

A MODEST  
AND Clear Answer  
TO Mr *Ball's* Discourse  
OF Set Forms OF PRAYER

by

**John Cotton**



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Mr *Ball's* Discourse  
OF  
**Set Forms**  
OF  
PRAYER

Written by the Reverend and Learned  
*John Cotton*, B. D. and Teacher of  
the Church of Christ at *Boston*  
*in New-England.*

Published for the Benefit of those who de-  
sire satisfaction in that Point.

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## To the Courteous Reader;

WE think, it not meet, to  
 fall a commending the  
 Author of this work,  
 who hath been so long  
 precious in the hearts of all the  
 Saints, and for his learning, pains  
 and piety so famous in the Churches  
 of Christ, that his own Works  
 may praise him in the Gate, though  
 we be silent. Neither shall we need  
 (as usually men do in their Epistles)  
 to set glosses upon the work, thy self  
 (if thou weighest it with a serious  
 and impartial spirit) we believe,  
 will do it, and save us that labour.  
 This only we say, thou wilt discern  
 (as some other godly learned, who  
 have perused it before also have  
 done) such a clear judgement, dexte-

rous aptness and pithy plainness in  
 a moderate and brotherly style in all  
 his Answers, that thou wilt think  
 thou seest the very spirit of the Au-  
 thor breathing in every page and  
 line. Now, the Father of lights clear  
 all our minds, that if his blessed  
 will so be, we may think and judge,  
 and speak and write the same thing;  
 And the God of all Grace warm our  
 hearts with a love of such truths as  
 we do know, that we may walk in  
 the light and power thereof to the  
 praise of his Grace, till we all meet  
 in one, and see him as he is, and so

be filled with all the fulness of God himself for evermore, Amen.

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**ADVERTISEMENTS  
UPON  
The Discourse of set-forms of  
PRAYER.**

**O**ur Preface touching the Defini-  
tion, and nature of prayer, I must  
not upon; as not much material  
to the clearing of the Cause in  
hand: it is enough in this Case, to premise  
what prayer in General is, and what is law-  
ful prayer: Prayer (in generally compre-  
hending both lawful and unlawful) is the  
lifting up (or pouring out) of the Desires of  
the heart for Divine blessings; Divine  
I say, that is, for such as God only can give,  
either for the nature, or kind of the thing gi-  
ven, or for the manner of giving.

Lawful prayer, is a lifting up (or pouring  
out) of the desires of the heart unto God, for  
Divine blessings, according to his will in the

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name of Jesus Christ, by the help of the  
Spirit of Grace.

**CHAP. I.  
The State of the Question.**

**F**Or dating of the Question, you give six Rules, of  
which I will only touch so many, as do more  
nearly touch upon the Cause.

*In your first Rule you say, it is not a Prayer, as penned,  
or printed, but as rehearsed, with understanding, feeling  
of wants, humility, confidence.*

*Ans.* Nor is it a prayer as rehearsed, though  
rehearsed with understanding, feeling of wants,

humility, confidence, unless a man therein pour out his *own desires* unto God; for I may read and rehearse a printed Prayer (say one of *David's* prophetic prayers against the enemies of the Church) yea, I may read it with understanding, with feeling of the wants of such a mercy, and also with humility, (in conscience of the Churches unworthiness of such a mercy, and with confidence that God will do for the Church now, as *David* prayed then, &c. Yet this will not be my prayer, unless I put up mine own desires in it: but about this there is no question.

*Answ.* 2. Though it be not a prayer, as penned or printed, yet is a means, and help and form of prayer, which either must find a warrant from

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the Word, or fall under the breach of the second Commandment.

*In the second Rule you say, the controversy is not of this or that prescript form of Prayer in particular, much less of one for substance of matter, faulty and erroneous: But of a prescript form of prayer in general, whether it be lawful to use any set form of prayer at all, though for the matter thereof never so found and allowable.*

*Answ.* But so to put the State of the *Question*, is indeed, to lead your self and others into temptations: for if it may be once obtained: that some prescript form is lawful in the General, this in the Theory will straight be reduced to this practice, to persuade men to join in such a prescript form of prayer as is justly liable to manifold exceptions, both for matter and manner.

If such as were compelled to worship the Lord before the golden Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, should put the state of the *Question*, not of such particular Calves, but of Calves, or Cherubims in general (for one form of Cherubims were like Calves) whether it be not lawful to worship the Lord before any Cherubims at all? It may be easily con-



ceived, what the issue would be, the *Question* admitteth the lawfulness of some Cherubims in General (which is out of question.) The practice will conclude the lawfulness of *Jeroboam's* Calves in particular; which was the sin which made *Israel* to sin.

2. *Your first Rule acknowledgeth that neither Christ. nor his Apostles, prescribed any set form of prayer, and therefore that no prescript form of prayer or Liturgy a simply necessary.*

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*Answ.* But this argueth not only no necessity of prescript forms, but also no expediency thereof to the edification of the Church, unless it might be presumed that there is some help or means of God's worship expedient to the edification of the Church, which never came into the heart of Christ and of his Apostles to commend unto the Church.

*In your sixth Rule you profess, you never held it lawful, to tie any man self, or to be tied always to a set form of Prayer: as knowing that our request's are to be framed according to the present necessity and occasion.*

*Answ.* But by the same reason, neither will it be lawful to be tied at any time to an ordinary use of any set form of prayer at all: for there is no change of time wherein the Church hath not some special occasion to change their *Petitions*, either by adding some *Petitions* more than formerly were needful, or by taking away some *Petitions* which were formerly needful (it may be at the last meeting) which are not needful now: And look upon what grounds it may be lawful to tie others, or to be tied by them, to a set form to day, upon the same grounds it will be as lawful to tie them, and to be tied by them to morrow, the next *Sabbath* as well as this, and the third *Sabbath* as well as both, and all *Sabbaths* as well as some.

If tying to set forms be lawful, and thought expedient, for uniformity in God's worship one day; the same uniformity is as expedient to be attended to in every *Sabbath*, as in one: or if tying to set forms be requisite to supply the defects of the gifts of ignorant Ministers, then thereby a cloak is made for the covering and flickering of ignorant

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Ministers: who had more heed to be shouldered speedily out of the Church, than to be sheltered therein one day to an end. And besides, if such set forms be prescribed for the succour of ignorant Ministers, then such Ministers as have received the gift of prayer, have no need at any time, nor use of prescribed and set forms of prayer at all.

*Object.* And if it be said that it is not intended, to make it lawful at any time, to tie or to be tied to a set form of Prayer, so as to offer up no more, nor fewer Petitions than what are prescribed in the Book, but only to warrant the lawfulness of some set forms of Prayer for some occasions.

*Answ.* It may be justly demanded, whether the same authority which tieth to a set form of prayer, for such or such occasions, may not as well tie to a set form of prayer for all other occasions, and if authority may tie the Church to any set form of prayer upon any occasion, whether may not the same Authority by the same Rule, forbid all other forms of prayers besides upon the same occasion,

*Disc.* In Brief (say you) the controversy is, whether it be not lawful to read a Prayer upon a book, or to make our desires known in a set form of words, when the things we beg, are allowable, fit, and necessary, and when it is done with understanding, feeling of our wants, faith in God's promises, and reverence of his Majesty.

Which Question you spread forth into three branches.

*Whether it be lawful in private to use a set form of prayer, or upon any occasion to read as prayer, a prayer upon a Book.*

*Whether a set form of prayer found, and pertinent for*

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*the substance of the matter, grave and simple for the order and manner, not prejudicing, abridging, or hindering by the length thereof, the preaching of the Word: may in any sort be tolerated in the Church, or read by the Minister in the public Congregation.*

*In case it should be unlawful for the Minister or the Minister of the Family to read a prescript form of prayer, yet whether it should be unlawful to be present at such assemblies.*

*Your Assertion is, that a stinted form of prayer is lawful to be used both in public and private, &c. And though it should be sin in the Minister or in the Governor of the family, yet may the people in the Congregation, and the inferior in the family be present at such prayers without sin or scuple of conscience?*

*Ans.* How far we go along with you in the Question thus stated and where we stick, may be expressed in these particulars.

First, We grant, a Christian man whether Minister, or of private place, may by the gift of prayer which he hath received, compile to himself a set form of prayer, and may use the same for his prayer, whether in public or private according to his place: yet so, as not to limit himself to those words: seeing he knoweth not what further occasion may be given him of enlarging his Petitions, by new occurrences of matters from Gods providence, and by the enlargement of the help of God's Spirit: nor so to limit himself as to stick long in any set form of prayer lead it turn into a customary, and empty form, contrary to the watchfulness unto Prayer, which must be Religiously kept of all growing Christians.

2. A man may give unto another holy dire-

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ctions, and rules for Prayer, and may also set down some forms, of prayer as examples of such rules, but not to prescribe them as set forms to them, to be used by them for their Prayers.

3. A man that readeth a form of Prayer in a Book, may be so affected with it, as in the desires of his heart to go along with it, and to use it for his present prayer, as it may thus fall out in reading one of *Calvin's* prayers, printed after his Lectures, or such other like.

4. We deny not, but a man that is affected with some Petitions in a Prayer devised by others, he may lawfully make use of them, and intersert them ordinarily into his own Prayers; But not to take up an entire form of Prayer devised by another, and to make it his own ordinary form of Prayer.

5. We grant Magistrates or other Christians may commend some Heads or Petitions to the Church according to the present state of things (which the Church as they see fit) may present and commend to God in their Prayers.

Thus far we consent, but farther we cannot go, out do rather conceive it to be unlawful.

1. To set a Part, and take up a set form of Prayer, and to use it as an ordinary prayer, that which is devised by others, whom God hath not called to be a mouth to me.

2. We conceive it also to be unlawful to bring in ordinarily any other Books, into the public worship of God, in the Church, besides the Book of God, and therefore do see no more warrant to read out of a Prayer Book, the public Prayers of a Church: then out of a book of *Homilies* to

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read the public Sermons of the Ministers of the Church.

3. We account it alike (if not more unlawful) for *Ancestors* to prescribe or enjoin set forms of Prayers to their posterity, or for one Church to prescribe set forms of Prayer unto another.

4. We hold it in like manner unlawful, for one Church to receive such set forms of Prayer from another, and to use them for their own Prayers.

5. We take it to be unlawful also, for the people of God to join in such prayers, which are so devised and prescribed to be read unto them, and to be offered up in their names, as their prayers.

To apply these things more punctually to the particular branches of the *Question*, as they are proposed, and stated by you.

For your first branch, we do not make it a controversy, whether it be lawful to make known our desires in a set form of words, in such sense as we granted above in our first point of consent: nor do we hold it unlawful to read a prayer upon a book and therein to express our desires in such sort as we granted in our third point of consent.

But nevertheless, we do not discern it to be lawful no not in private to use ordinarily a set form of prayer devised by others, nor to read such a prayer out of a book, for the ordinary prayer of a man's self much less of his *Family*.

For your second Branch, though we neither deny the use of set form in private, nor in public, so it be compiled by a mans own gifts, or by those whom God calleth to be his mouth.

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Yet we dare not allow the reading of a set form of public prayer out of a Book penned for the purpose, and those prayers compiled by the members of one Congregation and imposed upon others.

3. For your third Branch, we for our parts cannot justify it to be lawful for to be present, either in the family or in the congregation where, and when such prescript forms are read for the pray-ers of the company, as to join with them, or to seem to join with therein such worship.

But proceed we now to consider the weight of the Reasons which you give for your judgement and practice.

## CHAP. II.

### *Wherein your first Reason is propounded and considered.*

**T**hat Form of prayer (say you) is just and lawful wherein all things essential to prayer, and necessarily required in the Word of God may be observed:

*But all things essential to prayer, and necessarily required in the Word of God may be observed in read prayer, or in a prescript forms; what it required in holy prayer, more then that the matter be allowable and fit, the manner holy, reverend, faithful, your hearts laid open, and petitions forced with as strong, or stronger Reasons than we are able of our selves to press them with all; and may not a prayer holy and fit for the mat-*

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*ter thereof be read with knowledge, feeling of out wants, earnestness of our desires, holiness of our affection, and faith in God's promises.*

*Answ.* There is more required to a faithful holy prayer, then allowable and fit matter, and holy inward manner, in the good affections of the heart, for an outward holy manner is required likewise, else a man might pray to God allowable and fit petitions before an Image; and I deny not but that God may sometimes assist a man in such a prayer with holy manner of inward gracious affections: as for instance, holy *Bilney* might find his heart warmed in prayer to Christ, when he looked

at him as really present in the Sacrament, or else he would never have called so zealously on the people to turn all that adoration of dead Images to the adoration of Christ in the blessed Sacrament; nevertheless such a prayer was unlawful, through a defect in the outward manner of it: an outward means being called in for help in prayer, which God had not sanctified for that end.

