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## English Presbyterian Worship in the Restoration and Aftermath

### The Liturgical Context of Matthew Henry

WHEN MATTHEW HENRY (1662–1714) began his ministry at Chester in 1687 as a nonconformist Presbyterian divine, the liturgical context of England had been in a state of flux in many ways for twenty-five years. The liturgical changes of this English Restoration era shaped the historical context of Matthew Henry's developing Presbyterian worship ministry. Henry learned and experienced Presbyterian worship mainly from English nonconforming dissenters within the Restoration era (1660–1689), and he ministered at Chester and Hackney for twenty-seven years during the period of liturgical indulgence that began in 1687, until his death in 1714. During this thirty-year period, Matthew Henry made little change in the structure and method of private and public worship. He practiced and led worship without changes from inward or outward causes in this period of toleration towards the liturgy. His decisions on worship for the congregations both in Chester and Hackney were shaped from learning and experiencing English Presbyterian worship during the persecution of the nonconforming dissenters. Thus, liturgical changes in the Restoration era could be regarded as the main context for Henry's understanding and implementation of Presbyterian worship.

This chapter does not attempt to analyze the general issues about the English Restoration<sup>1</sup> or the historical case of any specific territories in England;<sup>2</sup> instead it attempts to examine the transition of English Presbyterian worship in the Restoration era as Henry's liturgical context. At that time, the policy of the king and decision of parliament directly determined the manner of worship since every religious policy was sanctioned by the state. Thus, in order to understand changes in worship of that period, it is necessary to comprehend liturgy within the political and religious context. Recent research has given historians new perspectives on various aspects of the Restoration era.<sup>3</sup> With help from historical research, this chapter will focus on how English Presbyterian worship was changed by the restoration of the monarchy. What was the vision of English Reformed Presbyterian ministers at the beginning of this period? What were the main changes—and the causes of these changes—in English Presbyterian worship under the condition of persecution? How did English Presbyterians respond to political freedom and what were Matthew Henry's choices regarding the liturgy in a context of toleration? By answering these questions, this chapter will illustrate the way English Presbyterians upheld the Reformed principle of worship during the Restoration era and will explore the liturgical context in which Matthew Henry began his ministry.

## THE VISION OF ENGLISH REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN WORSHIP

In 1660, two years before Henry's birth, the nation experienced the restoration of the English monarchy. For the Puritan nonconformists the Restoration meant a period of continuous religious persecution and strife. The persecution for the nonconformists, the Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, and Quakers, did not begin outside of any context; they were "all dissenters from the church as established by law."<sup>4</sup> The persecution of them

1. For example, this chapter does not engage in the debates that look at the English Restoration from a peculiar viewpoint, such as the "revisionist" perspective, which regards Protestants as having played a largely negative role in sixteenth-century England in terms of anti-Catholicism. For this debate and issue, see Finlayson, *Historians, Puritanism, and the English Revolution*, chap. 5, and McClendon et al., *Protestant Identities*.

2. For example, Ramsbottom, "Puritan Dissenters and English Churches."

3. For understanding recent scholarship on the Restoration era, see Harris et al., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England*, especially chap. 1.

4. Spurr, "From Puritanism to Dissent, 1660–1700," 238.

was the result of repeated decisions of Charles II and the Parliament and the nonconformists' rejections of the religious politics of the state. In order to understand how and why the English Presbyterians refused to follow the religious politics of the king and parliament and were thus persecuted, it is first necessary to examine their exact situation when the Restoration began. We need to explain the English Presbyterians' vision of worship and how they attempted to realize this vision within Restoration in England. The English Presbyterians' vision of worship at the beginning of the Restoration era can be seen best in the work of Richard Baxter (1615–1691). Richard Baxter's "Savoy Liturgy" or "Reformed Liturgy" (1661) shows the elements of the English Presbyterian vision when the Restoration began, although it was not implemented in the Presbyterian congregations in history. This section will investigate three points in Baxter's liturgy: why Baxter tried to write and use a new book of worship; what it included in the form and content of worship; and to what extent it can be seen as Reformed worship.

