make them the causes of the Church's distraction and division. Therefore, although he never used the sign of the cross in baptism or wore the surplice, he did not feel justified in giving up the ministry, because of these issues.<sup>2</sup> Equally neither should godly ministers be deprived of their living for failure to use or practice these.

Many of the bishops at the Conference were aware of Baxter's position on this matter. Morley reminded him that it was a strange

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 311 (p. 396).

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 19 (p. 14).

thing for him to make such a stir for other men's liberty, to forbear kneeling in the act of receiving, when he himself professed to take it to be lawful.

"I told them" says Baxter, "that they might perceive then that I argued not from interest and opinion; but from Charity and for Love and Peace."<sup>1</sup>

Baxter could not be silent when he saw hundreds of godly faithful ministers kept out of their churches. True to his temperament, he became their spokesman and chief defender. Great stress must be placed on this point, because too many of Baxter's critics have confused what he in fact believed with his interest in seeking to alleviate the hardships of his fellow ministers and to create conditions favourable for the total enterprise of peace and unity.

Even a cursory examination of Baxter's writings shows that he always maintained: "I judged a Form of Prayer and Liturgy to be lawful, and in some cases lawfully imposed."<sup>2</sup> He never fully agreed with those who accused the Prayer Book of impiety, idolatry or false doctrine. In fact he made it quite clear that he would rather be in communion with a Church that used the Common Prayer Book than with none or worse.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 212 (p. 345).

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 19 (p. 14).

<sup>3</sup>RB I ii 433 (p. 437).

Why then did Baxter take such a leading part in the attempt at reformation of the liturgy and ceremonies of the Church during the Savoy Conference? This question can only be answered against the background we have been discussing. It is in this light we now attempt to deal with the actual proceedings of the Savoy Conference.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE SAVOY CONFERENCE: PROCEEDINGS

When the long-promised Conference met on April 15th, 1661, asserts Norman Sykes, the situation was almost similar to that of the Hampton Court Conference of 1603. The Episcopalians were once more in possession and the Presbyterians on the defensive.<sup>1</sup>

The issues before them were not really to decide what might or might not be granted by way of concessions to the Presbyterians, but simply to reaffirm the soundness of the Episcopalian platform.<sup>2</sup>

Undoubtedly in 1661 the power in the Church was in the hands of a group of friends. Sheldon, Morley, and Clarendon, as we have already pointed out, had formed their acquaintance in their Oxford days, and their association had been deepened by their meetings at Great Tew. This close connection between these men has led one modern writer to assert that the Savoy Conference was managed by politicians rather than liturgical scholars.<sup>3</sup>

The bishop of London set forth the terms of reference for the conduct of the Conference. He demanded that since the Presbyterians

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<sup>1</sup>Norman Sykes, From Sheldon to Secker (Cambridge: University Press, 1959), pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>G. J. Cuming, A History of Anglican Liturgy (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1969), p. 153.

were the agitators for change and revision in the Prayer Book, nothing would be done until they had delivered their exceptions in writing together with the additional forms, and whatever alterations were desired.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem from this demand that the bishops had agreed to the Conference as a gesture of respect for the King and their friend, the Lord Chancellor.

Sheldon, with his characteristic rigor and straightforwardness, insisted that the Liturgy and ceremonies of the Church were very satisfactory and that they (the bishops) saw no necessity or urgency for reforming or altering them.<sup>2</sup> The Presbyterians claimed that this procedure was inconsistent with the instructions given in the King's Warrant.<sup>3</sup> To us today Sheldon's strategy may seem fair and logical, but to the Ministers it seemed an unusual practice and to them it betrayed the intransigence which was to characterize the actions of the bishops throughout the conference.

John Stoughton seems to agree with the Ministers' complaint.

He remarks:

According to the terms of the Commission, they met together to 'advise' and to 'consult' and the professed character and object of the Commission implied that there was to be friendly conferences and mutual concession. But the Bishops manifested no disposition to concede anything; they assumed the part and bearing of persons who were in the ascendant, and had to do with troublesome people, who were

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 171 (p. 305).

<sup>2</sup>RE I ii 171 (p. 305).

<sup>3</sup>See pp. 116, 117 of Chapter V.

asking unreasonable favours. They had made up their minds not to speak freely, and as men of business and stern conservators bent upon keeping up ancient restrictions, the course they pursued could be plausibly defended. Perhaps it would have mattered little in the end if Baxter's colleagues had persevered in their objections.<sup>1</sup>

Another writer observes that "Sheldon saw well what the effect would be of putting them to make all their demands at once. The number of them raised a mighty outcry against them, as people that could never be satisfied."<sup>2</sup> But the ministers declared that this approach was in conflict with the specific requirement of the Warrant. They had hoped that open debate would be more conducive to the ends they were seeking.<sup>3</sup> But Baxter objected to their point of view, and persuaded them to yield to Sheldon's demand.

Some weight must be attached to this because Baxter's consent to Sheldon's strategy has been misunderstood and presented in the wrong light by some of his critics.

Bosher, for example, makes the point that Sheldon has often been severely criticized for his insistence that the bishops had nothing to say or do until the Ministers yielded to his demand. He exonerates Sheldon from this charge by declaring:

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<sup>1</sup>John Stoughton, Religion in England (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1882), p. 164.

<sup>2</sup>Gilbert Burnet, History of His Own Time, (1724) Vol. I, p. 327.

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps one might wish to describe the ministers' objections as frivolous on the grounds that there was precedent for this procedure. The Hampton Court Conference went just that way. At that time the Puritans' objections were first dealt with. However one must also remember that the climate of opinion and the spirit of revenge were different in 1661 from what obtained in 1604.

Far from presenting this as an unfair strategy, Baxter declared: 'In this I confess, above all things else, I was wholly of his mind, and prevailed with my brethren to consent' . . . adding 'I conjecture upon contrary reasons.'<sup>1</sup>

If this statement of Baxter's as cited by Bosher stood by itself there could be no doubt that one would feel that the Puritan Divine did in fact agree with the Anglican Bishop's strategy. But this would certainly be the wrong impression.

In order to clear up this misleading idea and to make more explicit Baxter's real reason for yielding to Sheldon's tactic the full statement from Baxter's writing is here presented.

In this I must confess, above all things else, I was wholly of his mind, and prevailed with my brethren to consent, but I conjecture upon contrary reasons. For I suppose he thought that we should either be altogether by the ears and be of several minds among ourselves, at least in our new forms, or that when our Proposals and forms come to be scanned by them, they should find as much matter of exceptions against ours as we did against theirs; or that the people of our persuasion would be dissatisfied or divided about it. And indeed our Brethren themselves thought either all or much of this would come to pass and our Disadvantage would be exceeding great. But I told them the reasons of my opinion. (1) That we should quickly agree on our exceptions or offer none but what we agreed on. (2) That we were engaged to offer them new forms (which was the expedient which from the beginning I had aimed at and brought in, as the only way of accommodation, considering that they should be in Scripture Words and that Ministers should choose which forms they would). (3) That verbal disputes would be managed with much more contentions. (4) But above all, else our cause would never be well understood by our People or Foreigners or Posterity . . . and that if we refused this opportunity of leaving on record our Testimony against corruptions for a just and moderate Reformation we were never like to have the like in host again.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bosher, op. cit., p. 226. Quotations from Baxter are taken from RB I ii 171 (p. 305).

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 171 (p. 306).

It is quite apparent that this lengthy reasoned presentation in defense of his action for accepting Sheldon's strategy was, as Baxter said, their own justification and vindication,<sup>1</sup> and not, as Bosher would have us believe, an acknowledgement of the justice or fair play of their opponents.

Baxter saw the strategy but it was well suited for his purpose, because he knew the Conference to be of exceeding importance and had made preliminary preparations for the occasion. Therefore to reject Sheldon's scheme would be to frustrate his own plans and to weaken his defenses. Of course, the motive and end were different but the method and means were good.

Another point which can be brought against Bosher's interpretation is the fact that, from near the beginning of the Conference, Baxter had already perceived that hope for an agreement was doomed, since the bishops had rejected his plea for a primitive or moderate episcopacy for curing the divisions and restoring the peace and unity of the Church. Thus "I foresaw and foretold them what they were about to do. I perceived that they intended no abatements."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>It must be recalled that none of Baxter's opponents ever questioned his sincerity in working for a meaningful compromise. Neither did they accuse him of wanting to replace the Prayer Book with his Liturgy. They have accused him of talking too long, but even his most severe critics, Morley and Gunning, freely acknowledge his intellectual integrity and honesty of intentions. See RB I ii (p. 344). See also The Church Reformation Desired by the Reconcilers D.W.L. MSS 59 11. Here Baxter makes it very clear that he was not opposed to the Liturgy but only to the rigidity which the bishops wanted to impose upon those of "tender consciences."