Let me give you another instance, when the *Corinthians* prayed in the Church publicly, in the Spirit, but withal in a strange tongue, their prayer wanted not allowable and fit matter, nor holy inward manner (for they prayed in the spirit) yet the prayer was unlawful through defect of an outward holy manner, because it being put up in a strange tongue before others, did not tend to the edification of others: In the case in hand, though prayer upon a Book prescribed by the authority of man may sometimes be furnished with allowable and fit matter, and sometimes uttered with inward holy affections; yet still it will be unlaw-

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ful through the defect of an outward holy manner. If such a prescribed book be found (as we conceive it will) an Image or help to prayer, devised by men, but not ordained by God, and so no better than an Image forbidden in the second Commandment.

*Disc. In reading the Scriptures, the eye doth lead the heart, and yet it may be read with judgement, reverence, meekness, joy, and why may not the like affections be moved in read prayer?*

*Ans.* Reading of Scriptures is an Ordinance of God, and not an Image or imagination of man; and therefore God not only may assist and bless the reading of the Scriptures, with inward good affections, but is usually wonted so to do in an honest and good heart, as delighting to breath in his own Ordinances: If it could be proved, that

the reading of a prescript form of prayer upon a Book were an Ordinance of God sanctified for the edification of the Church (as the reading of the Scriptures is) we might ordinarily expect the like assistance and blessing in reading of the one as well as of the other; the comparison would be more suitable, if instead of reading the Scriptures, were put the reading of Sermons and Homilies in the Church, for which we find as little warrant as for reading of Prayers; nor can we expect a greater blessing upon the one then upon the other; we do not deny that read prayer may lead and affect the heart, as may a Sermon read at home: But then neither is such a read prayer prescribed by others, nor set a part by me as my prayer; no more than the reading of such a Sermon is my preaching: which is not because the heart and

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the eye ate at variance in such a case (as your discourse speaketh) but because God doth not ordinarily delight to bless the heart with gracious affections, when the eyes go a whoring after the imaginations and inventions of men.

*Disc. Asaph and his Brethren could praise God in a form of words, set down by the Prophet David; and if a set form of words may be allowed in thanksgiving (which it one pan of prayer) it cannot be condemned in petitions.*

*Answ.* We do not deny a set-form either of Petition or of thanksgiving appointed by God, either to be read or sung, but we deny that God hath allowed either the ordinary officers in his Church (whether *Priests* or *Levites* in the old Testament, or *Pastors* and *Teachers* in the new) to appoint such forms of read prayers for the Church, or the Church to take up such forms of read prayers from them; God that hath forbidden us to make any graven Image to our selves, hath not forbidden or limited himself to devise and prescribe what



forms of worship himself shall see good for our use; the pains which are taken to parallel petitions and thanksgiving might have been spared; we neither refuse the forms of the one, nor of the other, such as are commended to us of God in his Word; the eye doth not hinder the affection of the heart in reading such things as God hath appointed to be read; he that giveth the Word to be read, can give the affections to read it withal, and hath promised so to do, which the sons of men that give us prescript forms of prayer to be read cannot do.

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*Disc. Whatsoever hatht the true matter and form of prayer; is truly and properly prayer; but a prescript form of prayer, found, and fit for matter; grave for manner of penning, read as prayer with knowledge, faith, reverence and fervency of affection, hath the true matter and form of prayer.*

*Answ.* The Argument doth not conclude the Question in hand; we might grant the conclusion without prejudice to the cause, for a prescript form of prayer may have the true matter, and essential form of prayer, and so be (for substance) truly and properly a prayer, and yet not every way an acceptable and lawful worship of God, through defect of some circumstances which may pertain to external form; Baptism may be properly and truly baptism, as wanting neither true matter nor Form, when it is dispensed by a Minister of the Gospel to a believer or his seed by the dipping or sprinkling of water upon him, *In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost*, and yet not every way a lawful worship of God, if it be administered in an outward form corrupted with the devises of men: as with Salt, Cream, Spittle, Cross, and the like; so is the case here; a prescript form of prayer may consist of law-

ful fit petitions, and be delivered with a faithful holy humble spirit, and so be truly and properly prayer, and yet fall short of some rule requisite to be attended to make it a lawful worship of God, to wit, if it be offered to God in a Grange Tongue or before an Image, or by the help of an Image; such as we conceive a

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prescript form of words to be in joined and imposed, to be read upon a book for the Prayers of the Church.

*Ans.* 2. If by Matter and Form be meant not only Internal and Essential form; but external also. Then we deny that a prescript form of prayer enjoined to be read upon a Book, is a lawful external form of prayer; no more than a prescript form of Homilies is a lawful external form of preaching; These Answers seem to us sufficient and unavoidable, and we rest in them; but the other Answers which are alleged by you in your Discourse, and much and often beaten upon you, though it was delivered by one, whose works praise him in the gates, throughout all the Churches of the Saints: yet we do not insist upon it, as not willing to turn aside to unnecessary disputes, stinted set forms we do not look at, as lawful to them that need them; but unlawful to them that need them not: For though there be a good use of the distinction in this case (as we shall see anon) yet not in this case, where the necessity ariseth not from God's Commandment, but from the sinful defect of the Creature, for supply whereof God hath ordained sufficient help other ways.

But yet in reply which you make to the Answer, you give a distinction liable to the same exception which your self take against that

Answer: For that Answer consisting of a distinction of arbitrary and necessary help.

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*Your Discourse rejecteth it as a distinction not grounded upon the Word of God, which in Divinity is (as you say) on unwritten traditions and is this distinction of your own any better?*

*Helps say you and furtherances in God's Service, are of two sorts; some in nature and use, the same with the true worship of God, instituted by his highness, and these are unlawful, because they are devised; and others concern the Method, Phrase of Speech, outward manner of celebration, only as mere circumstances, and these are not forbidden.*

A distinction ungrounded upon the Word, & so no better than an unwritten tradition, and withal, both the parts imply a falsehood; for a prayer which a Minister deviseth for his own, and his peoples use, before the Sermon, is in nature and use the same with the true worship of God instituted by his highness; yet it is not unlawful because it is devised, for it is devised by him, who is called of God to devise and indict it, as *David* did, *Psal.* 45:1. and all the rest, and that by help of the Spirit of prayer: again, on the other part, a prescribed Homily doth conserve the method, phrase of speech, outward manner of celebration, only as a mere circumstance; yet no Word of God ever allowed it to be read for the public preaching of the Word unto the people.

It is true which the *Discourse* speaketh of the *Method* of Sermons, devised or studied by such as Preach them, there may be some liberty, whether to preach by doctrine, reason and use, or some other way; the like may be said of forms

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*of Chatechisms, Blessings, and Baptisms:* But the reason of this liberty is because we find in

*Scripture* several forms of all these, and therefore we limit or prescribe no set forms to any; *Paul's* Epistle to the *Romans* is carried along by Doctrine, reasons and uses, and so are sundry more of his Epistles. But Christ's Sermon on the Mount, is carried in another *Method*: *The Apostles Catechise is of one form*, Heb. 6:1, 2. *David's of another*, Psal. 34:11, 12, 13, 14. *The Priest's Blessings, were of one form*, Numb. 6:23. to 26. *The Apostles Blessings of another*, 2 Cor. 12:13. 2 Thes. 3.17, 18. Heb. 13:20, 21. Jude 24:25. *The forms of baptizing did also sometimes vary, something the words of our Saviour*, Math. 28:19. *Others another form of words*, Acts 19:5. The thing is this, where God hath used variety of forms, he leaveth us at liberty to use that one form or the other; But to gather a liberty to prescribe and limit a set form of any of these, where God hath not limited; is to pervert and abuse the power of the keys of Christ's Kingdom: to wit, to bind where Christ looseth, but your *Objection* is (as you say) answered by others, and that more safely.

Disc. *That men's inventions in the service of God are forbidden in the second Commandment: But Book-Prayer is an Invention of men?*

To this your *Discourse* replieth by retorting upon a former *Answer*, which we said afore, we did not make use of in this case.

You reply again the *Objection* it self is of no weight, for by this reason all set forms of *Cate-*

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*chisms*, studied *Sermons*, Interpretations of *Scripture* divisions of it into *Sections* and *Chapters*, reading one part this week, and another the next, conceived prayer it self may be disallowed.

*Ans.* Touching set forms of *Catechism*, we do willingly approve diligent attendance to

the *Catechising* of youth, and *Novices* in any form tending to Edification; but to devise and prescribe a set form of words, wherein all the *Questions* and *Answers* shall run, and no other; we know no warrant for that from *Scripture*, if God would have his people limited to a set form of words in catechizing: he would himself have prescribed some set form of his own inspiration, which might be defective in no principles, nor incommodious in any expression.

2. What though there might be some colour to put a set form of words of catechism into the mouths of Children and Novices, the better to help their memory and capacities; will it therefore argue it to be a reasonable service of God, to put a set form of words and prayers, into the mouths of Ministers to help their memories and capacities, in pouring out their own and the Churches Petitions unto God.

Studied *Sermons* are of another nature, it is an Ordinance of God that *Sermons* should be studied, before preached; *Jude* made it his whole study, *πᾶσαν σπουδῆν* to write his Epistle, *Jude* 3. How much more ought we to make it our whole study to preach: who are not so

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immediately inspired. *Solomon* gave good heed and sought out to find, and set in order fit words and matter for the edification of the people, *Eccles.* 12:9, 10. and behold less than *Solomon* are Ministers here, though in respect of the clear discerning the Mysteries of Christ, *The least in the Kingdom of God together than he.* *Timothy* is exhorted to give attendance to reading, Meditation, Doctrine, to meditate thereon, to give himself wholly to them, that his profiting might appear to all: That he might shew himself approved unto God, A work-

man that needeth not to be ashamed, 1 *Tim.* 4: 13, 14, 15. with 2 *Tim.* 2:15, But give me leave to speak without offence: You seem to me in this point to take too much liberty, in a serious cause to play upon equivocation: It is true, in studying a Sermon the Preacher useth his Invention and Judgement; and in that sense his Sermon may be called mans Invention: But you are not ignorant, we speak in this cause of such inventions of men, as God hath given neither Commandment nor direction for in his Word; In which sense a studied Sermon is no more a man's Invention, than a studied answer, which *Solomon* commendeth as a path of the Righteous, *Prov.* 15:28. The like may be said of the next instance, which is, *Interpretation of Scriptures*, as also, a *conceived Prayer*: Interpretation of *Scripture* is from a spiritual gift, which God hath given, and commanded to be used for the edification of his Church, 1 *Cor.* 14: 25. *Nehem.* 8:8. So is Prayer conceived from a

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spirit and gift of prayer, which is to be used also and attended to, as a principal part of the Ministerial office, 1 *Cor.* 14:15. *Acts* 6:4.

Obj: *If it be said, but I may take an Interpretation, or Translation of Scripture from others, and therefore a form of Prayers from others also?*

*Answ.* 1. There is a broad difference betwixt an Interpretation of *Scripture*, as it is put for translation of *Scripture*, and read Prayer, for reading of *Scripture* in the Church is an ordinance of God; so is the reading of it in a tongue which the people understandeth, and therefore it is an ordinance of God that the Word be read in some translation.

But the reading of a prayer, for the prayers of the Church is no ordinance of God, therefore there is not the like ground from the Word to

make use of *Prayer-Books*, to read prayers, as to make use of a printed Bible for the reading of the Word.

2. Every Minister that hath understanding of the original languages wherein the *Scripture* was written, ought to make use of his own gift in examining the truth of the translation which he readeth unto the Church, which will not be allowed in prescript *Liturgies*: As for the division of Scriptures into *Sections* and *Chapters*, and the reading of one part this *Week*, and the other next; It is certain, division of *Scripture* is ancient, even from the times of the *Prophets*: And evident it is, the whole *Scripture* cannot be read over in one day: And therefore it is from God, that some divisions of

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Scriptures be observed, according to the variety of matter therein contained, and distinctly devideth it self, and consequently it is from God, that one part of it be read at this Assembly another at the next, because all cannot be read at once.

And yet we know no warrant that one Church should prescribe another, what division to make of the Scriptures, or what part of it should be read this day, and what the next, what God hath left free let no man limit.

*Disc. Preaching is commanded of God; so is interpretation of Scripture, but phrase and method of Interpretation is of men: The matter of the Scripture is the immediate Word of God, but the Word and phrase, which are Vessels to convey this truth to us (I speak of Translations not of the Original Text) are human and not of God, by immediate inspiration, God commandeth us to call upon him, both in public and private, but the words in which we express our desires, are our own, both in conceived and stinted Prayer.*

*Answ.* It is true preaching of the Word and the Interpretation of the Word are of God, but the phrase and Method is of men, yet so of men as they have commandment and warrant from God, to preach and interpret the Word: and not in what phrase and Method pleases themselves: nor in such words as man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, 1 *Cor.* 2:13. Nor so from men as that the men of one Church may devise a set form thereof, and bind all men, as well of other Churches as

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their own, to this or that manner of phrase, or Method, the like is to be said of prayer also.

