

The Life and Times of Daniel Getsius, Vicar of Stoke Gabriel 1636-1672

A learned man from mainland Europe, Daniel Getsius was the vicar and incumbent of the living of Stoke Gabriel during the turbulent period of the Civil War and the rise and fall of Puritanism. He survived the challenges of the time and held on to the living until his death a decade after the Restoration, but he was not unscathed. His reputation as a faithful member of the established church was damaged when he was described as a Presbyterian and subsequently as a time-server and trimmer. The purpose of this paper is to offer a critical perspective of the man and to endeavour to establish the veracity of such descriptions of his faith and character while comparing his historical record with that of contemporaneous incumbents in neighbouring parishes.

An analysis of the Church-of-England database for Devonshire reveals that there was only a small number of clergy who retained their living through the rise and fall of Puritanism without any temporal discontinuity.¹ While research into the general picture of such clergy has not been undertaken, some local context was required to compare and contrast the churchmanship of Getsius with that of the incumbents of the neighbouring parishes and to understand their relationships. The use of a Church-of-England or Presbyterian organisation to provide local context would not be appropriate since the former collapsed in 1641 while the latter, belatedly established by the Exeter Provincial Assembly in 1633, was never fully implemented.² An element of judgement was therefore required and nine neighbouring parishes were selected which are either side of the lower reaches of the River Dart, namely Ashprington, Berry Pomeroy, Brixham with Churston Ferrers, Comworthy, Dartington, Dartmouth, Dittisham, Paignton and Marldon Chapel, and Totnes.³ All these parishes, together with that of Stoke Gabriel, are referred to herein as the Lower Dart Neighbourhood, a map of which is provided in Appendix 1.

The period in question corresponds to the reigns of James I (1603-1625) and Charles I (1625-1649), the interregnum during which the country was governed by the Republican Commonwealth (1649-53 and 1659-1660) and the Cromwellian Protectorate (1653-1659), and the reign of the restored Stuart monarch, Charles II (1660-1685). In particular, the period corresponds to the life of Daniel Getsius (1592-1672).

Biography of Daniel Getsius before his Incumbency of Stoke Gabriel

Johann Daniel Getsius was born in 1592 in Odernheim in the County Palatine of the Rhine, now part of Germany.⁴ He lost his father when he was an infant and his family moved to Hesse when the Bavarian army took his home town. He then escaped further north to Vetera Castra to stay with his Uncle Justus Baronius but was evicted from the house because of their religious differences. Getsius made his way to Holland and thence to England where he continued his studies at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford.⁵ He came to Dartmouth in

1629 with Robert Jago, an alumnus of Exeter College, Oxford, and brother of Elizabeth whom Getsius married in 1630.⁶ He taught at the local school and preached at Townstall for about seven years.

Getsius' mother had committed him to a religious education from an early age. He attended the University of Marburg before he came to England and had been taught by some of the leading theologians of the day. Daniel Tossanus, a Protestant professor of theology, tutored him in the principles of religion. Dr Ludov. Crocius, a professor of sacred theology, supervised his studies at the University of Marburg, from which he obtained his MA degree. The Puritan Master of Emmanuel College, Dr John Preston, tutored Getsius at Cambridge. At Oxford, he befriended Sir Arthur Upton, a Presbyterian upon whose friendship he relied in later life. Even his uncle may have unwittingly contributed to his education through his unsuccessful endeavours to convert him to Catholicism.

In 1636, Getsius was granted denizenship by Charles I which allowed him to remain in England and, within a month, to be presented to the vicarage of Stoke Gabriel, some 5 miles upriver from Dartmouth.⁷ His patron was the Royalist, Sir William Walter, and he was inducted into the living by the Bishop of Exeter, Joseph Hall.^{8,9} A rural parish having a population of about 500, it must have seemed a very different world to the towns in which he had lived previously. He continued to teach, both as a schoolmaster at Totnes Grammar School and as a private tutor, thus supplementing the income from his living.¹⁰ One of his tutees, Valentine Greatrakes, an infamous healer of the time, provided him with a lifetime annuity.¹¹

Daniel and Elizabeth Getsius had four sons and one daughter. Three of the sons went to Exeter College, Oxford University.¹² Daniel Jr became the rector of Bigbury (1660-1691), Samuel became chaplain of All Souls' College (but died shortly after), and Walter became the vicar of Brixham with Churston Ferrers (1679-1701). His only daughter, Elizabeth, married Thomas Osborne and their son, Petrus, became the vicar of Stoke Gabriel in 1705. Getsius died in 1672 at the age of 80 and was buried in the churchyard on Boxing Day.