<sup>2</sup>D.W.L. MSS 59 12, Vol. VI.

But despite his forebodings over the outcome of the Conference, he insisted that it be held in order to avoid the charge of obstinacy and sedition against the Church's peace. Furthermore he wanted "posterity" to see what efforts the non-conformists had made for a moderate Reformation against corruptions. Above all Baxter was not easily deterred from any course of action that was concerned with unity and concord. So he declared: "I thought it a cause that I could comfortably suffer for; and should as willingly be a Martyr for Charity as for Faith."<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with Sheldon's plan, Baxter and the Presbyterians withdrew to draw up their exceptions and alterations to the Liturgy. Two lists of exceptions were drawn up, but only one was presented. These are distinguished in this study as "the Exceptions as drawn up" and "the Exceptions as Presented."

The Exceptions as presented were the work of the Ministers, excepting Baxter. His responsibility was to prepare what came to be known as the Reformed Liturgy. Whoever suggested that the work should be divided as it was is not made known either in the unpublished MSS or in Baxter's published writings. But because of Baxter's preliminary work it seems a natural and sensible thing to have asked him to draw up the additions or new forms and to release him from other work. According to his own confession he "had been guilty of that design from the beginning and of engaging them in that piece of

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 236 (p. 306).

service (and some of them thought it would be odious to the Independents and others who are against a Liturgy as such)."<sup>1</sup>

To accuse Baxter and his colleagues of preparing a Liturgy to replace the Book of Common Prayer, would be to fly in the face of the evidence. As a matter of fact, Baxter never charged the Prayer Book "with false Doctrine or Idolatry, or false worship in the Matter or Substance."<sup>2</sup> To him it was disorderly and defective, lacking in perfection; but these were not the sort of imperfections which debarred one from using it, even though the necessity for revising and altering it was still very pressing.

Baxter's Reformed Liturgy was simply an alternative, which he felt to be entirely consistent with the King's declaration for the accommodation of "tender consciences."<sup>3</sup> Quite apart from the fact that it was prepared within a fortnight the Liturgy is a remarkable achievement and reflects the magnificence of Baxter's liturgical skills. Another reason that can be given for Baxter's Liturgy is simply his love for consistency and clarity. The thoroughly scriptural character of the Liturgy reflects Baxter's contention that all forms of worship should as far as possible, be clear and consistent since God is the object of praise and worship. Baxter disliked confusion,

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 171 (p. 306).

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 174 (p. 307).

<sup>3</sup>Henry Ferne's letter makes this part quite clear. He reported that the Ministers presented the Liturgy desiring that every Minister (or pastor) have the liberty to use it "or the forms of our Liturgy with liberty also for conceived prayers if occasions required it." BM Add 28, 53, Danby MSS, fol. 1.

especially in worship. "I put in the forms and order of discipline," he asserts, "partly because else we should never have had opportunity therein to express our minds, and partly because indeed it belongeth to the integrity of the work, and to show the difference between their kind of discipline in chancellor's court, and ours by Pastors in Christian Congregations."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Baxter was unrealistic in his high expectations for his Liturgy. How well he succeeded in providing a form of worship that is orderly, correct and clear, is likely to depend on the nature of the spectacles through which one reads the Liturgy. The Laudian bishops were outraged that he should attempt to write an "intire Liturgy", whereas a more sympathetic writer comes to the conclusion that "few better liturgies probably exist."<sup>2</sup>

When Baxter rejoined his colleagues who were left to draw up the Exceptions, he found them still at work and entered consequently in their effort. His chief engagement at this point was to test the consistency, clarity and depth of their objections to the Prayer Book in order to save embarrassment and to ensure success. He carefully drew up a list of faults which he most disliked in the forms, while at the same time openly declaring to his brethren that his complaints against the Prayer Book were in some measure, different from those which they had made.

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 171 (p. 306).

<sup>2</sup>Orme, Life of Baxter, II, p. 305.



As these Exceptions reveal the general position of Church reformers during the period they merit close study. From the opening phrases of this particular document one is struck by the fact that the programme of reform advocated by this group of Puritan leaders in 1661 was quite similar in many respects to that which Puritans had proposed in the Millenary Petition of 1603. But the fact that the grievances were still being articulated in 1661 indicated an unwillingness on the part of the Anglican bishops in general to bring about changes in the Liturgy.

In presenting their exceptions the Ministers now pleaded that as the first Reformers composed the Liturgy with a view to winning over papists, it (the Liturgy) ought now to be revised so as to gain upon the judgments and affections of all Protestants. The Prayer Book was regarded as a valuable but imperfect expression of reformed worship. It was urged that, after one hundred years' use of the Book, a revision might well be attempted, "especially considering that many godly and learned men have from the beginning all along earnestly desired the alterations of many things therein."<sup>1</sup>

The Exceptions as presented fell into two categories: (1) General and (2) Particulars. The General consisted of eighteen statements of criticisms and observations, the Particulars of seventy-eight. The Exceptions, quite apart from their tediousness and prolixity show evidence of hurried and hasty preparation. But if studied carefully they represent the best criticism of the Prayer

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii p. 316.

Book that had been developed in the long, and sometimes arid, controversy between the Puritans and the Episcopalians.

In broadest outline the Exceptions deal with general principles, faulty or confused phrases and expressions, and objectionable usages. With regard to the first, the Ministers wanted to have the Prayer Book altered to the point where it would be doctrinally acceptable to "all those who in the substantials of the Protestant religions are of the same persuasions as ourselves." Spontaneous or conceived prayer should not be restricted or hindered. The use of the Apocrypha in worship should be discontinued. Since, they maintained, the only two sacraments of the Church were baptism and the Lord's Supper, that part of the Prayer Book which implies that Confirmation and Matrimony are also sacraments should be altered.

The Ministers raised more serious questions about the forms for the ordinance of baptism. They suggested the words "May receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration," which were said before baptism, should be altered to read thus: "May be regenerated and receive the remissions of sin." Again they requested that the words after baptism--"that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant by Thy Holy Spirit"--should be changed. The language in which the Ministers expressed this objection is quite striking. "We cannot", they asserted, "in faith say that every child that is baptized is regenerated by God's Holy Spirit, at least it is a disputable point, and therefore we desire it may be otherwise expressed."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>An Accompt op. cit., 4ff.

Confirmation is not condemned, but the Ministers did emphasize that enough was not being done to assure a proper examination of the children to be confirmed. The children were not adequately prepared by repeating from memory the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and by answering some questions of the Catechism. They pointed out further that the rite when it is administered ought to conform to the King's Declaration that it be solemnly performed by "the information and with the consent of the minister of the place."<sup>1</sup>

In connection with the statement, "who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them the forgiveness of all their sins", the Ministers voiced their objection thus:

This supposeth that all the children who are brought to be confirmed have the Spirit of Christ and the forgiveness of all their sins; whereas a great number of children at that age, having committed many sins since their baptism, do show no evidence of serious repentance or of any special saving grace; and therefore this confirmation (if administered to such) would be a perilous and gross abuse.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the solemnization of matrimony, the Puritan leaders objected to the use of the ring, and of the word "worship," and to the rubric which enjoins receiving the communion; and with respect to the visitation of the sick, the same persons wished that a form of absolution might be omitted at the Ministers' option, or that if used, it might be framed on a declarative and conditional form.

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<sup>1</sup>See Chapter V, p. 107, Item V.

<sup>2</sup>RE I li p. 329.

On the question of faulty and defective phrases and expressions, the Ministers objected to the people's participation in the forms of responses and alternate reading of the Psalms and Hymns which caused a confused murmur in the congregation and was totally unedifying. The people's part is "to be only with silence and reverence to attend thereunto, and to declare their consent by saying, Amen."<sup>1</sup>

The Liturgy, in the Ministers' estimation, was for the most part defective especially in its variance with the Scripture and therefore should be corrected. The word "Minister" should be employed instead of "priest" and the "Lord's Day" should be substituted for Sunday. The King James Version of the Bible should be used at Church, and readings or lessons should come only from the Old and New Testaments. No portions of the Old Testament or Acts of the Apostles are to be called "Epistles."

The Liturgy was also defective in Praise and Thanksgiving. The Collects were disorderly, and catechisms were imperfect. A pure version of the metrical Psalms should be provided; and all obsolete words should be altered.