### Political and Religious Attempts to Unify the Anglican and Presbyterian Form of Worship

When the restoration of the monarchy began in 1660, Charles II "issued a declaration [Declaration of Breda] promising 'a liberty to tender consciences . . . that no man shall be disquieted, or call in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom.'"<sup>5</sup> Regardless of the motives,<sup>6</sup> this declaration of Charles II shows his desire for religious toleration. John Spurr assessed Charles's policy on toleration by saying that "[he] intended to bind the bleeding wounds of his English kingdom, to abolish all notes of discord, separation, and difference of parties, by pardoning past crimes, extending liberty in religion to those of a tender conscience, and referring all disputed property titles to parliament."<sup>7</sup> Bard Thompson, liturgical historian, also pointed out the liturgical significance of Charles's choice of religious toleration by

5. Watts, *The Dissenters*, 221.

6. According to Watts, two explanations are possible: "that the years of religious strife, involuntary exile, and the pursuit of pleasure had taught the king a worldly skepticism which looked on all religions with tolerant indifference; or alternatively, that the king was a sincere, though secret, Roman Catholic who wanted toleration only because it would mean security for his hated co-religionists and would constitute a first step towards the restoration of papal influence in England" (ibid.).

7. Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*, 30.

mentioning that “the Church of England would become sufficiently comprehensive to include some of the Puritans.”<sup>8</sup> While some toleration in liturgical practice was given, both the Anglicans and the nonconformists attempted to take their religious places with the restoration of the monarchy by reintroducing their own liturgy. Among these attempts, the English Presbyterians also endeavored not to lose this opportunity to unify the Anglican and Presbyterian liturgy with their own Reformed convictions. Richard Baxter’s Reformed Liturgy in 1661 can be regarded as an English Presbyterian political and religious effort to unify liturgy based on his Reformed convictions about worship.<sup>9</sup>

### *Unifying Liturgy*

However, the English Presbyterian vision for the national church during this short period of liturgical toleration was not accomplished. One of the religious issues that Charles II faced was the tension between the Church of England and the nonconformist Puritans. Anglican bishops, on the one hand, and other nonconformists, on the other hand, had their own visions at that time. The Cavaliers in the Parliament who defended their king and church “were determined to restore the Prayer Book.”<sup>10</sup> Anglican bishops “chided the ministers for their adulation of the Reformed churches and surmised that a more profitable norm would be the liturgy of the ancient Greek and Latin Churches.”<sup>11</sup> There “was [also] the spontaneous recovery of the Church of England in the counties, cathedral cities and parishes of England.”<sup>12</sup> In practice, “the local gentry occasionally encouraged a return to the Prayer Book by prosecuting those clergy who failed to use it under Elizabethan statutes.”<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the Independents would not follow Baxter’s reformation of worship but insisted, “Scripture gave no warrant to prescribed forms of prayer.”<sup>14</sup> They even “feared that this settlement [based on the tolerant principle of Charles’ declaration from Breda] would lessen

8. Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 375.

9. To Baxter, “unify the liturgy” meant an attempt to establish a more Reformed liturgy as a national form of worship for all Protestants in England.

10. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 2:363.

11. Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 276.

12. Spurr, *Restoration Church of England*, 36.

13. *Ibid.*, 37.

14. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 2:375.

their own chances of a toleration.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, “in 1661–2 the movement towards this form of church [a broad-based national church] was stopped in its tracks.”<sup>16</sup>

Under these conditions, English Presbyterians needed to overcome serious attacks from Anglican bishops and radical nonconforming Independents in order to accomplish their vision of unifying liturgy. Thus, while facing this conflict, English Presbyterians attempted to unify the liturgy with the help of the monarchy. One of the attempts was producing the “Exceptions against the Book of Common Prayer;” the other was the “submission of Baxter’s ‘Reformation of the Liturgy.’”

Thompson categorized the list of “Exceptions” that the Presbyterian commissioners prepared against the *Book of Common Prayer* into two divisions: (1) general objections to principles and characteristics of the Book, and (2) specific criticisms of details in the Book:

Of the general objections, some touched the nature of worship. The Puritans asked for a comprehensive, Scriptural liturgy. . . . They opposed any type of uniformity that would stifle extempore prayer or deprive the minister of all discretion in the conduct of worship. . . . They deemed the Book defective. . . .

