

ON ECCLESIASTICAL INNOVATIONS

House of Commons

1 September 1641

Whereas divers innovations in or about the worship of God have been lately practiced in this Kingdom by enjoining some things and prohibiting others, without warrant of law, to the great grievance and discontent of His Majesty's subjects; for the suppression of such innovations, and for preservation of the public peace, it is this day ordered by the Commons in Parliament assembled:

That the church-wardens of every parish church and chapel respectively do forthwith remove the Communion table from the east end of the church, chapel, or chancel into some other convenient place; and that they take away the rails, and level the chancels as heretofore they were before the late innovations.

That all crucifixes, scandalous pictures of any one or more persons of the Trinity, and all images of the Virgin Mary shall be taken away and abolished, and that all tapers, candlesticks, and basins be removed from the Communion table.

That all corporal bowing at the name of Jesus, or towards the east end of the church, chapel, or chancel, or towards the Communion table be henceforth forborne.

That the orders aforesaid be observed in all the several cathedral churches of this Kingdom, and all the collegiate churches or chapels in the two Universities, or any other part of the Kingdom, and in the Temple Church and the chapels of the other Inns of Court by the deans of the said cathedral churches, by the Vice-Chancellors of the said Universities, and by the heads and governors of the several colleges and halls aforesaid, and by the benchers and readers in the said Inns of Court respectively.

That the Lord's Day shall be duly observed and sanctified; all dancing or other sports, either before or after divine service, be forborne and restrained, and that the preaching of God's word be permitted in the afternoon in the several churches and chapels of this Kingdom; and that ministers and preachers be encouraged thereunto.

That the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities, heads and governors of colleges, all parsons, vicars, and church-wardens do make certificates of the performance of these orders; and if the same shall not be observed in any of the places aforementioned, upon complaint thereof made to the two next justices of peace, mayor, or head officers of cities or towns corporate, it is ordered that the said justices, mayor, or other head officer respectively, shall examine the truth of all such complaints, and certify by whose default the same are committed; all which certificates are to be delivered in Parliament before 30 October next.

This order was presented from the committee appointed to that purpose, and put to the question and assented unto.

Henry Gee and William John Hardy, eds., *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (London: MacMillan and Company, 1914):551–552.