Under the caption of objectionable usages, the Ministers singled out the use of the surplice, the signing of the cross in baptism, and kneeling for Communion, as unwarrantable. With regard to feast days and other holy days the Ministers were particularly severe. The Confession is very defective, not clearly

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<sup>1</sup>Accompt, p. 4.

expressing original sin, not sufficiently enumerating actual sins but consisting only of generalities.<sup>1</sup> Fasting in Lent was opposed. The Ministers questioned the right of the bishops to impose "human" institutions. Even their advocates had admitted that these were "indifferent". They appealed to Paul's admonition that no scandal or occasion of stumbling should be laid before a weak brother. A stirring plea was presented for unity and for removing the grievous causes of division which had plagued the Church and nation for much too long.

We do therefore most earnestly entreat the right reverend fathers and brethren, to whom these papers are delivered . . . to join with us in importuning His Most Excellent Majesty, that His most gracious indulgence, as to these ceremonies, granted in His royal Declaration, may be confirmed and continued to us and our posterity.<sup>2</sup>

Much ado has been made about the Ministers' Exceptions. In some quarters they are described as sweeping and unreasonable demands. Others speak of them as an indulgence in trivia. In view of these strictures, it would not be amiss to study closely what these Ministers were seeking by way of Reformation of the Liturgy and ceremonies.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 17 (p. 319).

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 18 (p. 320).

<sup>3</sup>It may be well to repeat that Baxter did not play a dominant part in drawing up the Exceptions as presented. It is also curious that Reynolds, Bishop of Norwich, who appeared at the Conference as a Presbyterian, and in Convocation as a Prelate, shared in the responsibility of preparing objections to the Prayer Book. See RB I ii p. 307. It is also interesting to recall that the same Bishop as a member of convocation contributed to the new forms in the Prayer book.

To be sure, the tediousness of the Exceptions did provoke the bishops and reduced the possibility of any essential changes in the Liturgy. And if, like Boshier,<sup>1</sup> one looks at the Conference through Anglican eyes the action of the bishops could plausibly be defended. The bishops at the Savoy had an immense weight of argument behind them. They could argue that the Exceptions were the familiar Puritan wails which began from Elizabethan times and they had seen enough from the actions of the Puritans which forced them to be negative in their attitude in 1661.

However, notice must be taken of the kind of emphases given in the Exceptions. Great stress is placed on the fact that the Prayers and other parts of the Liturgy should have nothing doubtful or questioned amongst pious, sincere and orthodox persons, since the desired aim of all is the declaring of unity and consent of those who participate in the public worship of God.<sup>2</sup>

Boshier tried to make a case for the Anglican bishops by suggesting that they entered upon the conference with some hope of satisfying the more moderate Puritans, and not with any predetermined attitude of non-possumus. Reference is made to Reynolds as an encouraging example of what the Anglicans had anticipated, namely, comprehending within the Establishment the more moderate men among the Puritans. In a decisive statement Boshier asserts "it should not

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<sup>1</sup>Boshier, op. cit., p. 226.

<sup>2</sup>Accompt., p. 2. This part was written by William Bates.

be forgotten that many such Puritans did in fact find it possible to conform when the hour of decision came."<sup>1</sup>

What is evidently forgotten by Boshier and others like him is the fact that more than half of the twenty-one Ministers at the Conference were 'orthodox' Presbyterians and had belonged to Presbyterian Church courts. Hardly anyone of them but Baxter fully merited Baxter's favorite designation of "moderate episcopal." What must also be remembered is that after the ejection of 1662, moderate Episcopal Ministers joined ranks with true Presbyterians. Sixteen out of the twenty-one Puritans at the Savoy Conference who were ejected and did not subsequently conform, styled themselves "Presbyterian" when licensed under the King's Declaration of Indulgence in 1672 as entitled to preach--Baxter alone excepted.<sup>2</sup>

To accuse the Ministers of arrogance or hypocrisy on the basis of their Exceptions is neither just nor right. They had expressed "their high and honourable esteem for those Godly Learned Bishops" and hoped that they could work together for Christian Moderation and Clemency.<sup>3</sup>

But there seemed to be an unconscious fear in the minds of the Ministers regarding the reception of their Exceptions by the bishops. They therefore appealed to them "to judge it their Duty (what we find to be the Apostles' own practice) in a special manner to be tender of the Churches' peace, to bear with the infirmities

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<sup>1</sup>Boshier, op. cit., pp. 228, 229.

<sup>2</sup>A. H. Wood, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>3</sup>Accompt., p. 2.

of the weak, and not to please themselves, nor to measure the consciences of other Men by the Light or Latitude of their own, but seriously and readily to consider and advise of such expedients as may most conduce to the healing of our Breaches, and uniting those that differ."<sup>1</sup>

There are three discernible points in this appeal that emphasize the Ministers' concerns: Charity, dialogue, and unity. If these can only be achieved, "we doubt not that the peace of the Church will be thereby settled, the hearts of Ministers and people comforted and composed, and the great Mercy of Unity and Stability . . . bestowed upon us and our posterity after us."<sup>2</sup>

In addition to their Exceptions, the Ministers handed in two other documents, the Petition for Peace and the Reformation of the Liturgy. Powicke claims that anyone who wishes to understand Baxter should read this Petition.

It will bring home to him with what intensity of vision and feeling Baxter grasped the high issues at stake. On the other hand it will show him just where the Bishops failed: they failed (quite apart from the merits of their case) in moral and religious earnestness. This was the glaring contrast between them and Baxter. Accordingly his appeal did not move them in the least, except to impatience.<sup>3</sup>

But another equally respected authority described the Petition as "for the most part a lengthy repetition of the Puritan wail, which

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>F. J. Powicke, A Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924), pp. 201, 202.



had been going on for a hundred years against set forms of prayer and ceremonial.<sup>1</sup>

The Petition for Peace is a carefully conceived and irenic document which brings out more clearly than anything else Baxter's true temperament in his efforts for peace and unity.

Its main burden takes the form of an appeal to both sides to bury their differences, past and present, and to take up a new search for unity. There are seventeen main points in the Petition. It opens on a note of submission. Baxter entreated thus:

That you will grant what we have here proposed and craved of you. Even your charitable interpretation, acceptance of, and consent unto the alteration and additions to the Liturgy now tendred unto you . . . And that seeing we cannot obtain the form of Episcopal Government, described by Usher, the late Reverend Primate of Ireland, and approved by many Episcopal Divines, we may at least enjoy those benefits of Reformation and Discipline, and that freedom from subscription, Oaths and Ceremonies which are granted in the said Declaration, by the means of your charitable Mediation and Request.<sup>2</sup>

On this point the Petition speaks of the several hundred Ministers who were ejected and in great distress. In essence the following main points are to be noted.

1) That neither the Book of Common Prayer, nor the Reformed Liturgy should be imposed on the Ministers or people who scruple, but they should be free to use the one most consistent with the claims of their consciences.

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Procter and W. H. Frere, The Book of Common Prayer with a Rationale of Its Offices, (Revised ed.) (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1958), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>D.W.L. MSS 59 12 fol. 129. Italics are mine.

2) That any imposition which fosters division, ejection and suppression of certain of His Majesty's subjects is inconsistent with the instruction of Scripture.

3) That the proper exercise of discipline is within the jurisdiction of the Pastors as well as the bishops.

4) That ceremonies and Liturgies did not essentiate the Church and as such were not necessary for salvation. Therefore, they should not be the cause of stumbling for faithful Ministers and people. (This is an extremely important point because here is revealed how much Baxter was willing to reduce doctrines in order to have a Christian Church broadly based on the essentials of the Christian faith for the sake of peace and concord.)

5) That the best form of Government for the Church is the Primitive or Moderate Episcopacy as practised in the Ancient Church and as advocated by Archbishop Usher.<sup>1</sup> But since this form was not followed it cannot be expected of Ministers to swear canonical obedience to diocesan bishops.

Nothing that the Ministers requested in this plea for peace overstepped the promises given in the King's Declaration. To be sure, the Petition is far too wordy but it cannot be accused of being polemical. The quality of its tone is highly moralistic and as is already noted, was deliberately conceived so as to reduce the

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<sup>1</sup>David Underdown is deeply convinced that had the bishops accepted Usher's scheme which the Ministers offered as a basis for agreement, the unity of the Church would have been preserved. See his Pride's Furge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 21; also p. 16.

possibility of a negative response from the bishops. It made indeed a searching appeal to the conscience.

It reminded the bishops of their moral and spiritual responsibilities as Servants of the Flock of God. If they would soberly consider the Petition, and grant the specific reforms as based on the Declaration, along with the freedom to use the Reformed Liturgy as an alternative, and restore the able and godly Ministers to their places in the service of the Church, "how great would be the benefits of this unworthy nation."<sup>1</sup>

The Ministers noted that if the bishops expelled Ministers who could not subscribe to the existing Liturgy, their action would be wholly inconsistent with the action of the early Church for centuries. If they ejected those who were disposed to accept primitive episcopacy, an alternative form of Liturgy, and the system of discipline as these were set forth in the King's Declaration, they (the bishops) would be doing what bishops like Usher and Hall would have utterly condemned.<sup>2</sup>

The Petition ended with an appeal which deserves attention:

Grant us but the freedom that Christ and His apostles left unto the Churches; use necessary things as necessary, and unnecessary as unnecessary . . . and tolerate the tolerable, while they live peaceably. . . . But if you reject our suit, we shall commit all to Him that judgeth righteously. . . .<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>D.W.L. op. cit., fol. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Gould, op. cit., p. 187.