Of the specific criticisms, some were designed to achieve a greater correspondence between Scripture and liturgy, others to serve the clarity of the biblical message. Thus, the doxology should be restored to the Lord’s Prayer, the apocryphal *Benedicite* replaced by a psalm or hymn. . . . The lessons should be read, not sung, and preaching more strictly enjoined. . . . Holy Communion should no longer be given to any persons except those who were prepared to receive it. . . . They thought it well to restore the Black Rubric of the 1552 Prayer Book, with its discourse against adoring the elements.<sup>17</sup>

However, Anglican bishops defeated this effort by declaring “that the liturgy could not be circumscribed by Scripture, but rightfully included those matters which were generally received in the Catholic Church.”<sup>18</sup>

While the Presbyterian commissioners articulated the “Exceptions,” in an attempt to help resolve the tension between the Anglicans and the nonconformists, Baxter submitted his *Reformation of the Liturgy*, which

15. Spurr, *Restoration Church of England*, 37–38.

16. Spurr, “From Puritanism to Dissent,” 236.

17. Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 376–77.

18. *Ibid.*, 387.

was in fact a complete service-book and thereafter acquired the name, ‘the Savoy Liturgy.’<sup>19</sup> Baxter by himself produced the alternative Reformed order of service with the anticipation of the approval of the Presbyterian liturgy by the king and parliament. Baxter’s Reformed Liturgy can be understood as an alternative liturgical book written at the restoration of the monarchy in order to unify services of the State with a Reformed liturgy. As Davies commented, “[W]hile the *Westminster Directory* was a compromise between Presbyterians and Independents, the ‘Reformed Liturgy’ represents the liturgical convictions of one party, the English Presbyterians.”<sup>20</sup>

Although this liturgical book was formulated by him alone, Baxter’s attempt to unify two liturgical traditions was not initiated by himself; this unified ideal liturgy was an earlier vision of English Presbyterians. When English Presbyterians saw the possibility of the restoration of the monarchy, “it was hoped that in return for Presbyterian support of his efforts to regain the throne, Charles would accept limitations upon his powers as King and agree to the establishment of Presbyterianism instead of Anglicanism.”<sup>21</sup> That is why English Presbyterians tried to take a central place at the beginning of the Restoration. As Douglas Lacey pointed out, the English Presbyterian ministers “were thinking primarily of their hope to gain Charles II’s acceptance of Presbyterianism as the established religion.”<sup>22</sup> However, Baxter’s Reformed Liturgy failed to take a place as an alternative to the *Book of Common Prayer*. In reality, “it has received little attention at its own time.”<sup>23</sup>

On July 24, 1661, the Savoy Conference closed without achieving any reconciliation. Regardless of the result, it is clear that English Presbyterians attempted to unify liturgy by producing the list of the “Exceptions” and “Reformed Liturgy.” The English Presbyterian commissioners and Baxter “objected to set liturgy as it totally excluded the gift of prayer and because of the ‘Romish Forms’ still in it.”<sup>24</sup>

19. *Ibid.*, 377. He quickly produced this Reformed Liturgy within two weeks.

20. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 2:434.

21. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England*, 4.

22. *Ibid.*, 6.

23. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 2:433.

24. Williams, “The Puritan Concept and Practice of Prayer,” 360.

*With a Reformed Vision*

While Baxter wanted, through the Savoy Conference, to unify the liturgy, he did not attempt to achieve just one uniform liturgy in order to overcome the tension among the Protestants in England. Furthermore, by unifying the liturgy he endeavored to achieve a Reformed vision of worship for the restoration of the monarchy.

First of all, Baxter did not seek to unify the liturgy simply for the purpose of a unified liturgy; he did his best to make Presbyterian worship an official liturgy of the State when the restoration of the monarchy provided the opportunity. To put it another way, he attempted to develop Reformed liturgy in his specific context. Before the Restoration began, *The Westminster Directory* of 1644 had been in use among Presbyterians and Independents for about sixteen years. As Davies pointed out, “The *Directory* of 1644 produced jointly by Presbyterians and Independents was a compromise, exacting too little for the Presbyterians and too much for the Independents.”<sup>25</sup> As a Presbyterian minister Baxter anticipated the establishment of Presbyterianism by articulating a more Reformed liturgy when the opportunity was given.