Religious & Civil Conflict that was the Backdrop to Daniel Getsius' Ministry

At the time of Getsius' arrival in England in 1619, the country had experienced a period of peace and stability under Elizabeth I and James I. The country was firmly Protestant but under pressure from Puritans, the so-called Godly, to reform itself further.¹³ Meanwhile, the Catholic recusants continued to be a significant and dangerous minority, covertly continuing to use their banned ceremonies and rituals and retaining their allegiance to the Pope. The Puritans, who wanted greater freedom in worship and church government, came from within the established church and were securing positions in high office. Many became Members of Parliament, with which both James I and Charles I, through the exercise of their Divine Right, found themselves increasingly in conflict.¹⁴ It was a period of huge population growth with material prosperity for

some but impoverishment for many. Embarking upon his ministry in 1636, there would have been much work for the new vicar of Stoke Gabriel but little did he know that, having escaped from the war afflicting his Palatine homeland, he would soon become embroiled in the troubles of his adopted country.

In the early seventeenth century, the Church-of-England was defined by the Elizabethan Settlement, that is the reformed doctrine represented by the 39 Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and the episcopal organisation. Members of the church who subscribed to the reformed doctrine have been termed: Churchmen, Conservative or Orthodox Protestants, and Prayerbook Protestants. All were committed to the use of the BCP, for which reason the term "Prayerbook Protestant" is used herein to distinguish such Protestants from the Puritans, especially the Presbyterians.¹⁵ Generally, Prayerbook Protestants were Royalists and Puritans were Parliamentarians.

In 1633, Charles I had appointed William Laud as the Archbishop of Canterbury. An autocratic man, Laud introduced rules on matters of ceremony and ritual to reflect the beauty of holiness and unify worship across the country.¹⁶ He was a Prayerbook Protestant but a high churchman, accused of being an Arminian and even having Catholic sympathies. Regarded by Puritans as dangerous, he provided a focus for their objections and engendered even greater division between Prayerbook Protestants and Puritans that eventually resulted in schism. By 1640, Laud had been imprisoned, the Puritans were in the ascendancy, and Charles I had few supporters in Parliament. In 1641, the Church-of-England organisation had collapsed and in the following year the Civil War had commenced.

The Presbyterian Solemn League and Covenant (SLC) was signed in 1643 and provided for the further reformation of religion in England. In 1645, the BCP was abolished and the Public Worship Directory (PWD) authorised as its replacement, thus proscribing any ceremony that was remotely "superstitious" or had a papist legacy.¹⁷ The PWD expressly provided for the following changes:

- Members of the congregation should offer no adoration and should not bow to one place or another;
- Baptisms should be performed in front of the congregation (not in west end fonts) and involve the sprinkling of water without the sign of the cross;
- Holy Communion should be administered with communicants sitting at or about the table;
- Sundays should be days of rest, abstaining from sports and pastimes and using time for bible study and meditation (Sabbatarianism);
- Marriages should be pronounced after the making of vows without exchanging rings;
- Burials should be undertaken without ceremony, specifically without singing, kneeling and praying before the dead body;

- Public solemn fasting should be a duty requiring total abstinence from food and also from labour, rich apparel, etc; and
- Festival days, formerly Holy Days, should be discontinued.¹⁸

Surviving churchwarden accounts might show the requisition of a bowl to enable baptisms to be performed in front of the congregation, but changes in ceremony, involving no new liturgical artefact or omitting some part of the former BCP office, are evidentially challenging. Moreover, some clergy knew the BCP by rote and could recite it in private or to participants who might be none the wiser. The Loyalist Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Sanderson, went further in 1652 by publishing how the BCP could be put aside but its substance retained.¹⁹ As a result, the extent to which the PWD ceremonial changes were actually implemented at the parochial level is difficult to ascertain without contemporary evidence and often may be inferred only through the religious conviction and churchmanship of the presiding minister.

The establishment of Committees of Ejectors and Triers offered some control over the Presbyterianism of the parishes.²⁰ The Committees were empowered to sequester the livings of incumbents who were “malignant”, “scandalous” or “insufficient”, which meant those who did not preach or whose personal conduct was reproachable but it also came to mean those who were simply loyal to the king and the BCP. Sequestrations thus enabled the vacant livings to be occupied by approved Presbyterian ministers, so-called ‘Intruders’, and lecturers whose income might be augmented through the use of funds realised from the sale of episcopal assets.