<sup>3</sup>Gould, op. cit., pp. 199-200.

Nearly a month elapsed in the preparation of the Ministers documents. During that month a new Parliament was elected and with it a new Convocation. That Parliament has been described "as more royalist than the King, and more Anglican than the Bishops."<sup>1</sup>

By this time too, popular support had turned decidedly in the bishops' favour and they were strong enough to employ to an even greater measure, the language of authority. Thus when the Exceptions along with the Petition for Peace and the Reformation of the Liturgy, passed into their hands, they gave their Answer not as if the issues were under joint discussion, but as if each question were submitted to them for their decision.<sup>2</sup>

They therefore insisted that they were permitted by the King's decree to make only such changes as were necessary and approved by both parties. In the light of this the discussion had already terminated when the bishops gave in their Answer. The concessions offered were a significant proof, from the smallness of their number and their comparative unimportance, that the two parties were now so remote from each other as to leave no prospect of any solid agreement. Henry Ferne in fact stated that there were not many things to which they (the Anglicans) could agree.<sup>3</sup> The bishops' Answer also falls into two categories. In each category they

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<sup>1</sup>E. Cardwell, A History of Conferences and other Proceedings Connected with the Book of Common Prayer from 1588-1690 (Oxford University Press, 1841), p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>BM Add 28, 053. Danby MSS, fol. 1.

dealt with the Ministers' objections point by point. They vigorously maintained that the Prayer Book as it was provided the best assurance for preserving and perpetuating peace and unity in the Church. They reminded the Ministers that the burden of proof rested upon them to demonstrate that the Liturgy in its present form was sinful and unlawful. They argued that its genuineness was not determined by the consensus of those who opposed it, although if such argument were permissible the weight of evidence would be decidedly in favour of its continuance since there were more people devoted to it than were against it. The bishops were therefore satisfied that the existing Liturgy conformed to Scripture and the usages of antiquity.

In the Answer to questions relating to forms of prayer, particularly extemporaneous prayers, the bishops explicitly declared: "Devotion is apt to freeze or sleep, or flat in a long continued prayer"; as a consequence the use of many short prayers was to be encouraged since the worshippers were "therein often called upon and awakened by frequent 'Amens' and 'responses'". They criticized extemporaneous prayers as being too tedious and the expression of private opinions. The bishops contended that fasting in Lent was a valid and useful practice, and that the observance of saints' days, and the use of the words 'priest' and 'Sunday' should not be abrogated.

On the question of ceremonies the bishops asserted the Church's authority to impose the use of them. They therefore defended the three disputed points, the surplice, the use of the cross in Baptism and kneeling at Communion. The core of their argument with

respect to these was that only superior persons were fit to determine or judge their convenience and those who were not capable of doing so their duty was to obey. "Pretence of conscience" said the bishops, "is no exemption from obedience . . . and we must not perform public services undecently or disorderly for the ease of tender consciences." Only the ignorant or obstinate would oppose and by their opposition set up roadblocks in the way of peace and unity. The bishops argued that the surplice was ancient and had never lost the reverence which was always ascribed to it. As for the cross in Baptism its importance must never be minimized because it was a significantion to all that Christians were not ashamed of the cross of Christ. Kneeling in the act of receiving the Communion was proper and reverent, declared the bishops. It is very revealing that the vital issue of admission to the Lord's Table was ignored by the bishops and they took little heed of the protest against the rubric which compelled all parishioners to celebrate the Lord's Supper not less than three times in one year.

The subject of Baptism was a particularly heated one. On no point did the bishops agree with the Ministers. They in fact denied that the Ministers had the power to judge whether the parents who presented the infants for Baptism were fit and proper persons or were notorious sinners and unbelievers. Here again the question of authority--which undoubtedly was the crucial question throughout this whole conference--comes to the fore. Just as Baxter had contended for the power of the Keys to be given to the Pastors, the bishops with equal conviction and firmness refused to grant any such authority.

On a sounder principle the bishops resolved that every infant should be baptized. This is how they expressed their view:

It is an erroneous doctrine, and the ground of many others, and of many of your exceptions, that children have no other right to Baptism, than in their parents' right. . . . Our Church concludes more charitably, that Christ will favourably accept every infant to Baptism, that is presented by the Church according to our present order.<sup>1</sup>

The bishops were unyielding in their position on the teaching of baptismal regeneration. They declared:

Seeing that God's Sacraments have their effects, where the receiver does not put any bar against them (which children cannot do), we may say in faith of every child that is baptized, that it is regenerated by God's Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of this point of view is that the validity of baptismal regeneration is made to depend on Christ rather than on the faith of the child or the parents or godparents. With regard to Confirmation, against which the Ministers had expressed grave doubts and objections, the bishops in the Answer stated that it must be reserved to a bishop, "to bless being an act of authority." Clearly, the maintenance of episcopal authority was regarded as of paramount importance.

The use of the ring in marriage was defended as legitimate and it was an assumption that all those who were to be married ought to be fit to receive the Sacraments; but as one author notes, "in

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<sup>1</sup>Egerton MSS. 2570. The whole account of the bishops' Answer is presented point by point in Egerton MSS. 2570 and is written in several hands.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

spite of the bishops' assumption, Parliament afterwards decided to make Communion optional on the marriage-day."<sup>1</sup>

The bishops took an extreme position in which they indicated their intention to make an alteration in the Prayer Book against the Ministers' principles. They proposed that the Catechism should state,<sup>2</sup> "that children being baptized have all things necessary for their salvation, and dying before they commit any actual sins, be undoubtedly saved though they be not confirmed."<sup>3</sup>

This proposal angered Baxter and evoked from him the strongest and severest protest.

Of course, the bishops were not entirely unyielding even though the evidence supports Baxter's outcry that the Answer was "without any abatements or alterations at all that are worth the naming."<sup>4</sup>

In fact the bishops conceded only seventeen points out of the ninety-six which the Ministers presented; three from the category we labelled "General" and fourteen from the category labelled "Particular". Of the seventeen points it is generally agreed that only one has any significance, that is, the substitution of the Authorized Version, but it should be noted that this in no way affects the structure or doctrine of the services.

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<sup>1</sup>A. H. Wood, op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>3</sup>Procter and Frere, New History of the Book of Common Prayer, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1920), p. 200.

<sup>4</sup>RE I ii 187 (p. 334).



The bishops yielded to the removal of archaisms, but of the other concessions, six deal with general principles, seven with defective wording, and two with objectionable usages.

Apart from these concessions each Exception is firmly and scathingly argued against by the bishops. They had maintained from the start that the Church formulas were most proper and needed no revision. This attitude still characterized their dealings with the Ministers and the documents presented. No plea of "tender consciences" was going to move them to adopt changes for which there was in their opinion no clear necessity.

The two leading Anglican liturgical scholars, Procter and Frere, point to the fact that the bishops "took up a strong and unyielding position behind primitive custom and Catholic usage."<sup>1</sup>

In this connection also another writer affirms:

The Bishops' Answers were written in an uncourteous, and captious spirit, not indicating the slightest disposition to conciliate, but foreclosing the possibilities of removing objections: for they said, the alteration asked would be a virtual confession that the Liturgy is an intolerable burden to tender consciences, a direct cause of schism and a superstitious usage, that it would justify past Non-conformity and condemn the conduct of all Conformists. The document presents an angry defence of Church formulas; and, whilst there is much in the reasoning which commends itself to admirers of the Liturgy, the temper betrayed is of a kind which many of them will condemn.<sup>2</sup>

It is only fair to say that the bishops' unyielding attitude was not one of anger as Stoughton suggests. Rather it was one of rational

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<sup>1</sup>Procter and Frere, The Book of Common Prayer with a Rationale of its Offices, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup>Stoughton, op. cit., p. 177.

analysis and shrewd calculation about the difference between theory and practice. They are not to be condemned for believing that to yield on any essential points would manifestly change the character of their beloved Book of Common Prayer and indeed the character of the whole Church, which, it may be recalled, they thought had been miraculously restored to them. They were undoubtedly still worried about English Puritans who were not all Presbyterians.