But when your *Discourse* saith, that the words wherein we express our desires are our own in conceived and stinted prayer, you might as well have said, that the words wherein we deliver our Sermons are our own; both in conceived Sermons, and in stinted *Homilies*

*Disc.* *These two kinds of Prayer (conceived and stinted) agree in their Author, Matter, Form, Object, end, and common nature; the one is no more an Invention of man than the other: so then devised Worship it unlawful but not a worship in a form of words devised.*

*Answ.* And so might we say of prayer to God before an Image, and prayer without an Image; they are two kinds of prayer that agree in their Author, matter, form, object, end, and common nature, yet we cannot say the one is more an invention of men than the other: As devised Worship is unlawful, so are devised forms, and means of worship unlawful also: of which sort such set forms of words be as are devised and composed by the officers of one Congregation, and imposed upon the brethren of another Congregation, for the forms of their prayers.



*Answ.* 2. We cannot say (as you do) that such conceived and stinted forms agree in their Authors, for I am not the Author of the matter of that prayer which another man composed, and was the Author of, and is now stinted and prescribed to me; no more then I can be said

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to be the Author of that Sermon which another man indicted. *Battyllus* was not the Author of *Virgil's* Verses.

Though he resiteth theirs as his own, *Virgil* justly challengeth his own out of his hand, *Hos ego versiculas feci*, &c. Nor can we say that such conceived or stinted forms agree in their form, if by form be meant external form, it is not the same form of walking to walk with Crutches, and to walk upright: It is not the same form of prayer, to pray with help of men's inventions, and with such helps only as the Holy Ghost supplieth: which also hindereth that they cannot be said to agree in their common nature; The one being a lawful form of prayer, the other unlawful; And therefore when your Discourse saith, that conceived and stinted prayer, the one is no more the invention of man than the other, we cannot understand the truth of that: for in conceived prayer, the Spirit of God within us teacheth us what to pray. And for that the Ordinance and Word of God is plain, *Rom.* 8:26. But in stinted prayer the matter is not suggested or indicted to us by the Spirit of God within us, but prescribed and imposed upon us, by the will, wisdom and authority of men; whom the Holy Ghost hath not called to such a work: as therefore a devised worship is unlawful; so it is unlawful to worship God in a form of words devised by the Officers of one Congregation, and prescribed and imposed upon others.

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Disc. *Nay* (saith your *Discourse*) *for the form of words is not worship, but the Prayer tendered in that form.*

*Ans.* As Prayer is Worship, so the form in which prayer is offered to God, is *Modus*, or *Medium Cultus*, the manner, or means, or help of Worship: which if it be not warranted, and instituted of God, it is forbidden in the second *Commandment*: when God forbid his people to worship him in such a manner, as the *Gentiles* served their gods, he ordained them a rule to be perpetually observed in all service to him, to wit, that we should worship him as himself hath commanded, which the opposition inferreth, that his meaning is not only with such duties, but in such a manner as himself hath commanded, without adding ought thereto, or taking ought therefrom, *Deut.* 12:30, 31, 32. *Now he hath commanded us to pray in the spirit*, *Eph.* 5:18. which implies not only with such affections as his Spirit kindleth and stirreth up, but also with such matter and words as his spirit helpeth us unto: For his Spirit is said to help us what to pray, which else we should not know, *Rom.* 8:20. Now in a stinted prescript form of prayer, we know what to pray without the Spirit; when we join in prayer with another who is our mouth to God, though we know what to pray by his help, yet it is such an help as the Spirit himself hath provided, *1 Cor.* 14:16.

Disc. *It followeth in the Discourse, that men's inventions in God's worship that be of the same na-*

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*ture and use with true worship, or with means of worship ordained by God, be unlawful; but method, phrase, order, of speech devised by man, was never judged an invention of man unlawful.*

*Answ.* 1. This hath been alleged, and answered before, but this further let me add; 1. That the words imply, that men's inventions that be not of the same nature and use with the worship of God, or with the means thereof are lawful: whereas it is evident that the making of perfume like unto the incense of the Tabernacle, though not to the same use in God's worship, but to smell at, was rejected of God as utterly unlawful, *Exod.* 30:38. The making of like things to the ordinances of God, or to the means of worship, though not to the like end, but to any religious end, will not be allowed in the second Commandment, as *Gideon's* Ephod declareth.

2. These set forms of prayer prescribed to the Churches, we see not but that they are of the same nature, and enjoined for the same use, for which any forms of prayer in Scripture are ordained of God; and therefore by the verdict of your *Discourse* they are unlawful: For as those forms of prayer in Scripture are given of God to supply the Church with fit matter for their petitions, and praises upon sundry occasions.

And for the use to the edification of the Church: so the forms how in question are of the like nature, given to the like end, only enjoined with more strictness and severity,

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which maketh both their use less profitable, and their burden more heavy, then God's own institutions.

3. Method, phrase and order of speech devised by men, was judged an unlawful invention by *Paul*, when such wisdom of words in preaching become not the simplicity of the Gospel, 1 *Cor.* 2. therefore it cannot be said, that method, phrase and order of speech devised by

man, was never judged an unlawful invention; and surely method, phrase, order of speech devised, and prescribed by one Congregation to another in prayer, doth as little beseem liberty and purity of the Gospel, as the other in preaching did ill become the simplicity of the Gospel.

*Disc.* *Set prayer is no strange manner of worship, because in it all things required to the nature of true prayer may be observed.*

*Answ.* This hath been answered before; more goeth to the lawfulness of a prayer than the nature of true prayer; defect in any circumstance, though but in external form, maketh a prayer unlawful.

*Disc.* *In what method and frame of speech to pray, wee find nothing prescribed of God in particular; neither do we judge any thing necessary, more than that order, decency, and edification be regarded.*

*Answ.* Be it so, but how then shall men have power to prescribe to the Churches method and form of speech in prayer, when God hath prescribed nothing. The Apostles, who had the largest and highest Commission of any

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Church governors in the New Testament, yet they had no power to teach, or to prescribe to the Churches any other things than what Christ had commanded them, *Matth.* 28:19, 20. Say not, though no other things, yet Church governors may command such and such manner of those things: for then a further Commission must be shown, where Christ gave to his Apostles, or their successors power to ordain and prescribe such and filch manner of the administration of his holy things, as themselves should see good.

But we never saw any such commission held forth to this day from any colour of Scripture

light; that only place, 1 Cor. 14:40. which is alleged in this case, is far off from reaching forth any such authority; for though the place do shew that it is the duty of the Church to administer all the holy things of God, in order and decency, and to edification, and to see that all things be so carried, yet it doth not give to the Church any such power as to make orders, or to ordain forms of decency, or to devise means of edification, which himself hath not ordained? the Church may indeed appoint such orders, the neglect whereof would be disorderly and confusion, as they may appoint one Prophet to speak at once? and when another is called to begin, the first to hold his peace, because the neglect hereof would breed confusion: The Church may appoint such decencies, the neglect whereof would be undecent; as for men to pray bare-headed, and women co-

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vered, because the contrary were uncomely by the light of nature, and civil custom; The Church may appoint, and ought to use such helps and means to edification, as the Lord hath instituted to that end; but if the Church go beyond the bounds of this dower they do at once both exceed the bounds of Apostolical authority, and cut short the bounds of Christian liberty.

*Disc. A set form of prayer is for substance and nature agreeable to the rules of direction delivered in the word of truth, though for method and word be human, as conceived prayer it.*

*Ans.* A set form of prayer, as it is set by one Congregation for another, can find no rule of direction, nor any foot-step thereof in the word of truth.

In saying that for method and words, a set form of prayer is human, as conceived prayer

is; there is the like liberty taken of Sophistry, in an equivocation, which was observed before: for though a conceived Prayer may be said to be human, as it is conceived and indicted in the heart of a man, and by man offered as worship to God (as all other holy duties be in this sense human) yet such a conceived prayer being indicted by the Spirit of God in the heart of him that prayeth, and being expressly commanded in the Word: it cannot be truly called an human invention, which is only spoken of those things as have neither commandment, nor pattern from the Word, in which sense we called a set form human.

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*Disc. If our Brethren despair not of the goodness of their Cause; let them in an orderly Treatise set down what is necessary and essentially required, to the nature and being of true Prayer, and then shew that same one or other of them cannot be observed in a stinted or Prescript form of Prayer, and we will readily yield unto them; and some Reason or pregnant place of Scripture, shall put us to silence.*

*Answ.* We see no cause to despair of the goodness of the cause, which we conceive is not our's but God's; we choose rather to bewail the sinfulness of our former course, then eagerly to dispute for our present proceedings; we all of us have sinned with our Brethren, and with our Fathers in worshipping God after the precepts of men, and have as much cause to judge our selves for it, as you have: To write a Treatise of all the requisites to true prayer, is nothing to the standing or falling of the Cause.

As hath been said, prayer may be true, and have all those things which are necessary and essentially require to true prayer, and yet sinfully defective in some external circumstances: It were much more pertinent to write a Trea-

tise of the Second Commandment, whereunto the consideration of the helps and Forms of Worship doth properly belong; & from thence to consider whether any sound reason at last (which you desire) may not be inferred against prescript Forms of Prayer.

Let us therefore consider together of the meaning of that *Commandment*, though not in the full latitude of it (for that were not so per-

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tinent to the Cause in hand) but so far as concerneth the present business; and yet not seeking thereby, nor striving to put you to silence, but to awaken both our selves and you (if it be the Will of God) to repentance.

The Second *Commandment*, in forbidding Images, forbiddeth not only bodily Images, (Graven or Molten, or Painted, but all spiritual Images also; which are the Imaginations and Inventions of men, whether they be ordained for worship (as *Apocrapha* Scriptures, and the Laws of men binding the Conscience) or for helps and means of worship (as significant Ceremonies, to teach and stir up to spiritual Duties) or finally, for forms, and manner of worship, yet when we speak of helps and means of worship invented by Men, and forbidden by God, in this Commandment we do not speak either of natural or artificial helps to help the natural sense in God's worship; (such as Scaffolds be to men's hearing) nor of the helps of Tongues and Arts which the wisdom of God hath given for an help to the mind and understanding in all knowledge: As if God commanded the people to read in his Word all their days, and to read with understanding the Translation of Scripture into the Mother-Tongue of each Nation, is a necessary help to this end, & the knowledge of grammar, &

tongues is a necessary help to such a translation. And so if God command the people to join together, as well in voice as in heart, to sing *Psalms*, and to sing them with understanding; seeing *Psalms* are a kind of holy Poetry, even

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as Grammar will be a necessary help to translate the *Psalms* into *English*; So Poetry will be requisite to translate the *English* into verse; and such kind of helps, though they be not expressly commanded by God, yet we look at them as warranted by necessary consequence from the Word; because God, who commanded the duties of Reading the Scripture, and singing of *Psalms*, (and both to be done with understanding) he doth imply a necessary warrant of such means as do naturally and necessarily lead to those ends, and without which those ends (without a miracle cannot be obtained.

We speak therefore of such means and helps of worship forbidden in this Commandment, not which do naturally and necessarily help forward the same (though remotely) but of such Arbitrary helps, as are voluntarily taken up by the wisdom and will of man for spiritual ends, (as *Gideon's* Ephod and *Pharisaical* washings, and superadded to those means and helps of worship; which God hath sufficiently, yea, and abundantly supplied, his Church and people withal, by his Word and Spirit, for all spiritual duties.

Nevertheless, this distinction of voluntary and necessary helps, may not be stretched so far, as to justify devised and set forms of Prayer, to supply the defects of sinfully ignorant, or carelessly bashful people, as cannot pray (especially before company) without a book: For, first, God would not have such persons (so sinfully ignorant and bashful) to be?



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called forth into public Ministry; the same and the blind shall not come into *Sion*, into *David's House*, 2 *Sam.* 5.8. nor may such ignorant and same Christians be admitted to come into the public place in the Church.

3. God hath provided other sufficient helps to supply these defects to private Christians: For besides the Spirit of God (which helps all our infirmities, *Rom.* 8:26.) who supplieth both the ignorant with knowledge of what, and how to pray, and the bashful with power; he hath also ordained instruction to help the ignorant, and frequent exercise, and diligent Catechising of a man's own family, to help his bashfulness in praying before them; and if strangers come in, (and they fit to partake in such an ordinance) God then offereth him the help of a Christian friend to supply his necessity before strangers; and when we speak of form, and manner of worship devised by men; we speak not, of such as light of nature and civil custom taketh up for order and decency: but of such as are taken up by the voluntary choice of the wisdom and will of man, either for such ends as God hath not appointed (as uniformity in Rites, and conformity to Idolaters) or for such ends, as for which God hath provided otherwise; as the Love-feasts in the Church to maintain brotherly love, for which God ordained the Lord's Supper, and feasts in private houses: or contrary to such ends and ways as God hath appointed, as the *Chemarines* to offer incense, (a type of Prayer) to main-

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tain a Praying Ministry, without sacrificing; as a read Liturgy to maintain a reading or praying Ministry without preaching.

