

**OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
CHURCHES: A
DISCOURSE POINTING
AT THE PRIMITIVE FORM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649595921

Of the Government of Churches: A Discourse Pointing at the Primitive Form by Herbert Thorndike

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

HERBERT THORNDIKE

**OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
CHURCHES: A
DISCOURSE POINTING
AT THE PRIMITIVE FORM**

132

OF THE
Government of Churches.

A
DISCOURSE POINTING AT THE PRIMITIVE FORM.

BY
HERBERT THORNDIKE, A.M.
FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE; AFTERWARDS
PREBENDARY OF WESTMINSTER.

Edited by
THE REV. DAVID LEWIS, M.A.
FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD.

LONDON:
C. J. STEWART, THEOLOGICAL BOOKSELLER,
11 KING WILLIAM STREET, WEST STRAND.

MDCCCLL

*Of the Government of Churches, A Discourse
Pointing at the Primitive Form. Printed
by Roger Daniel, Printer to the
Universitie of Cambridge.*

1641.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE "Discourse pointing at the Primitive Form of the Government of Churches" was written by its learned author two hundred years ago,¹ at a time when that government was openly assailed. Corruptions were alleged as having taken place in the actual administration of the system; and the system itself was said to be a departure from the original polity of the Church, and an usurpation over the kingdom of Christ.

¹ 1641. The present edition is an exact reprint of the text. Some of the authorities cited have been given at length; the references, verified throughout, have been given with greater minuteness.

And so it came to pass, that by repeated attacks upon the Church's order, that order was abolished, so far as man could prevail, and the Christian kingdom of England continued for a time visibly an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel."

Those days were indeed days of evil: good men and holy were persecuted; and they who had no regard to truth and justice succeeded in their work. So great was the confusion, and so loud the clamour, that they who would speak reverently could not be heard. The multitude was seduced from the pathways of order, by those who ought to have kept them there, and by others who had no authority to guide them at all. The children grew up rebellious to the Mother that gave them birth, and "went a whoring with their own inven-

tions," which they boldly declared to be the positive institutions of God.

Amid so much of wrong, it behoved those to whom authority was given, according to their measure and their calling, to endeavour to bring back our misguided forefathers—thereby delivering their own souls—to their first estate of truth and reverence and love.

In that goodly company who held fast their integrity while so many—and among them some of whom better things were reasonably expected—went astray, Herbert Thorndike holds not the lowest place. For during the great rebellion, he bore constant witness by his writings to ancient truth, taking occasion, from the iniquity of the times, to speak his mind more freely than perhaps he would otherwise have

done. And herein he missed not the lot of all those, who in the English Church have sighed for the restoration of unity. The sectaries were naturally his enemies, for he spared not their errors; and others, not favourable to these, were displeas'd at the boldness of his speaking.

The following book is not so much a defence of the order of Bishops, as it is an appeal for the restoration of the original government of Churches,¹—for a return to that estate of things, the loss of which even the puritans affected to lament, and yet destroyed the means by which it might be regained. They complained of the Bishops, “that they had wholly neglected the duty of preaching, under pretence of being more at leisure for the governing

¹ See p. 200.

part of their function; and that even in this they managed to insignificancy, and transferred their jurisdiction upon their chancellors and under-officers;—that none of them used to sit in their consistories for hearing complaints, or doing justice either to clergy or laity; but turned over the people to registrars, proctors, and apparitors, who drew their money from them against equity and law, and used them almost at discretion; that few or none of them made their visitations in person; . . . that few of them living in their episcopal cities, the poor were disappointed of the relief, and the better sort of the hospitality, they had reason to expect; and that by this absence divine service was hurried and ill performed in the cathedrals, for want of the Bishops' presence and inspection;—