Such doubts, of course, militated against a completely fair appraisal of what the Ministers were asking in their Exceptions and other documents. The situation also forecast the rigidity with which the Liturgy and ceremonies would be enforced and the remoteness of a meaningful settlement. To be sure, the bishops were aware that any form of rigid imposition of the Liturgy would keep Puritans out of the Church, no matter how many concessions were granted.

This point is of key importance, because Baxter makes it quite clear in a subsequent document, which he had prepared for the Conference but which was never used, and is therefore not among his published or collected works. In this new document, The Church Reformation Desired by the Reconcilers, Baxter explicitly states:

But if a form of Liturgy must be imposed on all our ministers we desire that it be not with such rigor as that the omission of a word or sentence or small part shall be punishable when the substance or general part is used, and all necessary parts of each office is performed. . . . And if any worthy minister scruple the use of the Liturgy but will live peaceably and not preach against it, we desire that (he) may be admitted to be a lecturer or assistant to such incumbent as desire it. If any allowed pastor be accused of injuring any person by denying them baptism or the Lord's Supper, or as guilty of maladministration, he shall be responsible to his Rulers, and if guilty and unreformed after a first and second

admonition, shall be punished according to law as his offence . . . but not forbidden his ministerial labour till it be proved that he does more hurt than good.<sup>1</sup>

When the Ministers received the bishops' Answer, they saw how little and inconsequential were the points yielded by their opponents. Thereupon the task of preparing a reply fell upon Baxter's willing shoulders.

The Ministers by this time resolved that the issues at stake now called for clear statements rather than bringing into play what little diplomacy they possessed.

Thus the Ministers' Rejoinder began with the accusation that the bishops' design was unscriptural and inconsistent with the practice of the Apostles. "We must protest before God and men against the dose of opium which you here prescribe or wish for, as that which plainly tendeth to cure the disease by the extinguishing of life and to unite us all in a dead religion."<sup>2</sup>

Plainly in the tone of this criticism there is no restraint or diplomacy. Such language could only lead to a further hardening of positions and a consequent degeneration of the Conference. In the Ministers' Rejoinder Baxter was guilty of "overdoing". He appeared at his weakest here. He was aware of the bishops' authority, and therefore ought to have calculated that harsh accusations against them, could be easily turned against him and jeopardize even further the non-conformists' cause.

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<sup>1</sup>The Church Reformation Desired by the Reconcilers; in ten articles written by Richard Baxter . . . For the use of posterity . . . D.W.L., MSS 59.11, Vol. V fols 158, 161.

<sup>2</sup>D.W.L. MSS 59.10 fol. 129.

But when he went on to decry the bishops' rule in such terms as; "O lamentable charity, that smoothes men's way to hell and keepeth them ignorant of their danger, till they are past remedy,"<sup>1</sup> he in fact destroyed himself and his cause. Of course, it was a destruction already settled by the bishops. Nothing that Baxter said or did at this point could have altered their judgment. If he had been more tactful and less vehement it might have allowed him to escape or avoid the opprobrium which some of his contemporaries and subsequent critics have heaped upon him, but it would have made no difference at the time.

So when one reads the concluding words of the Rejoinder: "If those be all the abatements and amendments you will admit, you sell your innocency and the Church's peace for nothing,"<sup>2</sup> one must bear in mind the provocations of the times and the power of the bishops' against the Puritans.

However, despite Baxter's sense of injury and his expression of indignation, such protest and strong remonstrance were lamentably out of place in an attempt to bring two parties of opposite sentiments to a mutual understanding, no matter how hopeless it seemed.

Baxter states in his Reliquiae that he had reasons "to think that the Generality of the Bishops and Doctors present never knew what we offered them in the Reformed Liturgy, nor in the Reply, nor in any of our Papers, save those few which we read openly to them."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>KB I ii. 190 (p. 335).

Bosher quotes Henry Ferne's letter<sup>1</sup> to refute Baxter's charge and to support the view that the Anglicans reached the conclusion regarding the futility of the negotiations only after the Ministers' documents were presented. But to maintain this position is to fly in the face of the evidence.

There is also another letter, written by Dr. Hacket, who was a member of the Conference, which according to Bosher provides conclusive evidence that the bishops did study the documents.

It must be noted that Baxter did not say all of the bishops and doctors were ignorant of the contents of those Papers. He in fact makes it quite explicit that the "writers of their Confutations would be at the labour of reading them over."<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately a recent discovery of a MS<sup>3</sup> containing the bishops' Answers clearly corroborates Baxter's assertion, for in this MS we found that the bishops' Answers were written by six different hands.

This seems to indicate that only the "writers of their Confutations" were chosen to deal with the different aspects of the Papers. Furthermore, in different parts of the Answers were several places where the word "I" was substituted or scratched and the word

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<sup>1</sup>Reference is already made to this letter. Ferne however, was not a member of the Savoy Conference.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 190 (p. 335).

<sup>3</sup>BM Egerton MSS 362 Vol 61.18. This document was brought to my attention by Dr. G. F. Nuttall and is here being studied for the first time since its discovery. A photostat copy is placed in the D.W.L. but the original remains in the BN.

"we" put in its place, indicating a change made either after or during the time when the Answers were read to the generality of the bishops and doctors.

The different styles in handwriting are quite distinct and the great number of spelling differences within the same document strongly favour the position that only six out of the twelve or so bishops and their co-adjutors had anything to do with the actual study or examination of the Ministers' Papers.

Moreover Dr. Hacket's letter could easily be interpreted to mean that not much time was really spent on these Papers by the generality of bishops and doctors. He stated in this letter, that "since we parted at London, a composure of a Liturgy (some say it is Mr. Baxter's pen) was brought to the Bishops. It was sent to me immediately to look it over and in three nights warning for my answers."<sup>1</sup>

Both Hacket and Ferne indicate that there was not much time spent in going over the Ministers' Papers. Ferne states that "we run through the whole liturgy and their Exceptions . . . agreeing what might be yielded to."<sup>2</sup> And Hacket complains that he had only three nights to look them over and submit his Answers.

The evidence seems conclusive that the bishops did not wish to comprehend within the Establishment the Puritans, who they

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<sup>1</sup>BM, Sloane MSS 1710, fol. 202. This letter was written on July 8, a little over two weeks before the Conference broke up.

<sup>2</sup>BM Add, 28, 053, Danby MSS fol. 1.

knew would not reach agreement on the basis of the minor concessions granted.

The Conference broke up on July 25, 1661, after ten days of indulgence in senseless disputations. Both sides knew that nothing could be achieved by their disputatious wranglings, yet both consented to engage in them, which only added to the discredit of their endeavours.<sup>1</sup>

Baxter maintained that what he was against was the rigidity of imposition of the Liturgy and ceremonies. He was not against the surplice as such, but compulsion to use it he held to be unlawful. Neither would he withhold the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper from anyone who had no scruples about receiving it kneeling, but compulsion to kneel on pain of excommunication was inconsistent with the promise of tender consciences. And so it was for the sign of the cross in baptism, and the proclaiming of infants to be regenerate.<sup>2</sup>

Procter and Frere sum up the situation in the following manner:

They [the bishops] also knew that it was vain to assent to any real change, for that, if they granted all the proposals of the Ministers and altered all the ceremonies and phrases objected to, the Prayer Book would still be deemed an intolerable burden, so long as its use in any shape was to be constantly and vigorously enforced.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The main issue debated was the sinfulness of enjoining ministers to deny the Communion to all that dare not kneel. Pearson, Gunning and Spurrow were the bishops disputant. Bates, Jacombe and Baxter represented the Ministers.

<sup>2</sup>Baxter had allowed Sir Ralph Clare to communicate kneeling in Kidderminster.

<sup>3</sup>Procter and Frere, op. cit., p. 189.

Such indeed were the presuppositions and pre-judgments with which the bishops entered into the Conference and these inevitably led to their own expected results.

Because of these they honestly could not see that the Presbyterians were not seeking complete freedom from all Liturgical forms.

"We would avoid," declared the Ministers, "both the extreme that would have no forms, and the contrary extreme that would have nothing but forms. You would deny us and all ministers the liberty of using any other Prayers beside the Liturgy."<sup>1</sup>

Thus after four months of misunderstanding and controversy, the Savoy Conference came to an inglorious end.