Second, it is clear that Baxter’s effort to unify the liturgy was initiated by a “Reformed vision.” Williams summarized the Puritans’ liturgical reformation: “According to *The Westminster Directory*, the Puritans’ criticisms of *the Book of Common Prayer* were not from any love of novelty. They were motivated by desire for a liturgy reformed in accordance with the Scriptures.”<sup>26</sup> Baxter’s Reformed vision in his Savoy Liturgy can be summarized as follows:

The Savoy Liturgy was constructed of *biblical speech*. It was a realization of the Puritan desire to have an exact correspondence between worship and the *Word of God*. Baxter was persuaded that such a liturgy would comprehend all manner of Christians: all would be satisfied by the infallible truths and apt phrases drawn out of *God’s own Word*; and all would be free to interpret this liturgy “according to the sense they have in *Scripture*.”<sup>27</sup>

25. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 2:406.

26. Williams, “The Puritan Concept and Practice of Prayer,” 357.

27. Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 381, italics added.

Thus, it was important that Baxter's development of a Reformed worship sought to do so according to the Scriptures when he sought to unify the liturgy.

## The Form and Content of Baxter's Reformed Liturgy

Although it was not used in English Presbyterian congregations, Baxter's Reformed Liturgy needs to be examined in more detail in order to understand what English Presbyterians wanted to achieve in liturgy at the restoration of the monarchy. When Baxter submitted a petition to the Savoy Conference, he categorized it in two parts, which show the Reformed vision of worship at the beginning of the Restoration: "A Petition for Peace" and "the Reformation of the Liturgy."<sup>28</sup>

"A Petition for Peace" literally means a petition "to the most reverend archbishop and bishops, and the reverend their assistants commissioned by his majesty to treat about the alteration of the Book of Common Prayer"<sup>29</sup> with twenty sections in the style of an apologetic letter. In addition, "the Reformation of the Liturgy" includes specific requests for alteration of worship. The contents of the Reformation of the Liturgy are as follows:

The Ordinary Public Worship on the Lord's Day  
The Order of Celebrating the Sacrament of the Body and Blood  
of Christ  
The Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism  
Of Catechizing, and the Approbation of Those That Are to be Ad-  
mitted to the Lord's Supper  
Of the Celebration of Matrimony  
The Visitation of the Sick, and Their Communion  
The Order for Solemnizing the Burial of the Dead  
Of Extraordinary Days of Humiliation, and Thanksgiving, and  
Anniversary Festivals  
Of Prayer and Thanksgiving for Particular Members of the Church  
Of Pastoral Discipline, Public Confession, Absolution, and Exclu-  
sion from the Holy Communion of the Church

28. The whole title of this petition is "A Petition for Peace: with the Reformation of the Liturgy. As It was Presented to the Right Reverend Bishops, by the Divines Appointed by His Majesties Commission to Treat with Them about the Alteration of It" (1661).

29. Subtitle of this petition.



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In addition to these ten sections, it includes an appendix composed of “a Larger Litany, or General Prayer: to be used at Discretion” and “the Church’s Praise for our Redemption; to be used at Discretion.”

To understand the changes the English Presbyterians attempted to make to the contemporary Anglican worship, it is useful to focus on the form and content of the Lord’s Day worship. The elements of the Lord’s Day worship (without Communion service) developed by Baxter are listed below:

- A Short Prayer (with shorter alternative)
- The Creed (sometimes Athanasius Creed)
- The Ten Commandments
- Scripture Sentences: for the right informing and affecting the people, and moving them to a penitent believing confession
- The Confession of Sin and Prayer for Pardon and Sanctification (with shorter alternative)
- Lord’s Prayer
- Scripture (Gospel) Sentences: for the strengthening of faith and raising the penitent
- Sentences what must be and done for the time to come for the salvation
- Reading Psalm 95 or 100 or 84 followed by the Psalms in order for the Day
- Reading a Chapter of the Old Testament
- Singing a Psalm or Te Deum
- Reading a Chapter of the New Testament
- Prayer for the King and Magistrates
- Sing or Reading Psalm 67 or 98 or Some Other Psalm or Benedictus or Magnificat
- Prayer for the State, Necessities of the Church, and the Subject of the Sermon
- Sermon upon Some Text of Holy Scripture
- Prayer for a Blessing on the Word of Instruction and Exhortation
- Benediction