It was touched upon before that, when God forbade us such a manner of worship, as Heathens use to their god, and against that one false manner of worship, establisheth his own institutions in his Word (*Deut.* 12:30, 31, 32.) He doth thereby evidently condemn under one false manner of worship all other forms or manners of worship, which are not instituted in his word. Hence conformity to Idolaters in cutting their hair and beards is forbidden, *Levit.* 19:27. Hence preaching in the wisdom of Words, (or in car-nal eloquence) is forbidden: as a painted Image against the second Commandment, *1 Cor.* 21. Hence Prayer towards the East falleth under the same reproof: Hence the incense of *Uzziah*, the strange fire of *Nadab* and *Abihu*; the striking of the rock by *Moses* in the Wilderness of *Sin*; the Love-Feasts brought into the Lord's Supper.

And many mere such like forms and manners of Gods worship are forbidden in the Word, as divers from the rule and pattern held forth in the second Commandment, as it is opened and illustrated by these and such like examples in the writings of the Prophets, and Apostles: we are not ignorant that there is also a sinful form and manner of worship which is forbidden in the third Commandment, as when we worship God unreverently, or drowsily, but that is rather *Ro. modus colendus*, than *modus cultus*.

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To apply then to this Rule and Commandment of God these set forms of Prayer devised by men, and prescribed to be read out of a Book, and so taken up by one Church from another, as the forms of their worship, and the helps of their devotion: We find no Commandment nor Pattern for them in the Word;

nor any promise for their acceptance; They are enjoined for helps, and means of Gods worship; which God hath not sanctified, and for forms of worship, which God hath not acknowledged, and therefore we know not how to excuse them from sin, against the true meaning of the second Commandment.

Object. *If it be said that it was granted, before in stating the Question, that in reading a Prayer penned by another man (say one of Calvin's Prayers after his Lectures) a man may be so affected with it, as that his heart going along therewith, he may convey hit own desires, and Petitions to God in reading thereof, and so make it his own Prayer, though devised by another, and read out of a Book.*

Answ. We grant that a man may make use of another mans penned Prayers read in private, not only for an example, or instruction how to pray; but also occasionally for his present Prayer; If he find the Petitions suitable to his present occasions: Yea, we grant further, that in case one Church should send letters to another Church, and in the end thereof should conclude with some Prayer suitable to the state of the Church to whom they write: we doubt not but that the Church to whom the letters

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are sent, finding the Petitions suitable to their condition, may lawfully go along therewith in spirit, and in the end say *Amen* thereto, and so make it their own Prayer.

But yet here be two things different from the case in hand.

First, They that penned such Prayers did not prescribe them as forms of Prayer for the brethren to use, left them freely to their liberty.

2. They that take them up occasionally for their present use, and make them their Pray-

ers, they do not set them apart to be read for their ordinary Prayers, either in public or in private, which seemeth to us a matter of weighty consideration, and maketh a great difference in the cause in hand to clear it by a familiar instance: A man parting through a burying place may see a dead mans scalp cast up, and thereby take occasion from the present object to meditate (for the present) on his mortality, and to prepare for like change: but if he shall take up, and keep that dead mans scalp in his Closet, or Bed chamber, to be an ordinary help to him, to put him in mind daily of his mortality: Now in so doing he maketh an Image of it, to himself, by setting it a part to be an help to him in Gods worship; which not being sanctified and set a part by God for that end, it now becomes a sin to him against the second Commandment in the former case, he took occasion to fall into a present good meditation of mortality, by the present sight of an object of mortality,

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as it was set before him occasionally by Gods providence, wherein he did well according to the second Commandment, not to pass by such a passage of God's providence in vain: But in the latter case in setting it a part to be an ordinary help to him in such meditations, or in joyning the same to others; He in so doing maketh it to him and them an Image, it not being instituted, or sanctified by God, but devised and set apart by man, for such a spiritual end, which is forbidden in the second Commandment.

If it be said again, when I read Prayer and find some Petitions therein that suit well with my estate, I may not only then use them for my present Prayer, but may again and, again

ordinarily make use thereof in my own Prayers.

*Answ.* We deny not that, but it is one thing to take up a Petition, or two, or more, and to insert them here and there into mine own Prayers, and another thing to take up a whole entire prayer, or form of prayer, and use it ordinarily as mine own; see the like in Preaching, I may make use of a sentence or two, or more, here and there out of another man's Sermon, and it may be inculcate the same again and again, in many Sermons together of my own; But I may not therefore take up a whole Sermon penned by another, and preach it for mine own, though it were never so fit for my Text, and for mine own Congregation.

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Whence also another reason (and in our apprehension of just weight) may be alleged against the ordinary use of set forms of Prayers devised by others. If every Minister be to edify the Church by the dispensation of his own talents, and gifts, as well in prayer as in preaching: Then he may not pray another man's penned prayer, no more then preach another man's penned Sermon, but the former is true, 1 *Cor.* 12:7. *Acts* 6:4 *Eph.* 4:8, 11, 12, 13. therefore the latter.

3. Let me add a third reason, If I may worship God in the *congregation* with a set form of prayer, read out of a book, then I may bring into the Church another book besides the book of God, to be read ordinarily for the public edification of the Church: But we know no warrant for the use of any book in the Church to be read ordinarily for the public edification of the Church; besides the book of God; to bring into the Church any other book besides God's, is like the bringing in of another

*Altar* into the Temple of the Lord, and set it up besides the *Altar* of the Lord: which did in time thrust the *Altar* of the Lord to stand behind, and give place, and at length to be laid aside, 2 *Kings* 16:14, 15. I need not apply it, experience goeth far enough in applying of it; If it be an unsanctified way of preaching to fill a Sermon with *Quotations*, out of the Books of ancient Divines (whom more commonly then safely they call Fathers) though the sentences be godly, and pithy, how much more will it be an unsanctified kind of prayer, to make up not only many Petitions together, but also a

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whole form of Prayer out of a book, less ancient, and much more offensive.

4. Let me conclude with a fourth reason, and add no more in this place, He that selecteth a few prayers which in themselves are free from offensive matter but of a book liable (in the whole bulk) to many just exceptions, and withal imposed by one Church upon another, he doth really therein hold forth and profess his subjection (not only to the irregular exercise of that authority, whereby it is in-joined) but also to the whole order of worship enjoined in that book; as *Paul* in practising (though but seldom) a few ceremonies out of the book of the Law, did therein hold forth and profess his orderly walking according to the whole Law, and his professed subjection to the whole order of worship prescribed by the authority of the Law, *Acts* 21:24, 25. which had it not been warranted by God himself for a season, he had doubtless thereby sinned against the second Commandment, Since then the second Commandment is so many ways violated by reading of a Prayer-book, devised and prescribed by human authority, for the public Prayers

of the Church, the Lord pardon all our provocations of his jealousy by our former ignorance in this point, & keep us blameless for after times, for his holy name's sake, in Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

You know the sins against this Commandment, do more provoke the jealousy of the Lord against his people, and that for many generations, then the breach of any of the rest, which is the reason why the Lord setteth be-

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fore his people (as a flaming sword) his jealousy, for a sanction and sense of this Commandment above the rest, *Exod. 20:5.* And shall we then provoke the Lord to jealousy, are we stronger than he? but let us proceed with our Discourse.

*Disc. They tell us (say you) God hath not ordained a set prescript worship, he hath not indeed prescribed it at necessary, but his Word doth warrant it to us as lawful.*

*Ans.* First, shew us, but one Text of the word that doth warrant it as lawful, any word of precept or promise, or pattern from the Scripture, and we shall do as you offer to do, fit down in silence.

Secondly, if God hath not prescribed a set form as necessary, why is such necessity put upon all the Churches, for receiving of it, hath the Church power to bind where God looseth?

*Disc. Touching the external form of words, in which we should proffer our Petitions, we know nothing precisely commanded by the Lord, and therefore judge it a thing merely indifferent whether our requests be read or uttered; whether in a stinted or conceived form of words; neither do we bring in any strange manner of Prayer; for in substance the prayer read and conceived if all one.*

*Ans.* First, touching the external form of words in prayer, we may know (and must

willingly know what the word hath taught us) that the Lord hath commanded (whether expressly or by just consequence, all is one):

First, that as in Preaching, so consequently

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in Prayer, we are to express our minds in such a frame of words, not which mans wisdom teacheth, but which the *Holy Ghost* teacheth, 1 *Cor.* 2:13.

Secondly, that we are not to worship God after the precepts, or patterns of men, but do all things after the pattern in the mount, *Esay* 29:13. *Deut.* 12:30, 31, 32. *Heb.* 8:5.

Thirdly, that we should not worship God in an Image, devised by man, and such are all set forms of Prayer, devised helps of worship, and prescribed to be read in the Church of Christ.

*Answ.* 2. But suppose (as the *Discourse* presumeth, that it were a thing merely indifferent, whether our requests be read, or uttered, whether in a stinted or conceived form of words, It seemeth to us a manifest transgression of the bounds, both of Apostolical authority, and Christian liberty, to bring in or take up a form of Prayer stinted and limited by men, which is left to us indifferent by God; nor can we excuse a read prayer prescribed by men, from a strange form of prayer; seeing no such form is read or heard of, in all the Scripture; so great a difference is there betwixt a conceived, and a prescribed read prayer, as is betwixt the fire from the Altar and the strange fire; the one is an ordinance of God, the other is an imagination of men.



**CHAP. III.**  
*Wherein Answer is returned, to Reason  
 the second.*

**I**F it be lawful to use a prescript form of blessing, prayer thanks-giving, and baptising set down in the Word of God, Then all prescript forms of Prayer or Liturgy, are not to be condemned; but the former appeareth from Numb. 6:22, 23. Psal. 102:1. Hos. 14:2, 3. Joel 2:17. Deut. 5:10. Psal. 92:1. Ezra. 3:10. Rev. 15:3. 2 Chron. 29:30. Isa. 12:1. Math. 28:19. *What answer do our Brethren return to thy Argument?*

*Ans.* Our answer is ready, and plain, just and short, we deny both the Major Proposition, and the ground of the Minor; for (to speak; first to the former) it doth not follow that prescript form of prayer invented by men is lawful, because a form prescribed of God is good and allowable; the Reason whereof is sound and evident; though God forbid men to make themselves any Image, or likeness in his worship, yet he hath not forbidden himself this power to prescribe any Image or form to us; be appointed his people to make the Cherubim? to worship him before them, both in the Tabernacle and Temple; but yet when Jeroboam made to himself the like form at *Dan* and *Bethel*,

and prescribed them to the people, it was a manifest breach of the second Commandment; what reply doth the Discourser return to this?

*Disc.* *A mere shift (say you) instead of an answer: for the question if not of this or that form in particular, but of a prescript form in it self confided; the Lord's Prayer was indicted, or prescribed by*

*our Saviour himself and they yet deny the use thereof as a prayer, and most of the Reasons which they brings do conclude against every set form of prayer, at well as against any one; thus they argue: If a set form of Prayer be lawful, then a man may carry his prayers in his pocket; buy them at the Book-binders shops, &c. and doth not this Reason disallow all penned and printed forms as well as ours?*

*Answ.* Thus, with one sudden and blunt dash of a Pen, a holy and divine truth confirmed by plentiful evidence of Scripture, and applied generally and frequently by our bed Divines against Popish Images, is at once blotted out, and branded as a shift: I say no more but this: This is a speaking evil of the Law; and condemning of the Law, and that in a higher degree than that which is reprov'd by the Apostle *James, Chap. 4:11.* for the Law itself in condemning Images, and the imaginations of men's devising, commandeth and establisheth the Images and imaginations ordained by God.

Therefore for you to call such a distinction of Images, as is established by the Law of God,

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a mere shift is to make your self (pardon my plainness) in this case, not an observer of the Law, but a Judge; so far will inordinate zeal to a way of error transport even godly minds.