"We were all agreed on the ends", says Baxter, "for the Church's welfare, unity, and peace and His Majesty's happiness and contentment; but after all our debates, were disagreed of the means, and this was the end of that Assembly and Commission."<sup>2</sup>

One thing that emerges quite clearly from our discussion of the Savoy Conference is that even if the Conference had succeeded in a form of compromise on the Prayer Book, that was still not going to bring about the desired unity and the "giving of satisfaction to tender consciences", which was the explicit desire of the King as expressed in the Declaration and the King's Warrant. The fact is the bishops paid little heed to the central questions of Church government by absolute prelacy or modified episcopacy and Church

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<sup>1</sup>D.W.L., op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 231 (p. 357).



discipline by diocesan bishops or by pastors and synods. The discussion on the Prayer Book itself was doomed to failure with the futile method of exchanging bitter documents and the bishops' refusal to settle disputed points openly. But in fairness to the bishops it must be pointed out that since the Reformation the principle had been laid down that every national Church should impose ceremonies that were not believed contrary to the Word of God; and there is every reason to believe that the bishops at the Conference were convinced that their action in this regard was not inconsistent with this Reformation principle. Yet it is true that Baxter's contention was not that the ceremonies in themselves were sinful, but that it was sinful to impose them.

So although, according to Baxter, both bishops and Ministers were agreed on the ends they failed to reach agreement on the means and this was the end indeed of all the proceedings of the Savoy Conference of 1661.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The greatest controversy surrounding the Savoy Conference has always been concerned with the cause or causes for its failure. More attention has been paid to this brief period in Baxter's life than to any other equally brief period. Almost every writer on this subject up to the present day has directly or indirectly placed the blame for the abortive outcome of the conference on Baxter. In the eyes of Anglicans in his own day and since, there is no doubt that, had Baxter not been present, agreement between the Presbyterians and the Anglicans would have been reached. His contemporaries, beginning with the amiable Lord Chancellor, told him that he was severe and strict and that he made those things Sin which others did not. Baxter's reply to Clarendon's criticism is revealing. "I told him that I had spoken nothing but what I thought, and had given my Reasons for . . ."<sup>1</sup> The sincerity and purpose with which he conducted himself are clearly seen in this manly answer.

Another of his contemporaries and one of his severest critics, bishop Morley, does not disguise his impressions of Baxter. He emphatically and publicly declared:

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<sup>1</sup>RE I ii 237 (p. 365).

His (Baxter's) brethren have several times declared themselves not to be of his opinion. . . . And therefore we were so just as not to charge them with the assertion,<sup>1</sup> especially considering they did shew themselves unwilling to enter upon this dispute,<sup>2</sup> and seemed to like much better another way tending to an amicable and fair compliance, which was wicilly frustrated by Mr. Baxter's furious eagerness to engage in Disputation.<sup>3</sup>

In recent times some Anglicans have been even more severe in passing judgment on Baxter, than his contemporaries were. In the estimation of Boshet, "Baxter's combativeness and voluble self-assertion were highly exasperating to the Anglicans and militated against any friendly rapprochment between the two parties." Therefore, "in the eyes of churchmen the blame for the failure of the Conference was squarely fixed on the shoulders of Richard Baxter."<sup>4</sup>

Another scholar laments. "He [Baxter] had no sense of humour. He had never had training or experience in negotiating or in getting business through assemblies. Not a statesman, he was also not more charitable than the opponents he now met."<sup>5</sup>

Clark may be right in saying that Baxter had no sense of humour, but he is certainly wrong in claiming that he had no

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<sup>1</sup>The assertion being "that a man might live without any actual sin."

<sup>2</sup>This was the dispute in the last few days of the Conference when the Ministers decided that any further debate was unrealistic. However, Bates, Baxter, and Jacombe were allowed to enter the debate.

<sup>3</sup>Accompt., p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Boshet, op. cit., pp. 229, 230, 228.

<sup>5</sup>G. N. Clark, The Later Stuarts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), p. 19.

experience in negotiating. The error in this statement is too glaring to merit any further comment. S. C. Carpenter suggests that, had agreement been reached, the Church of England might have been the Church of the whole English people, "but it would have been a different church, less true to its Catholic tradition, less likely to be in the end a focus of ecumenical reunion and with a Calvinistic bias."<sup>1</sup>

Before engaging in a discussion of these strictures and criticisms of Baxter, another essential point must first be considered, namely the political climate at the time of the Conference. It is beyond dispute that the political events which transpired at the time of the Conference inevitably favoured and encouraged the position taken by the bishops.

Cardwell gives notice of the fact that

as soon as the Parliament of 1661 was assembled, and the sentiments of the House of Commons were ascertained, there could no longer be any doubt as to the future form and relations of the national Church.<sup>2</sup>

We must not overlook the important fact of the simultaneity between the meetings of the new Parliament and those of the new Convocation. Baxter was certainly alert enough to discern elements from these meetings that would strengthen the hands of the bishops at the Savoy. At the elections for Convocation, the Anglicans

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<sup>1</sup>S. C. Carpenter, The Church of England, 597-1688 (London: J. Murray, 1954), p. 457.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Cardwell, A History of Conferences and Other Proceedings Connected with the Book of Common Prayer from 1588-1690 (Oxford: University Press, 1841), p. 244.

gained a solid majority, because so many Puritan ministers had been ejected and their places taken up by sequestered Anglicans.<sup>1</sup> On May 7 when the London Ministers met at Sion College to elect a Principal and an assistant for the ensuing year, the Diocesan party again carried the election and so took control of the college. On May 8 Convocation assembled, while the Conference was in session, and as was expected both parties were controlled by men who were more Royalist than the King and more Anglican than the bishops.

Within less than two weeks after Parliament met an order was proclaimed for the destruction of the Solemn League and Covenant, and on the 22 of May, the Covenant was burnt in public by the hands of the common Hangman.<sup>2</sup>

These are some of the events which took place in less than one month after the commissioners had assembled to discuss the Liturgy and to make revision and alterations that would accommodate the Puritans and those of tender consciences.

It is quite likely that the bishops sincerely felt that in the light of the political situation, they had pursued the right course. These actions were an endorsement of their plans and to change might mean alienating more people from the Church than the number which might be comprehended.

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<sup>1</sup>By the end of 1660 about 695 ministers were ejected most of these being Presbyterians. 290 were displaced by Anglicans. See A. S. Matthews' Calamy Revised.

<sup>2</sup>RB I ii 181 (p. 334).

Another point of great political importance is that which is revealed by Dr. Nuttall. This writer has shown that while the Conference was in session on May 8, the few members of the New Parliament who would not receive the Communion according to the Prayer Book were suspended. He further calls attention to the fact that even before the Conference ended, within the two weeks June 25 to July 9, a Bill for Uniformity, assuming conformity to the Prayer Book as it then stood, was read three times in the House of Commons. But even more significant is the fact that with the restoration of the bishops to the House of Lords, all twelve principal commissioners in the Anglican party at the Savoy now had seats in that House, to which on July 10, the Bill for Uniformity was sent up. At the beginning of 1662 some of these bishops did in fact serve on the Lords' Select Committee for the Bill.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Baxter nor his colleagues could be insensitive to this dramatic development of events. As Cardwell observed, they were aware that the torch was already uplifted for their destruction; nevertheless they sought to remove whatever obstacles were removable in the pursuit of concord.<sup>2</sup>

Baxter's own words are very often used against him to prove that he was responsible for the failure of the Conference.

Surely it was natural for him to think and even admit that his "overdoing" had aggravated and provoked the bishops, especially

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<sup>1</sup>G. F. Nuttall, Richard Baxter, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup>Cardwell, op. cit., p. 244.

Morley, Cunning, Sheldon and Cosin, who from 1660 had already engaged him in bitter disputes during their meetings with the King in the Lord Chamberlain dwellings.

Baxter never shrunk from the costs of his leadership.

The fact that he was the chief spokesman for the Puritans must not be treated as it were, in passing. Morley's and Ferne's arguments that Baxter's colleagues seemed upset at him, because they several times thought that there was a better and more amicable and fair compliance, which he frustrated by his eagerness to engage in disputation,<sup>1</sup> and his strictness and severity,<sup>2</sup> are very slippery; for had the Puritan divines really wanted to keep Baxter in check, they could easily have outvoted him despite his protest. Had they been convinced that the bishops were in fact trying to understand their motives and conduct in the hope of reaching a settlement or compromise, they would not have allowed Baxter to frustrate their only chance of being taken back into the Church. The evidence proves the contrary to be more consistent with the ministers namely, that they were fully persuaded that very little could come out of their negotiations with the bishops, yet in order to avoid the charge of sedition and disruption of the Church's unity and peace they decided to meet.

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<sup>1</sup>Animadversions Upon a Late Treatise Entitled The Protestant Reconciler (London: Richard Chiswell, 1683). John Stoughton wrongly attributes this anonymous work to bishop Rust. In fact the author is Daniel Whitby. See Richard Baxter's Penitent Confession 1691.

<sup>2</sup>Ferne, op. cit.