This “Ordinary Public Worship on the Lord’s Day” of Baxter’s is not an innovation unrelated to previous Puritan worship. At the same time, his suggested Lord’s Day worship is distinctive from *The Westminster Directory* in its structure and form. Baxter’s suggested Lord’s Day worship is a more Presbyterian liturgical pattern than that of *The Westminster Directory for the Publique Worship of God* (1644). *The Westminster Directory* was “an authentic creation of the Puritan spirit and the truest exemplar of Puritan

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worship.”<sup>30</sup> This *Directory* was prepared by the Westminster Assembly, which convened on July 1, 1643, in order to “reform the standards of the church in a manner ‘most agreeable to God’s holy word.’”<sup>31</sup> After serious debate on the form and freedom of worship, the Assembly produced a *Directory*, “as opposed to a liturgy, which outlined the main headings of worship, and described the substance of each element in such a way that by altering here and there a word, a man may mould it into a prayer.”<sup>32</sup>

*The Westminster Directory* includes these main elements of Lord’s Day worship:<sup>33</sup>

Prayer  
Public Reading of the Holy Scriptures  
Singing the Psalm  
Public Prayer before the Sermon (long prayer)  
Preaching of the Word  
Prayer after the Sermon  
Singing the Psalm  
(Celebration of the Communion)

These elements are much simpler than that of Baxter’s Savoy Liturgy.

A characteristic of *The Westminster Directory* is the Puritan seeking for liturgical freedom from the Anglican Church. The Puritans opposed any rubric that did not allow them to lead free prayers. The order of *The Westminster Directory* was prepared by the Puritans including Presbyterians, Scot commissioners, and Independents. Also, that order was not called a “liturgy” but a “directory.” As Thompson commented, “it [the directory] was a monumental effort to comprehend the virtues of form and freedom.”<sup>34</sup> To Baxter, this *Directory* was not enough to realize the vision of Presbyterian worship. That is why he attempted to suggest a more Presbyterian liturgical pattern of worship by articulating the Reformed Liturgy

30. Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 353.

31. *Ibid.*, 349.

32. *Ibid.*

33. The complete contents of *The Westminster Directory* are the Assembling of the Congregation, Public Reading of the Holy Scripture, Public Prayer before Sermon, Preaching the Word, Prayer after the Sermon, the Sacrament of Baptism, the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the Sanctification of the Lord’s Day, the Solemnization of Marriage, the Visitation of the Sick, Burial of the Dead, Public Solemn Fasting, the Observation of days of Public Thanksgiving, Sing the Psalms, and An Appendix touching Days and Places of Public Worship.

34. Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 353.

when the opportunity was given. To understand Baxter, we must examine the nature of a Presbyterian pattern of worship in the Reformed Liturgy.

### Reformed Characteristics of Worship in the Savoy Liturgy

Baxter's "Ordinary Public Worship on Lord's Day" reveals several Reformed characteristics. Most of all, Baxter's liturgy places worship on a biblical foundation. The original copy of the "Ordinary" includes biblical texts for each element. The scriptural texts quoted for each element consist of not just a simple verse but various proofs from the Old Testament to the New Testament. All the eighteen elements above have a biblical foundation and relation. Baxter even provided scriptural texts for the content of prayer.

When considering these numerous biblical texts, it is hard to believe that he composed this worship order in two weeks. It is certain that he had prepared this type of worship order beforehand. Baxter's massive book *Five Disputations of Church Government and Worship* (1659; 492 pages) already expressed his conviction about biblical worship. In the section of "Whether a Stinted Liturgy, or Form of Worship, be a Desirable Means for the Peace of these Churches?" he clearly wrote in Prop. 7: "The safest way of composing a stinted liturgy, is to take it all, or as much as may be, for words as well as matter out of the Holy Scriptures."<sup>35</sup> With this thesis, he gave sufficient reason for his conviction by concluding, "there are no other words that may be preferred before the word of God, or stand in competition with them."<sup>36</sup>

Second, Baxter's liturgy has a biblical direction, which means that it is composed of biblical form and content. Among the eighteen elements of worship in the Savoy Liturgy given above, the content of most of the elements come from the Bible: "The Ten Commandments," "Scripture Sentences," "The Lord's Prayer," "Scripture (Gospel) Sentences," "Reading a Psalm," "Reading a Chapter of the Old Testament," "Singing a Psalm," "Reading a Chapter of the New Testament," "Sing or Reading a Psalm," and "Sermon." In addition, the words and forms of prayers in his liturgy are based on Scripture. He did not directly quote any prayers from the Scriptures. Instead he intentionally composed prayers using the content and language of the Scriptures. He attempted to produce a flexible biblical pattern of prayer in contrast to Anglican fixed prayers. Moreover, Baxter directed worship music to follow a biblical form by continuing to sing the

35. Baxter, *Five Disputations of Church Government and Worship*, 378.

36. *Ibid.*, 379.