But to speak to the grounds of such a censure, though it were granted that the question is not of this or that form of Prayer in particular, yet is of a set form devised by men, and prescribed to be read out of a book for an ordinary Prayer; yea, I might add further, that the occasion of the Question in hand, springeth from an offence taken at some brethren (as ap-

peareth by the letters sent to us about this matter, by sundry Reverend godly brethren, and subscribed amongst others, by your own name) for their not joining with others to worship God in a common stinted Liturgy, known to be devised by men, and prescribed to be read for the public Prayers of all the Churches in the Country; howsoever therefore the question be reduced by your Discourses *ab Hypothesi, ad Thesin* (& by lawful rules of dispute so may be) yet it is against the rule *Μεταβαενεῖν εἰς ἄλλο γν<sup>ω</sup>μοζ*, so to palliate the matter, as to draw the question above the kind, and occasion of the question, you may upon occasion of one prescript form of Prayer devised by men, put the question of any prescript form of Prayer devised by men; but it is an utter changing and forfeiting of the cause to put off the question in hand to forms of Prayer devised and prescribed by God; what though some that have spoken

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or written in this cause, have waved some forms of Prayer devised by God himself; and have used some arguments, that grasp at more than they can hold?

The state of the question must not be drawn to the arguments, but the arguments to the state of the question; It is true, some have doubted, and some have denied the use of the Lord's Prayer (as it is called) for a Prayer, but they would never have denied it or doubted of it, if they had thought it had been prescribed by Christ for a Prayer: But howsoever (not to spend words and time in vain) we for our parts (I speak for the most part) do grant it may be lawful to pray that very Prayer, in the same words, and yet this will not at all prejudice the cause in hand, to justify Prayers in a Book

composed by men, and imposed by one Church upon another.

Nevertheless, that Argument against such Prayers which are fetched from the Topics of the Pocket, or of the Book-binders Shops, we neither use, nor allow, they which use them may clear their own intentions and drift in them.

Having thus cleared the denial of the Major Proportion, we do as justly deny the ground of the Minor, for though it do appear from Scripture, that some forms of Prayer, or blessing, or baptizing, or thanksgiving devised by God, were sometimes used by godly men (and it was lawful for them so to do) yet we? deny(that which was the ground of the Minor)

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that God in his Word did set down any prescript form of any of these: Prescript (I say) In such a sense as in this Question is intended; to wit, precisely enjoining the use thereof in all their public holy Assemblies: nor will any of the Scriptures alleged reach that; in *Numb.* 6:22, 23. The *Priests* are directed to a form of blessing: But that they used that and not other forms, doth not appear: It is evident that the Apostles used divers other forms, as hath been shewed above, in *Psal.* 22.1. there is no prescribing of a form of words at all, only Christ used the same words, with a little variance upon the like occasion, on the Cross, or if you urge the title of the *Psalms*, from *Junius* his notes, as if the *Psalm* were appointed to be rung every morning by break of day: Bear with us if we rather fetch the meaning of these, words תשתרצלאלה from the *Psalm* it self, *vers.* 19. where the Prophet alluding to אלהי אלהי calleth the Lord אלהי my strength hasten to help me, the words therefore in the

title hold forth no more but the Argument of the *Psalm* אֵילֶתְהַשְׁתֵּר צַל for speedy help a *Psalm* of *David*, In *Psalm* 102:1. the Title sheweth what an afflicted soul in such a case did pray; but doth not prescribe all afflicted souls to pour out the same form of words in their afflictions. *Hosea* 14:2, 3. The Prophet directeth them to take words to themselves, to such a purpose: But whether the self same words, or some other such like, he doth not limit or prescribe: The like may be said of *Joel*.

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47 (really 49, but misnumbered from this point on)

1:17. *Deut.* 5:10. hath nothing sounding towards the point in hand. I suppose it is miswritten by the error of the Scribe. In *Psal.* 92:1. the *Psalm* is penned for the Sabbath, but whether for a word of instruction for the Sabbath, or for thanksgiving on the Sabbath it is not mentioned, we willingly grant it was penned for both; But nevertheless, it was not prescribed every Sabbath day to be sung. In *Ezra* 3:10. it doth appear, as also 2 *Chron.* 29:30. That they praised God with the words of *David* and after his Ordinance: But his Ordinance and words were appointed by God, 2 *Chron.* 29:25. And yet not so prescribed to be used as never to be omitted; In *Rev.* 15:3. when it is said, they sung the Song of *Moses* the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb; It is only meant, they praised God with *Psalms* to the like effect as that of *Moses*; not with the same words, much less upon prescript. *Isa.* 12:1. It is prophesied the Church shall praise God to such a purpose as these words hold forth: But whether in these very words, is uncertain, certain it is, they are not so prescribed to do; but left at liberty. In *Matth.* 29:19. the place is miswritten, as before.

Disc. *But it sufficeth us that these forms of Blessing and Prayer, might lawfully be used as a blessing, or Prayer, though in conscience they were not necessarily tied to the use of them: The lawful, not the necessary use of a prescript form of prayer for liberty) is now in question: for if the Saints informer, times might pray unto God, or praise him in a stinted*

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*form of words; indicted by others, or invented by themselves (as we find they might and did) we also at this day do the same.*

Ans. We, deny not that forms of Prayer and blessings indicted by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, may be lawfully so used, but we deny that they were prescribed, or limited to be so used, but still the Church left at liberty to use them, or some other holy forms in their dead; and therefore when the Discourse saith the lawful, not the necessary use of a prescript form, is now in question, you make the question to imply a contradiction: for a prescript form is put upon the Churches, as necessary to be used in all public holy assemblies, else it is not a form prescribed, but described only.

Disc. *But (saith the Discourser) if they will hear with patience, the consequence of that argument, The use of a devised, and prescribed form of prayer will be justified from their own ground; for they teach that God hath not appointed in, his Word any prescript form, which of necessity we are tied to use at all; that the matter of our prayers are divers, according to the several occasions, which happen and fall out; that the Inward frame it the elevation of the soul to God, in humility, love, fear and confidence; from which premises it will necessarily follow, if one godly form of prayer may be used, another also fit for matter, grave for phrase of speech, may be allowed, for none is absolutely commanded.*

*Answ.* The contrary conclusion doth rather follow from the premises; for if none be absolutely commanded by God, then none ought to

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 be commanded or prescribed by men; what God hath left free in his worship, let no man limit; To what Church did God ever give power to bind where himself looseth? And if it be unlawful for Church Governors to bind where God looseth, it will be unlawful for the people so deeply to offend the conscience of their Governors, as to build them up, or to harden them in their sins, by ready subjection to such injunctions, and serious and zealous pleading for them: How much safer were it for the people of God, to stand fast in the liberty which Christ hath purchased for them, in accepting no other yoke of ordinances, nor forms of worship, then himself hath put upon them? that so Church Governors might contain themselves within the power in Church affairs, wherein the Lord hath contained himself throughout the Scriptures; when shall it once be that the servants of God will learn to be wife, and teach others to be wife, not above that which is written, but according to it, that so an end might be put at length to the inventions and innovations of the sons of men, whereby they take upon themselves an usurpation beyond the bounds of Apostolical Authority, and put upon the people an unjust restraint of the bounds of their dear bought Christian liberty?

*Disc.* The use of a prescript form of prayer for Liturgy derogateth (as some say) from the honour, fruit and benefit of Christ's ascension; who ascending upon high, hath given gifts to men for the

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*work of the Ministry, Eph. 4:8. Let it be granted that every particular Minister is able in so full and ample manner at all times to open his heart before God (which can never be proved) as that he shall not need the help of a book; Is there no warrant therefore for others to prescribe, or for themselves to read or use stinted prayer; why not? an able Minister hath discretion to know what portion of Scripture is fit to be read; Hath the Church then no power to appoint what Books and Chapters shall ordinarily be read; or hath a Minister no warrant to observe that appointment? A learned Linguist is able to translate a Chapter in the old or new Testament, peradventure as well of it is translated, may not the Church yet ordain one usually to be read?*

*Let our brethren judge the strength of their Reason, in one framed after the same manner; If a Minister be indued with gifts to judge what portion of Scripture it meet to be read, then it there no warrant for another to prescribe, nor for them to read stinted portions of Scripture prescribed by men; prayer is a part of God's worship, so is reading of Scripture; the external form of words are human, so is the prescription of such a Book or Chapter.*

*Answ.* The Reason is of more weight against prescript forms, then will so easily be cast off, at least to our best apprehensions; For if the Lord Jesus by his ascension hath given sufficient furniture of gifts to the Ministers of his Church for prayer, as well as for preaching; For the whole work of the Ministry, for the edification

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*of the Church, For the perfecting of die Saints unto the fulness of the stature of the age of Christ; Then it is dishonourable unto Christ, and superfluous for the Governors of the*



Church, to prescribe unto Ministers set forms of Prayer in Liturgies, any more than set forms of preaching in Homilies; If Christ hath not gifted them as sufficient for the one as for the other, it doth indeed derogate from the honour and fruit of his ascension; if he have, then it is superfluous for Church governors, *Actum Agere*, even as much as to tie bladders under the wings of Sea-fowls to keep them from sinking, or to help them to swim; It is true that every good Minister is not able at all times to open his heart to God in Prayer, but neither is he able at all times to open the mind of God in preaching, but if he be not able to do both without book, neither will he be able to do either upon a book prescribed to him; I have known a Minister to edify the people more by silence in the Pulpit through strength of temptation, then ever I knew any do by reading a Homily upon the Book.

If an able Minister have discretion to know what portion of Scripture is fit to be read, to what end should the Church appoint him what Books and Chapter to read ordinarily; It is a commendable work in any state to procure a faithful translation of the Bible to be extant in the mother tongue of each people under their dominions, for the common benefit of them all. And we do easily grant a Minister (though he

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be a learned Linguist) hath liberty not only to make use of it in his private studies, but also to make use of it in the Congregation; for seeing reading of Scripture is an ordinance of God; yea, and reading of it in the mother tongue of each people, it will best agree with the edification of each people, to read it out of such a book as is frequent and currant in all their hands.

But yet the Church may not so bind him to such a translation, as not to give him leave to amend it, if need be; and he be able: And besides, this will no way reach the binding of Ministers to a set form of Prayer upon a book: seeing reading of Prayers in the Church, as Prayers, is not any ordinance of God; as all the reading of translated Scriptures be.

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## CHAP. IV.

### *Answering to the third Reason.*

**D**isc. IF it be lawful to sing Psalms in a form of words devised by men, then likewise to pray unto God in a stinted form; If the one of these be an invention of men a strange prayer; a similitude of a prayer: so is the other a similitude of a Psalm.

*Answ.* First, the singing of Psalms (whereof you speak) in a form of words devised by men, may have a double meaning: for either you mean such psalms as are compiled by ordinary men, or else Psalms penned by the Prophets; but translated by ordinary men into English verse, to be sung in the Churches; If you speak of the former, then this is our first answer:

1. We see as little warrant for singing *Apocrypha* Psalms in the Church, as for praying prescript *Liturgies* of men in the Church: and for both together, as little warrant as for reading *Apocrypha* Scriptures in the Church; but if you speak of the latter, then our second answer is this.

2. There is an observable difference between singing of Psalms and Prayer; as also, between the Psalms penned by the Prophets, and by other ordinary men; for in the peoples join-

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ing in prayer, there is no more required but their going along in silence, with consent of the heart, and in the end of the prayer, expressing their consent in voice, by saying, *Amen*, 1 *Corinth.* 14:16. But in singing of Psalms, all the people of God (as spiritual Priests) do sing with voice together, according to *Isa.* 52:8. which putteth a necessity upon a set form of Psalms, else one should sing one thing, and another another thing, which would instead of harmony, breed confusion; but there is no necessity of a set form of Prayer; for if the words of the Ministers prayers be understood of the people, they go along & join with him in silent consent, as well in a form conceived for the present occasion; as in a set form of words, whereunto they have been accustomed: besides the Psalms penned by the Prophets (as by *David* and the rest) being of divine inspiration, and part of the holy word of God (which we are commanded should dwell in us plenteously, and wherewith we are to teach and admonish our selves and one another, by the singing of them unto the Lord) we have therefore a lawful warrant, to sing such Psalms; even in such a form of words, as they are translated into by men; when yet we have not the like warrant to pray the forms of Prayer devised by ordinary men, which are not of divine inspiration, but of human invention and injunction, Psalms and Scripture translated are still as truly the Word of God in the translation, as in the original language.

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Disc. But (say you) *If a man be disposed to reason against the singing of Psalms, he may a great deal more plausibly argue that the infancy of the Church when God saw a set form to be necessary;*

*he inspired holy men to pen such as might be of use for that time, when such worship was approved; and therefore seeing at this day, no such forms are given us of God, they are not to be allowed.*

*Answ.* Such an argument though you think it were plausible, yet indeed it is less defenceable; for the truth is, set forms of Psalms are as necessary now, as they were then; for seeing it is necessary that all the people should join in voice as well as in heart, in the singing of Psalms, It is therefore necessary they should know before-hand the same set form of words in which they should all join; and seeing a set form of words in Psalms is necessary, it pleased the Lord to devise himself to our hands a set form of them by his holy Prophets; who being carried by the Holy Ghost, far above human infirmity and possibility of erring; they have set down such forms as were fit not only for the infancy of the Church, but for the public use of all Churches in all ages, and for all occasions, which cannot be said of any complements devised by ordinary men.