Another point of considerable importance, and one that clearly disproves the charges that Baxter's brethren were frequently disturbed by his role at the Conference is the fact that the most scathing document of the whole negotiations, namely, the Ministers' Rejoinder to the bishops' Answers, was not only inspired by the ministers but additions were made when Baxter submitted it to them for scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> It is best to cite what actually transpired.<sup>2</sup> Baxter states that when the ministers received the bishops' Answers and saw that they had yielded no abatements or alterations worth the naming, "Our brethren seeing what they were resolved to bring it to, and how unpeaceably they managed the Business, did think best to write them a plain Answer to their Paper, and not to suppress it as we had done by the First. This task they imposed on me, and I went out of town to Dr. Spurstow's House in Hackney for Retirement where in eight days I drew up a Reply to their Answer to our Exceptions: and the Brethren read it and consented to it; only wished that it had been larger in the latter end, where I had purposely been brief, because I had been too large in the beginning,

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<sup>1</sup>There are three very important additions to this document which are not written by Baxter. One of these is in the hand of Dr. Manton, one of the leaders, who was ejected in 1662, when the Act of Uniformity was enforced.

See William Harris', Some Memoirs of the Life and Character of the Reverend and Learned Thomas Manton D.D. (London: J. Darby, 1725), p. 26ff.

<sup>2</sup>The Ministers reply is not printed in RB but is preserved in the Treatises in MSS in DWL. See MSS 59.10, Vol. IV, fol. 129.



and because Particulars may be answered satisfactorily in a few words when the General Differences are fully cleared."<sup>1</sup>

The question which remains to be asked is why did the ministers encourage Baxter not to suppress anything as they had hitherto done? Why did they feel that now was no time for mincing words?

These men who, according to two leading Anglican scholars, were men of deep "learning, acuteness and piety,"<sup>2</sup> had seen the development of events. Now their fears were confirmed that their future in the Church was dark indeed. But they had also grown weary in their search for peace and unity. So like Baxter many of them were prepared to face ejection and hardship in their effort to keep the doors of the Church open and their attempts to resist impositions on the consciences of others. This is perhaps true of Baxter more than of any other of his contemporaries. He was against the "Independent separating rigour"<sup>3</sup> as well as against the "Sect-Makers". He "will never join with them that have but one Form in Christ's School"<sup>4</sup> he once wrote to a separatist, and it is precisely this among other things, he was struggling so desperately to say to the bishops at the Savoy Conference.

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii 187 (pp. 334, 335). Italics are Baxter's.

<sup>2</sup>Procter and Frere, op. cit., p. 171.

<sup>3</sup>RB II i 103 (p. 46).

<sup>4</sup>RB appendix III, p. 62, in a letter of September 29 to Thomas Lambe.

Baxter was not afraid to be the scapegoat. He willingly accepted much of the responsibility for the breakdown of the Conference because as he explained:

. . . the Reason why I spoke so much was because it was the desire of my Brethren, and I was loath to expose them to the hatred of the Bishops; but was willinger to take it all upon myself--they themselves having so much wit as to be therein more sparing and cautious than I, and I thought that the Day and Cause commanded me these two things which then were objected against me as my Crimes viz, speaking too boldly and too long.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that the famous Worcester House Declaration of October 25, 1660, raised the hopes of the Puritans that Comprehension and toleration were negotiable and that on this basis the principal parties in the Nation could be brought together and the Church's Peace secured.

But because of the political climate and the turn of events, the bishops honestly, though firmly, assumed that no concessions would be granted that would in any way open the doors for the Puritans and weaken their control of ecclesiastical affairs, or reduce the status and reverence accorded to the Prayer Book and Prelacy.

Of great importance also is the unexplained delay in calling the Conference. It will be recalled that the Conference was scheduled to commence on the 15th of March, but a whole month elapsed before the Commissioners assembled at the Savoy for their first meeting.

The evidence points to the fact that the negotiations prior to the actual Conference, as well as the month's delay were

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<sup>1</sup>RB I ii. 236 (p. 364).

contrived in order to ensure that the bishops were fully in control of the Church and to give the New Parliament the much needed time to determine upon its programme for both Church and State. Sheldon made the startling comment shortly after the bishops were firmly in control of the Church, "now we know their minds, we will make the door so narrow that they will be knaves if they conform."<sup>1</sup>

His expectations were slightly frustrated by the number of Puritans that eventually conformed. He expressed his disappointment thus: "If we had thought so many would have conformed, we would have made it stricter."<sup>2</sup>

Thus disgust and horror evoked by the thought of the impudence by which the Puritans rose to power during the Interregnum were strong influences that made a successful or satisfactory outcome of the Conference illusory.

But politics was so much a branch of ecclesiastical affairs that now the victors showed no disposition to accept the vanquished. To be sure, it was virtually impossible to conceal the motive of political bitterness and revenge which played a major part in the breakdown of the Conference.

There were also the many years of ecclesiastical bitterness and theological rigidity on both sides. A few of the Ministers at the Conference maintained that these many years of rivalry and

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<sup>1</sup>A. M. Fairbairn, English Church History 1649-1702, Bicentenary Lectures, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

hatred could not all be buried in the space of four months. Many of them argued that reconciliation, though desirable, was well-nigh impossible, and this presupposition was a hindrance rather than a help when they met at the Savoy. So it is untrue to say that the Ministers did not approach the Conference without their own pre-judgments and a certain measure of intransigence which provoked the bishops in turn and increased their determination to keep the Puritans out of the Church.

It would indeed be misleading to suggest that Baxter was entirely blameless. He was too willing to carry the responsibility as chief spokesman. Being one to take his task seriously and to pursue peace and unity with deep sense of commitment, he quite often became overbearing in his speeches and his love of rational argument. Had he been more tactful he would have made his actions less vulnerable to the attacks of the critics and thus have avoided the severity of their judgments.

However, it is an inescapable fact that Baxter in some sense conceived his role at the Conference as that of a prophet, though a prophet of moderation. There are in his writings clear statements of his eagerness not to allow doctrines to take priority over peace and unity. As a "prophet" and pastor his plan was that he would indeed be the Witness or Agent of reconciliation Love and Justice in a Nation that was sadly divided; but he maintained that before this could be done the Church itself must be united.

This ideal proved fruitless, but the blame for its failure must not be placed on Baxter's shoulders. The evidence adduced from

the various documents relative to this question, points unmistakably to a number of vital factors as causes for the abortive outcome of the Savoy Conference, rather than to any single factor.

Perhaps more than any other, the political climate of 1660-1661 contributed to that result. The actions of the bishops were largely dictated by events in that sphere, and they thought it neither necessary nor desirable to bring in the Non-Conformists who, they assumed, would be a constant challenge and threat to their concept and practice of episcopacy and authority.

It is in this light that one must seek to understand the bishops' determination to preserve at all cost the principle of ius divinum. It is also against this background that one must place the blame for the failure of the Conference on the Bishops, notwithstanding the merit of their case, on the new Parliament and Convocation who passed the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and on the majority of Anglicans who turned popular opinion decidedly against the Non-Conformists.

The questions may now be asked: what is the value or relevance of this for our contemporary scene? What lessons can it teach us?

Baxter's insight that the Church's mission to the world takes priority over its forms and ceremonies, has a remarkable contemporaneity. It is this that many churchmen today are demanding. This it was that led Baxter to decry the divisions in the Church and made him critical of both Prelatists (the Sect-Makers), and Separatists (the Sects). He sought to preserve the balance between the extremes. Perhaps

even more than many churchmen today, Baxter grasped the enormous importance of moderation, controlled by Love, Truth and Justice.

On this basis I am confident that his appeal for unity in his own day and the principles by which this unity must be pursued and eventually established, can be extremely valuable and useful in helping to deal with the problems of union and unity in this ecumenical age. His emphasis on things necessary and his insight on mission as one of the marks of the Church may very well help to increase rapprochement among denominations and lead to a more charitable understanding of the significance of diversity in place of conformity. Baxter once wrote, "that Charity or Christian Love and Unity, are the vital Graces of the Christian Church." These are as essential (perhaps one might say more essential) for the Church today as when Baxter said it to the Church of his day. Baxter's purpose at the Savoy Conference was to hold the door of the Church open, and as Dr. Nuttall remarked, open one might say, for the Church of South India, save that in that Church there are ministers who have fastened on those who come after them what they decline for themselves, whereas Baxter declined to impose on his contemporaries the episcopal orders which he possessed himself. To him, imposition on the consciences of people, even those with whom he disagreed, he deemed unlawful and would have no part of it. This strong ecumenical outlook was what made him a non-conformist. By exposition and apology he worked to present and defend the Church's unity and the essentials of the Christian Faith. His expectations and his approach

caused him to be misunderstood and at times abused, but even his most severe critics have conceded the sincerity which dominated his efforts.