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psalms. Reformers, as Thompson mentioned, “urged the singing of psalms in church as an instrument of praise and a means of attaining common worship.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, Baxter attempted to use biblical principles to direct the form and content of Lord’s Day worship.

Third, Baxter’s liturgy is related to piety, which emphasizes holiness of life. In place of *The Westminster Directory’s* “Prayer after Sermon” Baxter has a “Prayer for a Blessing on the Word of Instruction and Exhortation.” Thompson pointed out that Baxter’s emphasis on holiness of life followed Calvin’s tradition: “while he [Baxter] did not use the law as Calvin preferred—to incite the penitent to true piety—he achieved *the same* great emphasis upon holiness of life by certain other devices, namely, by the Scriptural sentences that evoked sanctity, by the Exhortation at the close of communion, by the exercise of Discipline.”<sup>38</sup> In this way, Baxter tried to integrate life and liturgy in the new form of worship.

Fourth, Baxter’s liturgy has a Reformed characteristic in that it emphasized “ongoing reformation” of worship. One of the reasons that he submitted “a Petition for Peace” was to alter the *Book of Common Prayer*: “the Common Prayer Book as differing from the Masse-Book, being not so old, and that which might then be the matter of a change, is not so unchangeable itself, but that those alterations may be accepted for ends so desirable as are now before us.”<sup>39</sup> With this Reformed conviction, Baxter humbly asked the Savoy Conference to give the Presbyterians freedom: “the cause of the Non-conformists has been long ago stated . . . you have no reason to suspect them of any considerable change. Grant us but the freedom that Christ and His Apostles left unto the Churches.”<sup>40</sup> That is why he included some flexibility in his Reformed Liturgy by adding alternative prayers.

Although Baxter’s Savoy Liturgy arose from a clear Reformed vision, this vision was not realized in practice. Contrary to their expectations, English Presbyterian worship was changed under a new political and social context. Thus, it is necessary to examine how English Presbyterian worship changed during the Restoration in order to more clearly understand Matthew Henry’s liturgical context.

37. Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 188.

38. *Ibid.*, 383, italics added.

39. Baxter, *Petition*, 9.

40. *Ibid.*, 20.

## CHANGES IN ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN WORSHIP UNDER PERSECUTION IN THE RESTORATION ERA

The year of 1661, one year before Matthew Henry was born, was a crucial moment for English Presbyterian worship. Richard Baxter's "Petition to for Peace: with the Reformation of the Liturgy" was rejected by the Savoy Conference in 1661. Moreover, the Conference not only denied Baxter's "Petition" but also more actively required all clergy to follow the decision of Parliament by "requiring them to declare their unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the book entitled the Book of Common Prayer."<sup>41</sup> Changes of English Presbyterian worship in the Restoration era were explicitly connected to this political imposition on religion. To put it another way, changes of English Presbyterian worship were mainly motivated not so much by the inward needs or theological convictions of the ministers as by political and social causes.

English Presbyterian worship changed in significant ways between 1661, the year of Baxter's Reformed Liturgy's failure, and 1687. After 1687, the year of the Act of Indulgence, and 1689, the year of the Act of Toleration, English Presbyterian worship began to embrace the new experience of freedom. This section will focus on the period of persecution—1661 to 1687—by examining the main causes and changes of the English Presbyterian worship in that period. English nonconformists were severely persecuted by the "Clarendon Code," the series of enactments passed by the Cavalier Parliament:<sup>42</sup> Corporation Act (1661), Act of Uniformity (1662), Conventicle Act (1664, 1670), and Five Mile Act (1665). Although their main purpose was not to directly persecute English Presbyterians alone,<sup>43</sup> these enactments had a huge impact on English Presbyterian worship. The three most important arenas of change related to English Presbyterian worship during the period of persecution involved Anglican attacks on English Presbyterians in relation to their worship resource, Presbyterians' dissenters' experience of hardship and its effect on their worship, and a new emphasis on family piety and life.