*Disc.* *But (say you) a set form of words if as necessary in preaching, and public prayers, as in singing; this or that form is necessary in neither; a set form if necessary in both; the people cannot sing with the Minister, unless what is sung be represented to them in a set form of words; nor can they join in prayer, or attend to the word preached, un-*

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*less the matter of praying or preaching be conveyed to them in a set form of words.*

*Answ.* You confound a form of words understood and a set form: it is true, no man can join in prayer, or attend unto the Word preached, unless the matter of prayer or preaching be conveyed in a form of words understood: but yet without a set form of words they may,

the words being delivered in a known tongue; By set forms we understand standing forms, such as come to be used again and again, day by day in the same words; common sense maketh it evident, men may join in prayer, and attend to the Word preached, as well in a new form of words, according to the present occasion, which he never heard before, as in a set form which he heareth every day.

*Disc. But you demand, Is a Minister able to express the necessities of the people, or the doctrine of salvation in a form of words devised and studied by himself? and is he not able by meditation and study, to dictate, and compose a Psalm to be sung by the people, as occasion requireth? and if so, is not a stinted form of singing devised by men, an arbitrary help to him, and so forbidden.*

*Answ. 2.* Many a good Minister that is able to express the necessities of the people, or the doctrine of salvation, in a form of words devised and studied by himself: is not able so to dictate and compose a Psalm to be sung by the people each several occasion, no, though he should meditate and study hard for it: Poetry is not every good Scholars faculty; nor the

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penning of holy Psalms the skill of every good Minister: nor is it required that it should. For seeing the Holy Ghost hath already dictated and composed to our hands divers forms of Psalms for all occasions, it would be superfluous for Ministers to take up their meditations and studies, about the inventing other forms, though they had gifts fit for it: and therefore if such as have the skill to pen Psalms, do nevertheless sing the forms of Psalms set and composed by *David*, and other Prophets: as they cannot be said, therein to make use of the inventions of men, but of God's institutions; so neither can

they be said to sin upon the other respect, which you mention, because they use an help to them not necessary; whereas others that want their skill, do lawfully use *David's* Psalms, because such an help to them, is not arbitrary, but necessary: no, no, we do not approve of that distinction between arbitrary and necessary, in that sense, to that purpose; in that sense I say, for I here see you work upon an equivocation in this word necessary; For there is a double necessity spoken of in this case; a set form of worship may be said to be necessary, either through sinful defects in men, who should be able, but are not, to conceive a form, of worship of themselves, or else through the nature and condition of the worship it self, which cannot be performed, but in a set form, whatsoever the gifts of men be; in this latter sense, not in the former, is the singing of Psalms in a set form necessary; for unless a Psalm be expressed in a set form of words, and so set be-

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fore the people, all the people cannot join is voice (as well as heart) singing and praising God together in the same words; we admit of no necessity of any set forms of prayer (or other worship) in the former sense: as concerning such men unfit to be Ministers of the Gospel as want gifts to conceive a prayer according to the present occasion; but a set form of Psalms we allow as necessary in the latter sense, as necessary (by consequence) from divine institution; for if singing of Psalms be as it is of divine institution: and if Psalms be a kind of spiritual Poetry, and therefore to be put into verse; If it be also of divine institution; that all the people should join as well in voice, as in heart, in singing of Psalms; and that in a language known, and understood by themselves; then

it will be requisite and necessary by divine institutions (for he that instituteth the end, instituteth the necessary means that leadeth to the end) that in our *English Churches* the Psalms be translated into *English* verse, or metre; and received of the Churches in a set form; that so all the people may join with one voice and heart to praise the Lord together in the same words, but there is not the like necessity of a set form of words in prayer: For in prayer (as hath been said) there is no more required of the people then when they hear the words of the Minister, to go along with him in heart; and in the end of the prayer to answer with one accord in voice, *Amen*. And so whatsoever is required of the people by divine institution for

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joining in prayer is fully attained, without a set form of words in prayer, which cannot be attained in singing without a set form of words in Psalms.

*Disc.* *It is said of prayer, Christ hath given gifts to hit Ministers for preaching and praying, hath he not far the singing of Psalms also? If it be a dishonour to Christ (as some affirm) that they should use a form of prayer devised by others; Is it not a dishonour likewise, if they shall use a form of singing devised by others?*

*Answ.* It hath been answered above, that though God hath given gifts to his Ministers for preaching and praying; yet he hath not given to many the gift of inditing Psalms also; and yet neither is it any dishonour to Christ, nor sinful defect in his Ministers that he hath not so furnished them, seeing he himself hath sufficiently furnished them with all set forms of Psalms by the Ministry of his Prophets, divinely inspired for the service of the Church: and it is no dishonour to Christ or his Ministers that

they should take up forms of words devised by him for his own worship.

*Disc.* If there be any such necessity (of a set form of Psalms) as it pretended, because some Ministers are not enabled of themselves to furnish the necessities of the Church: It should rather exempt them from the practise of singing Psalms, then give liberty to a devised form; for it is a rule in divinity, that against a general negative precept no particular affirmative can be lawful, unless that particular be warranted in Scripture, &c. But against this sup-

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posed general negative precept, forbidding all devised helps, and furtherances in God's worship, there is no particular warrant allowing it in singing of Psalms.

*Answ.* It is not a supposed, but a real negative precept that generally forbiddeth all devised helps and furtherances in God's worship, meaning helps and furtherances devised by men without warrant from the word: For this is indeed the proper true meaning of the second Commandment, as hath been shewed above: but we deny that set forms of Psalms recorded in Scripture as helps and furtherances devised by men, but given by the Holy Ghost; and though the translation of the Psalms both in *English* and in Verse, be by men, yet not without warrant from the Holy Ghost, who hath commanded that the Word of God should dwell in us plenteously, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, *Coloss.* 3:16. who hath also commanded that we should sing with understanding, *1 Cor.* 14:15. which the people could not do to their own understanding, or the understanding of their Brethren, if the Psalms were not translated into their own mother tongue; and when the translation doth fitly express the



sense of the original Psalms: we have warrant also to make use of the translation, though compiled by ordinary men, as we see the Apostles did many times make use of the translation of the *Septuagints*, provided the translation be not imposed upon us, as that was not upon

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and that liberty be still left to correct or reform whatsoever shall be found in the translation to swerve from the true meaning and just weight of the original Scripture; besides, it hath been shewed above, (in opening the meaning of the second Commandment) that though the negative precept forbid all helps and means of God's worship devised by men without warrant from the word: yet not the help of Tongues and Art, which not the wit and will of man, but the wisdom of God hath provided as necessary helps for the furtherance of sundry parts of God's worship.

The Scriptures cannot be translated into our Mother Tongue, without the help of Grammar, nor the Psalms into verse and metre without the help of Poetry, nor sung without the help of Music (natural Music at the least) and therefore these kinds of helps we make use of, as not being means of worship devised, or suggested by the wit or will of man, but as they are indeed prepared and ordained (according to the light of nature) by God: And so not falling under the general negative precept which forbiddeth all human Inventions, and Injunctions in the worship of God.

*Disc. Now whether the pretended necessity of a set form, should exempt from the general negative precept, forbidding devised forms, or from the affirmative precept of singing Psalms let them judge who put the Exception.*

*Answ.* We doubt not to judge it safe to obey the affirmative precept of singing Psalms, in a

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set form of words though translated into English, and into verse by men, because set Psalms are ordained of God, and their translation into English verse is necessarily implied and warranted by God himself: And yet nevertheless we do not pretend any necessity to exempt any such set form from the general negative precept which falleth under the prohibition of it; for these the negative precept did never intend to prohibit: *You need not therefore to wonder (as you do in the following words) why such a necessity (as hath been opened) of a set devised form of singing should excuse a set form of Psalms, and yet not excuse a set form of prayer, but rather excuse the people from joining in it.*

*Answ.* Because there is no necessity at all of a devised set form of prayer unless it be through the sinful defect of the Ministers gifts in Prayer, which is such a necessity, as God abhorreth both it and the Minister for it; But the necessity of a set form of Psalms is such which God himself hath put, for the Celebration of that service with one accord, both in heart and voice, as hath been shewed, and therefore you might well have forborn that confident expression.

*Disc.* *If Christians shall not exempt themselves from the stinted Prayers used in the Congregation, until a material difference be shewed in these particulars, and that distinction of Arbitrary, and necessary, devised forms he approved by solid Reasons and holy Scriptures, the world shall end (I am confident) before they shall separate.*

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For you see a material difference in these particulars, between the necessity of a set form

of Psalms, and the necessity of a set form of Prayer. The necessity of the one is from God's Ordinance, and therefore warrantable: The necessity of the other is from man's Ignorance, and such ignorance as maketh him unfit for the Ministerial Office, and therefore sinful.

As for the distinction of Arbitrary and necessary devised forms in your sense, we neither use it nor approve it: And therefore have no cause to bring either holy Scriptures or solid Reasons for the proof of it: But in that sense wherein we use it, the distinction is so manifest from what we have said already, that we think your self will require no further proof of it.

## CHAP. V.

### *Answering to the fourth Reason.*

**D**isc. *YOUR fourth Reason may be thus contradicted, If the Spirit of God do work by means, and if he stir up good desires, yet giveth not ability to express our desires, in fit and significant words: Then it is lawful for us to use all godly means to stir up the graces of God in us: and to premeditate how to utter our Requests, in such a form and manner, as may best serve for our quickening, and the edification of others; and if the use of a premeditated form of*

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*words in prayer do not stint the Spirit; a set form of Prayer cannot be injurious to the Spirit, grant the one, the other will follow.*

*Answ.* If the speech be of public prayer, the same spirit that giveth the Minister ability to deliver a Sermon, in fit and significant terms, doth in like sort give ability to express his desires in Prayer, in fit and significant terms: no man is called of God to be a Minister of his Church, but he is as well apt to Pray as apt to Preach; But if the speech be of private persons, it is true, many good souls have better desires

than utterance; In regard of which defeat or without such defect we willingly condescend to you: It is lawful, yea, and necessary to him, to use all godly means to stir up the graces of God in him, and to premeditate how to utter his requests in such sort as best serves for his own quickening, & the edification of others: But this we deny, that the using of a prescript form of Prayer upon a book, devised and imposed by one man upon another to be used as their Prayer, is a godly means to stir up the graces of God in himself, or to edify others; For that which the Holy Ghost hath not sanctified in his Word for the stirring up of the graces of God in a man's self or others, that is not a godly means for such an end; But throughout the Scriptures we cannot find any where, that the Holy Ghost hath sanctified such a means to such an end: And then it is but an Image, which will rather teach a form of godliness, than edify to the power of it.

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*Disc. Peradventure they would creep out by saying the Spirit of God if our only helper in the time of Prayer, so that though at other times we might use helps to stir up the graces of the Spirit, yet not in time of prayer: But this distinction is not found in Scripture, neither can be deduced by any sound reason from thence. The Spirit of God is at all times the sole mover, and enabler of us to pray, and the use of lawful means, and such as suit with the nature of prayer, are at no time unlawful, as it is fit we meditate and read before we pray, so it is lawful in prayer to kneel and lift up our hands and eyes, to use the help of the voice, and the benefit of a Christian friend to stir up affection. Therefore we may dispute for the lawfulness of book Prayer, thus, if it be lawful to use external helps in time of prayer,*

*the better to stir up affections, then book prayer is not to be condemned.*

*Answ.* To creep cut, being a borrowed speech from worms; It being put upon us holdeth us forth as worms, and not as men, yea, worse than worms, (Serpents, rather than Worms:) That being compassed in with truth: are willing to creep out by any evasion, rather than to submit to the authority of the truth: But let our reverend and godly brother, be entreated, not to deal such measures to his Brethren: Least the God and Father of us both, be displeased and stir up others to return like measure to you, heaped up, pressed down, shaken together: our plain and simple Answer (without creeping or shifting) Is this, that it is lawful to use any external or internal helps,

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either before Prayer, to prepare us for it, or in Prayer to quicken, or enlarge us in it, provided, they be such means and helps as God hath sanctified to such an end, at such a time.

As we readily grant the help of books and meditation, before Prayer, so we do grant also the help of holy and reverent gestures in Prayer, as bowing down the knees, and lifting up of the hands, and eyes, and voice, the presence and assistance of a Christian friend, for all these God hath sanctified, to help the inward affections of the heart in prayer, do but shew that God hath sanctified Book-prayers, imposed upon us for our prayers, and that by the members of other Congregations, and we will neither creep nor dart away: But willingly bless the Lord for his goodness to you in this case, (as well as in many others) like as *Phineas* and the Congregation of *Israel* blessed God; for the *Rubenites* and *Gadites* that were able to give so good

an account of their actions, beyond the expectation of their brethren, *Jos. 22.*

*Disc.* In prayer penned by a godly and well experienced Christian, the case of a distressed soul may more pithily and amply be deciphered and anatomised than he of himself is able to do it; and in such a case to deny him this lawful help, is to takeaway the Crutch from the lame, and bread from the hungry.

