

HM 4.1 – Puritan Perspectives on Ministry

John Howe's moderate nonconformity and occasional conformity

1. The Perceived Intolerance and Immoderation of Calvinism

- some examples

2. Howe's Moderate Presbyterianism

- a) Howe a Presbyterian not an Independent
- b) and a 'presbyterian' – a 'dis-engaged faithful man', a 'meer Christian'
- c) funeral sermons
- d) personal refs to moderation

3. The theoretical basis of Howe's moderation

- a) 17th C calls for moderation and toleration
- b) distinction between fundamentals and circumstantials / primary and secondary /
essential and non-essential
- c) necessary to salvation

d) - what were the essentials? few in number, plain to all

e) creeds and 'Scripture-sufficiency'

4. Howe's efforts for visible union

5. Howe's reasons for his nonconformity

a) latitudinarian and dissenter attitudes to adiaphora

b) not doctrinal reasons

c) not about renouncing Solemn League and Covenant

d) nor about requirement for oath of passive obedience

e) partly about re-ordination

f) nor about ceremonies as such

g) but about terms of communion

a. must not be wider or narrower than those of Christ

b. this divides the church

- c. and is aggravated by making separate worship illegal
- d. the imposition of extra-essentials as terms of communion

6. Howe's Defence of Occasional Conformity

1. what was OC?
2. Baxter and Owen
3. in the 1690s
4. dissenters divided over the issue
5. John Owen – re liturgy
6. Daniel Defoe – re consistency
7. Anglican arguments against the practice
8. Howe's defence
 - a. good precedent for the practice
 - b. may be particular reasons for OC though not for full conformity
 1. Cof E and dissenting worship is lawful

2. ought to choose what is best

3. but reasons for occasionally attending less than the best

4. this largely Baxter's line

5. and stands unless
 - a) parish communion is unlawful or

 - b) any act of communion can be taken as an expression of full and constant

communion