41. Ramsbottom, "Puritan Dissenters and English Churches," 7.

42. "The period of persecution is usually associated with the name of Charles's Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Clarendon" (Watts, *Dissenters*, 223).

43. All nonconformists such as Presbyterians, Baptists, Independents, and Quakers were persecuted by the Clarendon Code.

## Anglican Attacks on English Presbyterians in Relation to Worship Resource

One of the great changes in English Presbyterian worship during the period of persecution was not to use any prescribed liturgies or liturgical texts as rubrics. They just took the Bible as the primary worship resource for both the foundation and the direction of worship. As Davies pointed out, “the Presbyterians had no objection to set prayers as such, but could not agree that the Book of Common Prayer was in all things conformable to the Word of God.”<sup>44</sup> When the political authorities required them to follow a fixed liturgy from the *Book of Common Prayer*, English Presbyterians chose a new way of worship. Their response to the political enactments of the Act of Corporation (1661) and Act of Uniformity (1662) relates to the liturgical resource. In response to these political requirements, English Presbyterians moved away from a written liturgical book or manual as their worship resource since they did not want to follow the idea of fixed prayers.

### *Presbyterian Response to the Corporation Act*

The Corporation Act in 1661 was the first policy of the Restoration to cause change in English Presbyterian worship. This enactment required “all mayors, aldermen, councilors, and borough officials to swear loyalty to the king and to take ‘the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, according to the rites of the Church of England.’”<sup>45</sup> One of the purposes of this political requirement was “to destroy the political influence of the Presbyterians and other sects.”<sup>46</sup> “The Corporation Act had shown that parliament knew how to strike a shrewd blow at the centres of Puritan power.”<sup>47</sup> The response to this political enactment was this:

Although there were efforts to defeat this resolution, and although about one-third of the Presbyterian-Congregationalist group of members in the Commons either refused to attend or to follow the prescribed Sacramental procedure, in the end all but one of them did comply with the requirement even though obviously with reluctance and undoubtedly with reservations. Thus did

44. Davies, *The English Free Churches*, 92.

45. Watts, *Dissenters*, 223.

46. Plum, *Restoration Puritanism*, 24.

47. *Ibid.*, 7.

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these members bend to the exigencies of the day, and occasional conformity as practiced by Puritans for political purposes has its beginnings.<sup>48</sup>

This was the beginning of persecution, as Davies described:

This [Act of Corporation] prohibited any Nonconformist henceforth from holding office in any city or municipal corporation, a ban that fell heavily on the Presbyterians in particular, because many of them held office in the City of London, and in other corporations. This, however, was only the beginning of the persecution.<sup>49</sup>

In addition to the political persecution of nonconformists, this Act also had religious significance in relation to English Presbyterian worship. Although its political aspect can be regarded as the main purpose of the Corporation Act, it specifically required those who sought public office to follow “the rite of the Church of England” based on the *Book of Common Prayer*. For approximately the past sixteen years, *The Westminster Directory of Public Worship* (1644) was decreed the national formulary of worship and had taken the place of the *Book of Common Prayer* as “the product of the Westminster Assembly of Divines appointed by Parliament.”<sup>50</sup> However, English Presbyterians, as nonconformists, criticized the *Book of Common Prayer* and even attempted to establish a more Reformed liturgy as a national form of worship with Baxter’s Savoy Liturgy. To them, Parliament’s political enactment requiring them to follow the rite of the Church of England meant religious persecution in terms of worship. In this way, through the Corporation Act, English Presbyterians not only lost the opportunity to recover Baxter’s Reformed Liturgy but also were required to follow the *Book of Common Prayer*. So the failure of a more Reformed liturgical form led to the English Presbyterians’ even greater hesitation to take any liturgical book as their direction for worship.

48. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics*, 19.

49. Davies, *English Free Churches*, 92–93.

50. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 2:344.