*Answ.* In case a distressed soul do meet with a prayer penned, by a godly and well experienced Christian, and do find his own case, pi-

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thily and amply deciphered and anatomized therein, we deny not but his heart and affections may go along with it, and say *Amen* to it: And thus far may find it a lawful help to him; but if you set a part such a prayer to support him as a crutch in his prayers (as without which he cannot walk straight and upright in that duty) or if he that penned that prayer, or others that have read it, do enjoin it upon him, and forbid him to pray (especially with others) unless he use that form, this instead of a crutch, will prove a cudgel to break the bones of the Spirit in prayer, and force him to halt in worshipping God after the precepts of men; as it hath been said before, so it may be again remembered here; a man may help his spirit in meditation of his mortality, by beholding a dead mans scalp, cast in his way by God's providence; but if he should set a part a deaths head, or take it up as enjoined to him by others, never to meditate or confer with others about his mortality, and estate of another life, but in the sight and use of the death's head, such a soul shall find but a dead heart, and a dead devotion from, such a means of mortification; if some forms of Prayer, espe-

cially such as gave occasion to this Dispute, do now seem to be as bread to the hungry, we say no more but this, then hungry souls will never be starved, that never want store of such like bread as this is.

*Disc. The ample and particular laying out of our necessities doth ease the heart, and move affections,*

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*and when this may be better done by the help of a Book in prayer than of our selves, it is senseless to accuse the use hereof, as a lip-labour, and a quenching of the spirit; he stinteth not the Spirit that labours to blow the coals of grace, &c.*

*Answ.* It is true, he stinteth not the Spirit, nor quencheth him; that useth any means falsified by the Spirit to blow the coals of grace; but this we deny, that a stinted form of prayer upon a book, devised by men, and enjoined to be used as the prayers of a Christian soul, is a means sanctified by the Spirit to blow the coals, of his grace; or that the repeating of such a set form of Prayer, though ample and particular in laying out his necessities, will ease his heart, or move his affections according to God; God doth not delight ordinarily to breath in the Masterly injunctions of brethren upon brethren, or of one Congregation upon another, especially in such things whereof we have? neither precept nor president in the Word.

*Disc. He doth not substitute his Christian friend, in the place of the word, and Spirit, who not able to lift up his soul to God, by reason of straighness of heart, and grievous pressure, doth crave his help and assistance in prayer, and may not a godly Book supply the want of a Christian companion?*

*Answ.* It is an ordinance of God, to crave the help of the Prayers of our brethren, and to join with them; shew the like warrant for Prayer upon a book, prescribed to us, and then

we will grant a godly book may supply even in this case the lack of a Christian companion;

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If a Minister be not able to preach by reason of the straightness of his heart, and grievous pressure, he may get his Christian friend to preach for him; but he may not make use of a godly homily enjoined to him by others, to supply the lack of a Christian friend.

*Disc. Why should it be a sin to read or pronounce d godly form of Prayer, is it for that it is read and pronounced, or because a man cannot lift up his heart in faith unto God, when he uttereth his requests in a stinted form of words; to assign the former, is superstition: To say the latter is to offend against common experience?*

*Answ.* We do not say it is a sin to read or pronounce a godly form of Prayer; but to read a form of Prayer devised by others, and to set it a part to read, being devised by others enjoined to me as my Prayer; This is sin, not because it is pronounced, for all public Prayer is pronounced; nor always in private, because it is read; for (as hath been said) a man may go along in his spirit, and be affected with some Prayer, which occasionally he readeth, and may lift up his own heart in it to the Lord; but a sin it is, as it is set apart by himself for his Prayer; or as it is so enjoined to him by others; and in public it is of sin, both because it is read, as the Prayer of the Church (and so another book brought into the Church besides God's Book) And because it is devised, not by the gift of God's Spirit in themselves, but in others, and also because by other it is prescribed or enjoined to be read, as the service, and

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worship of God in another Church: For we do not find that ever God gave warrant either for



the offering up of read Prayers to God, as the ordinary prayers of the Church; and lead of all for Prayers prescribed and enjoined by one Church unto another.

It is so far off from superstition to affirm this, that we look at it as a superstition to deny it; for to speak of superstition according to the true nature of it (and not according to the old Etymology) If superstition be *cultus supra statutum*, there is none of all these kinds, whether as read upon a book in the Congregation, for their ordinary Prayers; or devised by men of other Congregations for that end; or as imposed upon us by them: but they are all of them, and each one of them, *cultus supra statutum*, worships and helps, and forms of worship which never came into Gods heart to allow for his statute and worship.

*Disc. Will any man object, that read prayer is not Gods Ordinance? It hath been answered already, that prayer is the ordinance of God; but whether our prayers be only concerned in heart, or uttered by words; whether in our own, or other words; whether by pronouncing or reading, that is not appointed; when spake he one word of prayer within Book or without, in this or that form of words?*

*Answ.* Reply hath been made hereto before; as Prayer is an Ordinance of God, so are all the lawful helps and means and forms of prayer to God hath plainly expressed his allowance of Prayer conceived in the heart, and of prayer

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uttered, and pronounced by words both in our own words, and in the words of others, whom God calleth to be our mouths in the present assembly: but of set forms of read prayer devised by men of another Congregation, and prescribed and imposed upon others; it may justly be demanded, when did God speak one word of

them? And therefore, what have we to do with them? If it be said as God never spake word of reading Prayer within book, so never did he speak word of pronouncing Prayer without Book; the Text doth plainly enough express the contrary; for the Word of God speaketh expressly, that Christ lift up his eyes to Heaven in Prayer, *John* 17:1. & 11, 41, so did *David*, Psalm 123:1. and God hath ingrafted it in the hearts of all his people, to express the lifting up of their souls, their faith and hope, and desires to God, by lifting up their eyes steadfastly to Heaven in Prayer, yea, God hath engrafted it in the hearts of all men, and even put some kind of instinct into all living creatures, to lift up their eyes to Heaven for what they want, *Psa.* 145:15. Now, if the lifting up of the eyes to Heaven in Prayer be expressly mentioned in the Word, then how can it be truly said, that God never spake word of Prayer without Book? for they that lift up their eyes steadfastly to Heaven in Prayer, cannot (without some distractions) call them down in Prayer upon a book, if lifting up of the eyes to Heaven in Prayer, be a divine Institution (as the *Discourse* said even now) if it be

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an external means to help the affection of the spirit in Prayer) then it is against the Institution, and an hindrance to Prayer, instead of an help, to set a man's self or others, a form of read Prayers, wherein whilst he is reading he must usually cast down his eyes upon a Book.

## CHAP. VI.

### *Tending to give Answer unto the fifth Reason.*

**D**isc. *WHERE there is no breach of Law, there is no sin: But the use of a prescript form of Prayer is no breach of Law, or of any Commandment of God.*

*Answ.* It hath been shewed above that it is a breach of the second Commandment more ways than one, to devise and use a similitude and form, and means of worship, which God never appointed, and such is the reading of a set form of Prayer, for the Prayers of the Church.

2. It is an usurpation of more than Prophetical, or Apostolical authority, to prescribe a set form of *Liturgy*, to the Churches, and a greater usurpation for one Congregation to prescribe the same to another, which is a sin both against the second and fifth Command-

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3. It is a sinful and disloyal betraying of the souls of Magistrates to countenance their intruding such prescript forms of Prayer, upon Churches, by taking up the same forms from them, which they have not authority from God to enjoin, and stiffly to plead for them, a sin forbidden in the fifth and sixth Commandments.

4. It is a sinful betraying of Christian Liberty, which Christ hath purchased to every Church of his by his precious blood: For one Church voluntarily to take up the Injunctions and prescriptions of another, contrary to *Col.* 2:20, 22. which argument may be applied another way, by a Testimony from the book of Common-Prayer, God's Service is perfect Freedom, but the reading of a set form of Prayer

devised, and prescribed by others is not perfect freedom (for many would be right glad to be freed from it) therefore such reading of prayers is not God's service.

5. It is a sinful breach of the rule of decency, to offer up prayers to God in such a form, as cannot well stand with that decent gesture which is most suitable to Prayer, It is a gesture mod suitable to Prayer; to lift it up to God as with hearts and hands, so with eyes steadfastly lift up to Heaven: But this gesture cannot fitly, and steadfastly be used, in read Prayer, where the eyes must be usually cast down upon the Book.

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## CHAP. VII.

### *Wherein Answer is returned to the sixth Reason.*

**D**isc. IF a set form of prayer be disallowed, then a prescript form of Catechism and Confession must of necessity be condemned; but how absurd this is he is very blind, or willful that seeth not, the necessity, antiquity and excellency of catechising, is known to them that know any thing, touching the building and governing the House of God.

*Ans.* Touching set forms of Catechism, we have answered twice before in clearing some objections against the first Reason: whereto we refer you, it hath been already shewed us, that God himself hath set before us sundry forms of Catechism. *David's* Catechism was of one form, *Psal.* 34:11, 12, 13, 14. *Solomon's* of another, *Prov.* 4. The *Apostles* of another, *Heb.* 6:2. Yea, the *Apostles* name the heads of their Catechism, but neither propound the questions, nor answers them in use, An evident Argument they never meant to bind

Churches to set forms of Catechism: The excellent and necessary use of catechizing young men, and novices (as hath been said before) we willingly acknowledge: But little benefit have we seen reaped from set forms of questi-

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ons, and answers devised by one Church, and imposed by necessity upon another: They must look at them with coloured Spectacles, that can discern them: The like may be said of forms of Confessions, when a Church is suspected and slandered with corrupt and unfound Doctrine, they have a call from God, to set forth a public confession of their faith. But to prescribe the same as the confession of the faith of that Church to their posterity, or to prescribe the confession of one Church to be a form, and pattern unto others, sad experience hath shewed what a snare it hath been to both, nothing in after ages must be held for a doctrine of the Church (though never so necessary a truth) unless it were found amongst the Articles of Religion agreed upon by their fathers, in the confession of their Faith.

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## CHAP. VIII.

### *Giving Answer to the seventh*

#### *Reason.*

**D**isc. *IT is lawful to ask common blessings of God daily in a set form of words, Ergo. It is not unlawful to use a set form of Prayer; and if to pronounce it, to read it also: for reading of it self, is not impure, as pronouncing cannot make an evil matter good, no more can reading make a good matter evil, pronouncing and reading being Adjuncts in prayer both indifferent.*

*Answ.* First, the *Question* with us is not so much about set forms of prayer in general, as about set forms of Prayer devised by men of other Churches, prescribed, and enjoined to be read as the Prayers of the Church, or devised by one Christian, and set apart by another, as his prayers, to which this Argument reacheth not.

Though we do not deny it to be altogether unlawful to seek common blessings of God daily in a set form of words, yet we would not encourage men to rest and content themselves in so doing, much less to bind themselves so to do: For besides that, a daily set form will easily degenerate to a formality, how can a Christian be said to watch unto prayer (which we are

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commanded to do, *Eph.* 6:18.) If we content our selves with the same set form of prayer, this year, as the last: Besides, the common daily blessings, which the *Discourser* instanceth in; as faith, patience, meekness, love, sanctification of God's name. Coming of Christ's Kingdom, the state of these things doth ever and anon vary, and to bind a man's self daily to a set form of prayer, for such things as the state whereof is so daily varied, will bring in a loose and Incongruous kind of prayers, fit only for these, that do not discern, or are not affected with the present state of things, either in themselves, or others.

When it is said, if it be lawful to pronounce a set form of prayer, then to read it; If the meaning be to read it, for a prayer, the consequence is not firm, for though (as the *Discourser* saith) the reading of prayer is not impure: Yet the praying of read prayers is the using of such a Crutch to pray (as he speaketh) which God hath not appointed, and that maketh such read-

ing impure: And though pronouncing cannot make an evil matter good, nor simply reading make a good matter evil, yet reading to such an end, reading a set form of prayer, prescribed to me for my prayer, maketh to me a Will-worship of that which he that conceived the prayer might lawfully have pronounced.

The pronouncing of a good Sermon by him that made it, is a good and acceptable service to God, and his Church: But to read a Sermon

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as my preaching, which was made by another, maketh it neither so acceptable to God, nor to his Church, yea the reading of a mans own Sermon instead of preaching will much detract from the life and power of it, and make a man of God unserviceable for his place: Though reading and pronouncing of a thing, be both of them adjuncts, and common adjuncts too, to that which is pronounced or read, yet according to the ends and subjects, to which they may be applied, the one may be lawful, the other not indifferent but sinful, the reading of a Sermon for preaching, is a sinful manner of preaching; The difference will ever hold between the word read, and preached: They are two distinct Ordinances.