Thus among those who have worked for the peace and unity of the Church none deserved a higher place than the Pastor, writer and counsellor of Kidderminster. It is hoped that this study will have succeeded in advancing a better understanding of Baxter's role at the Savoy Conference in particular, and of his churchmanship, political philosophy and Puritanism, and have pointed to a higher estimate of his relevance both to his own day and to our time.

It is hoped further that this will be a partial fulfillment of his prophetic words spoken at the time of his trial in 1685:

"These things will surely be understood one day."

## APPENDIX

### THE SAVOY CONFERENCE: DOCUMENTS

Some attention has already been given to the documents of the Savoy Conference. It is hoped that the following detailed presentation of these documents may prove a convenient guide for future work on the Conference and the Baxter Treatises and other sources which are of great historic significance.

A considerable part of the documents were the original drafts or the original copies of what was printed in the Reliquiae Baxterianae. But a significant number are contained in the MS volumes which have not appeared in print. Much of the material Baxter had intended to publish and his reason for not accomplishing this ambition is of some interest.

In discussing these documents, we hope that the arrangement employed will be useful and practical.

For information regarding the documents of the Savoy Conference, there are five sources:

1. The MSS in D.W.L., Baxter MSS 59.12, Vol. VI; 59.11 Vol. V. 59.10, Vol. IV; 59.9, Vol. III; 59.13, Vol. VII.
2. The Reliquiae Baxterianae I ii. Here some vital items are included which are wanting in the MSS in D.W.L.
3. Egerton MS 2570. These documents are missing in the Baxter MSS and the Reliquiae. They were in fact thought to have been lost.



However it is now known that together with other parts of the Baxter Corpus which are of great historic significance, these are available in the British Museum as Egerton MS 2570. These papers were the basis for our re-evaluation of the Savoy Conference.

4. Liturgical Tracts 8.35.15. The parts dealing with the Conference are:

- i) "An Accompt of all the Proceedings of the Commissioners of both Persuasions appointed by his Sacred Majesty According to Letters Patent for the Review of the Book of Common Prayer 1660."

This account contains (a) the Ministers Exceptions against the Prayer Book, (b) the Bishops' Answers to the Exceptions and (c) the Ministers' rejoinder or Baxter's replies to the Bishops.

- ii) A Petition for Peace with the Reformation of the Liturgy.  
 iii) The Ministers Address to the King: "To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty. The Due Account, and Humble Petition of the Ministers of the Gospel, Lately Commissioned for the Review and Alteration of the Liturgy."

Items a and b in Part i are wanting in the D.W.L. MSS

Item a is found in the Reliquiae and b is in the Egerton MSS 2570, items 364, 365. Part ii is contained in D.W.L. MSS 59.10 Vol. IV; 59.9 Vol. III, and 59.13 Vol. VII, but it is not printed in the Reliquiae.

Part iii is printed in the Reliquiae but is not found in Egerton MSS.

5. "The Grand Debate between the Most Reverend the Bishops and the Presbyterian Divines Appointed by His Sacred Majesty as Commissioners for the Review and Alteration of the Book of Common Prayer . . . Being an Exact Account of their whole Proceedings. The most perfect copy, 1661."

This source contains the following parts:

- a) The Exceptions as Presented (b) the Bishops' Answers (c) the Ministers' Rejoinder or Baxter's replies, and (d) the Petition for Peace with the Reformation of the Liturgy.

Items a and b are wanting in D.W.L. MSS. Item a is found in the Reliquiae. Item b is found in Egerton MSS.

The other papers and documents relating to the Conference are: (a) Bishop's Cosin's Paper and reply (b) reply to Bishop Gunning (c) the Bishops' disputants and the debates. These are contained in D.W.L. and the Reliquiae.

Items (b) and (c) are in Egerton MSS.

A brief analysis of all the documents of the Conference reveals some important changes of additions and emphases which hitherto have been missed.

Beginning with the "Exceptions as drawn up"<sup>1</sup> which are found in D.W.L. MSS 59.11 Vol. V and 59.12 Vol. VI, and on pages 308-315 in

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<sup>1</sup>These were Baxter's criticisms against the Prayer Book which he offered to his brethren when they were drawing up theirs but were never accepted by them.

the Reliquiae, there is an insertion in the Reliquiae at the end of page 315 and the beginning of 316 that is positively not written by Baxter.

The addition is in the form of a criticism, and in fact a rejection of the practice of responses by the congregation. The importance of this addition in an unknown hand, lies in the fact that it is included in the Ministers' Exceptions against the Prayer Book.

Be it noted that "the Exceptions as presented" were entirely the work of the ministers. Some weight attaches to the fact that Baxter had nothing to do with the actual writing of these Exceptions and that his own suggested list of criticisms against the Book of Common Prayer was rejected. This supports his contention that all along he had informed his colleagues that his objections and criticisms of the Liturgy were different from their own.

But almost every discussion of Baxter's role at the Conference, leaves the impression that he was chiefly responsible for drawing up the objections against the Liturgy and that his brethren had little to do with it. Such an impression is completely out of harmony with what is revealed in the documents.

There are also some vital differences in emphasis and actual changes in the Exceptions as they are printed in the Accompt, the Grand Debate and in the Reliquiae.

What is significant about these differences is the fact that where they occur in the first two sources they tend to support the bishops' point of view against their Puritan opponents. In some

places certain key words or phrases are bracketed out in the Accompt, whereas in the Reliquiae these same expressions are italicised thus emphasizing their importance. An example of this is in that part of the Exceptions concerning morning and evening prayer. The following quotation helps to bring this point out.

Accompt

RB I ii

Exception:

We desire that the words of the first Rubric may be expressed as in the Book established by Authority of Parliament 5 and 6 Edward VI. thus; The Morning and Evening Prayer shall be used in such place of the Church Chappel, or Chancel, and the Minister shall so turn himself, as the people may best hear; and if there be any controversies therein, the matter shall be referred to the Ordinary.<sup>1</sup>

We desire that the words of the first Rubric may be expressed as in the Book established by Authority of Parliament 5 and 6 Edward VI. Thus the Morning and Evening Prayer shall be used in such place of the Church, Chappel, or Chancel, and the Minister shall so turn him, as the People may best hear, and if there be any Controversies therein, the matter shall be referred to the Ordinary.<sup>2</sup>

These differences are striking because they indicate that in the seventeenth century men were still sensitive to verbal nuances.

Reference is already made to the bishops' Answers to the Exceptions as presented. This document is of crucial importance and of great historic significance. It provides the basis for a fresh evaluation of the Savoy Conference while at the same time providing

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<sup>1</sup>Accompt, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Italics are in the original. There are several places where this difference appears. RB I ii, 321.

new insights for the study of the English Church and the history of non-conformity in the seventeenth century.

It reveals how little the bishops were willing to yield in order to accommodate those with tender consciences, and how much they were influenced and in fact directed by the political climate of the time. On the basis of this document, the conclusion that the leading bishops and politicians, with the notable exception of Clarendon, wanted neither comprehension nor toleration for the Puritans, is not open to question.

Any future study of the political and ecclesiastical problems of the English Church in this period must take serious account of this new document.

Another notable difference which is revealed in the documents and which has escaped the notice of Baxter's critics either consciously or unconsciously, is the document known as the Ministers' Rejoinder or Replies. In every instance the critics have attributed the writing of this document entirely to Baxter. It is without doubt the most scathing criticism against the bishops and one that most seriously affected the Conference.

But as we have already had occasion to show, Baxter was not the sole author of all that is contained in the Ministers' Rejoinder.

The MS reveals that there are three other hands who have added to the Rejoinder. One of the additions is a significant quotation from Clement of Alexandria Stromat Book 1, and is quoted in Greek and Latin. In the Rejoinder it comes under the section that deals

with the "Communion Service". This is contained in MS 129 fol. 427V.

The second addition deals with the Gloria Patri and comes under the section Concerning Morning and Evening Prayer. This is in MS 129 fol. 427V. The third is a reference to a passage from Hales and is found in MS 129 fol. 419V. This concerns general criticisms against "those Generals, loading Publick Form with Church pomp, garment, images and many Superfluties that creep into the Church under the name of Order and decency etc."

The particular passage quoted from Hales is that "the limiting of the Church Communion to things of doubtfull disputation, hath been in all Ages the ground of Schisme and Separation, and that he that separates from suspected opinions is not the Separatist."<sup>1</sup>

The first addition is positively identified as the handwriting of Thomas Manton, one of the leaders among the ministers at the Conference.

From our brief analysis of all the Documents and Papers dealing with the Savoy Conference further support is given to the position that it would be wrong to fasten the blame for the failure of the Conference on Richard Baxter, or on any single factor.

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<sup>1</sup>D.W.L. MS 129 fol. 427 Verso.

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