*The Influence of the Act of Uniformity on Change of Liturgical Text*

The Act of Uniformity was more actively “intended to eliminate the Presbyterians.”<sup>51</sup> Nonconformist Presbyterian ministers were ejected from the national church—a result they had not expected: “instead of healing the nation’s divisions and easing the path to conformity for moderate Presbyterians, this ‘sharp act’ [Act of Uniformity] virtually ensured that they would be forced out of the national church.”<sup>52</sup> Spurr clearly summarized the core demand of the Act of Uniformity:

The Act presented four specific difficulties to the scrupulous: to qualify for a clerical living it was necessary to give “unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by” the Book of Common Prayer, including the sacraments and ceremonies, psalter and ordinal; to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles, of which three concerned church government; to renounce the obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant for yourself and all others, and forswear “to endeavour any change or alteration of government either in church or state”; and finally, to have received ordination from the hands of a bishop.<sup>53</sup>

In brief, one liturgical purpose of this enactment, as Ramsbottom indicated, was to “make the Book of Common Prayer once again the only legal form of public worship.”<sup>54</sup>

All nonconformists including English Presbyterians needed to choose whether or not to consent to this political enactment regarding liturgy. As Charles Whiting pointed out, “the Act of Uniformity required the clergy to take the oath of canonical obedience, a phrase which many of them misinterpreted or misunderstood, and to swear obedience to the ordinary according to the canons of the Church.”<sup>55</sup> The Act of Uniformity pointed to several reasons for penalizing the nonconformists: “‘viciousness of life,’ ‘errors in doctrine,’ ‘superstitious innovations in worship,’ and ‘malignancy against the Parliament.’”<sup>56</sup> Regarding worship, it also “stipulated that the morning and evening prayers therein contained shall upon every Lord’s

51. Plum, *Restoration Puritanism*, 24.

52. Spurr, *Restoration Church of England*, 42.

53. *Ibid.*, 43.

54. Ramsbottom, “Puritan Dissenters and English Churches,” 6.

55. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism*, 17.

56. *Ibid.*, 6.



Day and upon all other days and occasions and at the times therein appointed be openly and solemnly read by all and every minister or curate in every church, chapel or other place of public worship.”<sup>57</sup>

Although some Presbyterians remained in the official ministry as Puritan clergymen,<sup>58</sup> a great number of the nonconforming Presbyterians were ejected; “it is traditional that the number of the ejected on St. Bartholomew’s Day, 1662, was 2000,”<sup>59</sup> even though it is impossible to get the exact numbers. The ejection of Presbyterian ministers influenced changes in worship in significant ways. They could not securely worship using the Reformed forms such as *The Westminster Directory* or Reformed Liturgy. The Act of Uniformity was not optional but mandatory for all Puritan clergymen, and their Reformed Book of Worship (Reformed Liturgy) was denied by Anglican power. But the English Presbyterian divines who attempted to establish a Reformed liturgy as a national form of worship at the beginning of the Restoration era did not want to comply with the political enactment requiring “unfeigned assent and consent to everything in the Book of Common Prayer.” Their strong rejection of the *Book of Common Prayer* was the most serious change in this period. The English Puritans’ criticisms of the *Book of Common Prayer*, as Roy Williams pointed out, “were not from any love of novelty. They were motivated by desire for a liturgy reformed in accordance with the Scriptures.”<sup>60</sup> As a result, their only choice—if they would not conform to the rubric of the Church of England—was to make the Bible, the traditional Reformed resource of worship, their liturgical foundation and direction.

57. Ramsbottom, “Puritan Dissenters and English Churches,” 7.

58. Owing to their willingness to continue in their places, some Puritan clergymen remained in the official ministry well after 1662. In fact, according to Spurr, “the overwhelming majority of the English parish clergy simply endured the changes brought about in 1660–62 as they had those of the previous decades” (*Restoration Church of England*, 42–43). According to Ramsbottom, “no doubt a few among them were motivated more by fear of losing their livelihood than by deep commitment to godly religion” (“Puritan Dissenters and English Churches,” 105).

59. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism*, 10. Horton Davies also agreed that “almost two thousand of the most conscientious ministers in England refused to comply with the new and stringent terms of conformity and lost their livelihoods” (*Worship and Theology in England*, 2:439). In another way, Harry Plum indicated that “considerable number decided to remain within the Anglican church, but it is impossible to say how many” (*Restoration Puritanism*, 25).

60. Williams, “The Puritan Concept and Practice of Prayer,” 360.