## CHAP. IX.

### *Answering unto the eight Reason.*

**T**He Jews before the coming of Christ used a prescript form of Prayer (as it is probable, and the learned note) in the celebration of the Passover, and that which they used (as is very probable) was approved by Christ himself.

*Answ.* That the Jews before the coming of Christ, did use certain Rites in keeping the Passover, It doth appear by the Testimonies alle-

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ged, as also by *Causabon*, and others: And that *some* forms of Prayer they used, according as the several passages of the Passover required: But it doth not at all appear that they used any set forms of Prayer, but only to that and the like effect, and that not by Prescript or Injunction from one to another, but leaving every father of a family at his liberty therein, much less will it appear that our Lord Jesus Christ, took up any set forms of Prayer by their example and least of all from their Injunction.

## CHAP. X.

### *Giving Answer to the ninth*

#### *Reason.*

Disc. ALL the reformed Churches at this day, do not only tolerate, but approve a set form of Liturgy, &c.

*Answ.* We count it a safe course to bewail our own sins and the sins of our fathers, whereby we have polluted the holy things of God, more or less, rather than to justify our own generations from the rule by their presidents; great cause we have to bless the Lord for the great light which the instruments whom God fed in reforming all Protestant Churches

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brought into the dark world, and left behind them: and yet it is well known in some thing or other, all of them, more or less failed: and it is more wonder they mould see so much truth out of the midst of darkness, then that they who saw so much, should fail in any thing but whereinsoever they failed the generation that have come after them, have too closely and ungodly stuck to their examples, yea, and



have been more zealous in the defence thereof, than have sought to perfect what they left defective; yet this we may truly affirm, that we know none of all the reformed foreign Churches that do prescribe a set form of Prayer with necessity to be observed; but leave their Minister at liberty to use the same, or some other form to the like effect at their own direction, which taketh off a great part of sin and burden of set forms; God knoweth how to pass by the remnant of iniquity of the transgression of them that seek him in truth, although all the high places be not taken away, 2 *Chron.* 15:17. The Lord did not so look at their high places, as to reject his people for idolaters or Superstitious Persons, when they sought him in (truth of heart) though in high places; neither yet would he justify their high places to after Ages, by the example and authority of their Ancestors: far be it from us to censure the present Churches of obstinacy, who have persisted in the presidents left by our holy ancestors, those first reformed; yet neither may we be so unfaithful as to sow Pillows under

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the Elbows, no, not of public Churches, who knoweth not they have all been more studious and tenacious of what form the doctrine and worship, and discipline was left unto them, then inquisitive after farther light, yea, sometimes more inclinable to look back into *Egypt*, than to hasten towards *Canaan*; it is true, we have cause to suspect our selves of error, rather than so many glorious lights of former and present times (to wit) if our faith were built upon our selves, we should prefer their judgments and testimony before our own; but seeing our faith resteth only on the word of the Lord, and his Spirit breathing therein,

and the Word hath promised more and more light shall break forth in these times, till *Anti-christ* be utterly consumed and abolished; we shall sin against the Grace and Word of truth if we confine our truth, either to the Divines of present or former ages.

Disc. *Be that all the Churches may err in this, yet I hope no moderate man can censure them of obstinacy, as at men not willing to consent to the truth shewed and manifested; how then cometh it to pass, that none of them hitherto have subscribed to this opinion, and to the practice of our brethren of the Separation? The true Churches of God cannot err fundamentally, nor obstinately against knowledge; but how can they be freed from one of these, let the opposites themselves judge.*

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*Ans.* Though we do not believe (as you do) that the true Churches of Christ cannot err fundamentally, but do conceive for a time they may (as the Church of *Israel* in the golden Calf, and afterwards more dangerously in the crucifying of Christ, and many Christian Churches almost all, in that time, when *Hierome* complaineth the whole world was become an *Arian*) yet we do not look at the reading of devised prescript forms, as a fundamental error: howbeit any error or sin persisted in against light, will in time argue an unfound and corrupt heart in the bottom. And although we dare not excuse true Churches (as you do) from possibility of obstinacy, at least in some degree (for we see *Moses* and the Prophets often taxing the Church of *Israel* of rebellion and obstinacy, *Deut.* 31:27. *Jer.* 22:21. *Ezek.* 3:7.) yet we dare not think that the Churches of Christ do sin of obstinacy (especially of reigning obstinacy) in this case; For

many of them never saw the grounds, as have born witness against set and prescript read forms of Prayer; and those that have seen their grounds, have not been convinced of the solidity of them; and therefore may not be charged with obstinacy, till after they have been convict of sin herein, and yet persist herein against light of conscience, which God forbid.

*This Reason (from the judgement and practice of other Churches) hath bean went to be of*

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*great force in former times; otherwise the Apostle would never have alleged the practise and consent of the Churches to confirm the faithful, and to stop the mouths of the contentious, Acts 15:22, 28. 1 Cor. 11:16. and 14:34.*

*Answ.* The Argument from the practice and judgement of Churches, was of greater force in the Apostles time than ever since: the estate of the Churches as then remained *tanquam intemerate virgo*, whilst the Apostles and the Apostolic men lived; men that could not err themselves; and were more watchful and zealous than to suffer any error to get head in any of the Churches; but let them that press the like argument now, let them shew us the like infallibility, vigilancy and zeal, of the guides of the Churches in these days; and we shall readily captivate our own judgements to such divine testimony: otherwise the judgement of Churches now, being but human testimony (unless it might appear grounded in Scripture warrant) we only hearken thus far to an Argument taken from the Churches, as reverently and meekly to attend to it, and if it dissent from Scripture, yet still to bear with

meekeſſneſſe and patience, and brotherly love, any failing which is found in them; but not therefore to approve and juſtify all their proceedings.

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## CHAP. XI.

### *Touching the other Queſtion of the peoples joining in prayer with the reading of a deviſed preſcript Liturgy.*

Finally, your Diſcourſe cometh along to make good a third aſſertion, which you had at firſt made a part of the ſtate of the Queſtion, to wit,

*Disc. That though it were unlawful for the Miniſters to uſe a preſcript form of prayer; yet no reaſon can be ſhewed, why it ſhould be unwarrantable for the people to be preſent at ſuch prayers and aſſemblies.*

*Anſw.* We conceive that good reaſon may be ſhewed. Why, if it be unlawful for the Miniſter to pray upon a book, a deviſed and preſcript form of prayer: it is unlawful likewiſe for the people ſo to be preſent at it, as to join with it, or ſeem to join with it.

Our firſt reaſon is taken from the unity of the Church, if the Officers or Miniſters, and all

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the members of the Church be one body, (as they are ſaid to be, 1 Cor. 10:17.) the ſin of the Miniſter of the Church openly committed in the public worſhip of God, is the ſin of them all that do join with him, and do not

bear witness against his sin according to God.

A second Reason may be taken from the compactness of God's worship, and communion which all the members in the Church have in it; all the worship of God in the Churches of Christ, is put up to God, as well by the people as by the Ministers *tiit^VfxdJbv* with one-accord, *Acts* 1:14. The Prayer of the Minister is the Prayer of them; the matter of his prayer is the matter of all their prayers; the form of his prayer (I speak of the external form, which is that wherein they can join) is the form of them; if then it be unlawful for the Minister to pray upon a book, a devised prescript form of prayer: it is alike unlawful for the people to join with him.

*Disc.* The people are commanded, to examine themselves before they draw nigh unto the presence of God, but not to examine whether the Ministers pray in one form or other.

*Answ.* The members of the Church are not indeed to examine the secret sins of any but themselves, but the open sins of any of their brethren, they ought to admonish one ano-

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ther thereof, and to prevent with holy watchfulness the sins of one another, else the sin of one *Achan* becometh the sin and plague of all *Israel*, *Joshua* 7:11, 12.

*Disc.* If the Minister pray coldly, (as they say all reading of stinted forms maketh but cold prayer: a drawing nigh to God with the lips; when the heart is far from him) yet this is the fault of the Minister only, not of all that are present, for such

*may be the Ministers fault to pray coldly, even in a conceived form.*

*Answ.* First, We do not lay (for our parts) that all praying upon a book or instituted forms, is but cold prayer, because God may pardon the ignorance of his people, and accept the sincerity of their hearts, help them with some spiritual affections, even in such prayers, howbeit, a form of prayer not allowed of God will not (of it self) affect the heart with heavenly warmth, neither do we say that the coldness of the Ministers heart in prayer, if it spring from the inward corruption of his own spirit, doth wrap the people into the fellowship of the same sin, *de secretis non Judicat Ecclesia*, nor is it defiled by the toleration of secret sins in others.

Put if the people be convinced, that the reading of prayer upon a book prescribed to them by man, is a sin against the second Commandment, and so no true help or means of God's

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worship, is therefore some hinderance and impediment to it, then the people shall be guilty, not only of the fellowship of those forms of Prayer, but also of the coldness of the Ministers heart therein, if they willingly join in that which corrupteth and cooleth his spirit.

*Disc.* Coldness and lip-labour in prayer is not helped with Separation, but by joining the inward affections of the heart with the outward Service.

*Answ.* True, if the coldness spring only from the corruption of the Ministers heart, and

not from the unsanctified means and helpless help of Prayer which he useth, to wit, a pre-script form of book-prayer; but as no man can wash his hands from sin, that removeth not away all outward occasions of such sin, as much as in him lieth, from himself and others, so no man can be freed from the guilt of such coldness as the Minister and the people do contract: by the customary use of such devised pre-script forms of Prayer, if he do not so much as in him lieth remove such occasions of evil from them.

*Disc. The Jews used a stinted form of prayer (or Liturgy) in the Synagogues, at the celebration of the Passover, before the days of our Saviour Christ, yet Christ never persuaded the people to absent themselves, nor did he withdraw himself but*

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*resorted to their Synagogues, and the Temple; as did also his Apostles after his ascension.*

*Answ. Of the Jewish forms of Prayer, we have spoken before, And have justly denied that they took up any book prayers, devised by others prescribed to them; and therefore no marvel if neither Christ nor his Apostles withdrew themselves from them; seeing the outward face of administrations, was only of God's Ordinances, not of the inventions of men, at the lean so far as not to draw them into fellowship or communion with them therein; the corruptions found amongst them, both in doctrine and worship Christ and his Apostles did freely bear witness against, both to themselves, and the people.*

*Disc. It is not lawful to separate from the Churches or assemblies of the Saints, in whose fellowship me may serve God with an holy worship, and believe*

*in him with an holy faith; for if a prayer conceived in the heart and uttered with the voice be a pure service of God, the same read upon a book, becometh not impure to them that hear it with holy affections.*

*Ans.* We do not separate from the Church and assembly of the Saints, but willingly join with you in every part of your holy Worship; and in every doctrine of your holy faith only we withdraw our selves from such parts of your administrations, wherein we cannot

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join with you, but wrap our selves into the fellowship of such sin which (in our consciences) we see committed by you; How the same Prayer conceived by the spirit of a Minister, and pronounced in his own, and in the peoples, name to God, may be a pure service to God, yet the same written in a book, and preferred to others to be read by them as their Prayers, may be an unlawful form of worship hath been shewed above; it is wearisome to repeat the same things so often.

*Disc.* Lastly, *The Scribes and the Pharisees sinned grievously in corrupting the Law with their false glosses, and defiling the worship of God with their own inventions; nevertheless, the faithful held fellowship and communion with them in the worship of God; and that by the approbation of the Prophets, and of Christ himself; but surely the health of the Church is more crazed by such great infirmities, than by the only toleration and use of a prescript form of prayer.*

*Ans.* The substance of this objection hath been answered— even now; the faithful did, and might lawfully join in worshipping God in



his own Ordinances, notwithstanding the accidental pollution which the Scribes and Pharisees brought in, both in doctrine and worship; for corruptions in doctrine do not draw the hearers into fellowship of the same faith: if they beware of the leaven of such doctrine, and bear witness against it; in time and place according

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to God; & as for the pollutions in worship, they chiefly lay in their private superstitious devotions, of washing their hands, and pots, and cups, and brazen vessels, and not in their outward administrations of public Ordinances; especially in such wherein their act and the peoples was offered up together with one accord; but there is not the like reason of public Prayer, wherein both Minister and people do all join together, as one man, with one accord; where any known sin in the outward administration of the Minister is the sin of all the people that join with him. The Lord give us hearts to deny our selves, and to sit close to him; that he may delight to lead us on by his spirit of truth, in all truth and goodness; and still delight to be merciful to us, in pardoning and healing all our forms and present pollutions, for his holy Name's sake in Jesus Christ, *Amen, Amen.*

**FINIS.**