The Committee’s power was not unencumbered and a number of factors acted to restrain their freedom.²¹ Firstly, the right of patronage still existed although Parliament now claimed that right insofar as it was previously held by bishops, delinquents and the Crown. Secondly, there was a shortage of approved Presbyterian ministers. Thirdly, in some parishes the existing incumbent enjoyed local gentry support or was so highly regarded by his parishioners that his eviction could do more harm than good; the prevailing wisdom in such situations was to replace the incumbent when he died. An additional factor was the value of the living and the prioritisation of the Committee’s work on wealthy or influential livings, which perversely afforded some degree of protection for poorer livings, especially in isolated locations. In consequence, there was not a quick, comprehensive purge of loyal clergy but a protracted process of harassment and/or eviction that lasted some fifteen years, resulting in an overall eviction of some 2300 clergy.²² Shortly before the Restoration, the majority of incumbents were Presbyterian while the remainder were Prayerbook Protestants at heart who had conformed to a greater or lesser degree.

All the while, the basic parochial organisation endured, continuing as the fundamental unit of secular and religious administration. And, although suppressed, the use of the BCP and the

festival culture persisted in spite of the absence of episcopal oversight and the best endeavours of the godly. In particular, the increasing imposition of Sabbatarianism provoked a widespread desire to return to the pre-war religious culture.²³ However, nothing would change while the Puritans remained in power and, even when Charles II was invited to return, there was still little hope among Prayerbook Protestants that a change back to the BCP would come. But a change came and came rapidly and was viewed by some as miraculous.²⁴

On the Restoration, the re-established Church-of-England required incumbents to acknowledge Royal Supremacy, to use only the BCP, and to subscribe to the 39 Articles of Religion. The implementing legislation required clergy subscription before St Bartholomew's Day, 1662. Some 1700 Presbyterian ministers resigned or were evicted over the period 1660-63 either because they were not episcopally ordained or because they refused to subscribe.²⁵ The urgent need to fill the vacancies resulted in many subscribing to the Articles of Religion ahead of the implementing legislation, many even being ordained deacon and priest (and in some cases presented to their living) all on the same day.²⁶

The harassment and eviction of ministers under the different Protestant regimes caused much suffering to them and their families. Calamy, a self-confessed Puritan, published a biographical compilation of the ministers who had been evicted by the Church-of-England on the Restoration.²⁷ This was followed up by the publication of a fuller account.²⁸ The publication was non-conformist propaganda and a Prayerbook Protestant response was required to address the imbalance that otherwise would have existed. Accordingly, Walker, a clergyman from Exeter, published a biographical compilation of the clergy who had suffered under the Presbyterian regime.²⁹ This in turn provoked a further publication from Calamy in reply.³⁰ In the twentieth century, Matthews corrected and updated the publication of Calamy.³¹ And subsequently repeated the exercise for the publication of Walker.³² Unashamedly political, the biographical compilations of Calamy and Walker demonstrate how polarised Protestantism had become during the seventeenth century.

Many clergy managed to escape eviction altogether by accommodating themselves more or less willingly to successive Protestant regimes.³³ They have been described, if not reviled, as "time-servers" or "time-trimmers".³⁴ The terms negatively imply a lack of integrity and an insincere attitude to priestly office, as immortalised in the satirical song, *The Vicar of Bray*. Adams has noted that such behaviour may be justifiable in some circumstances. He put it thus:

"Many clergy...accepted the regime unwillingly but not necessarily from selfish or cowardly motives. By compromising they could at least preserve their churches and parishes from the excesses of extremists."³⁵

Nonetheless, as Fincham and Taylor observed, it:

“...is still tempting to dismiss those clergy...as timeservers, prepared to sacrifice whatever convictions they had to preserve their income or, perhaps, forced to do so by their responsibilities to a wife and children.³⁶”

Such temptation should be resisted since a hasty conclusion without access to the relevant facts and circumstances risks unwarranted damage to a clergyman's reputation.

With smaller numbers of Catholics and greater numbers of Puritans, the position in Devon broadly mirrored that in the rest of the country.³⁷ In 1648, 73 ministers of Devon declared their support for the SLC by signing the Joint-Testimonie of the Ministers of Devon.³⁸ While it took another ten years before a Presbyterian organisation was developed for the county, there was no such delay in the work of the Presbyterian Committees. Gowers has provided a picture of church life and evictions of Devonshire clergy in the period from 1641-62.³⁹ Using the parochial returns that Walker obtained, he notes that the Committees evicted some 94 (20% of the total) and harassed (but not evicted) an additional 33 (7% of the total); the figures are minima since Walker obtained returns from only 204 parishes (or 43% of the total). Gowers also notes that from 1660-63, some 124 Presbyterian ministers and lecturers were evicted, the largest number of any county.

To identify incumbents from among the parishes of the Lower Dart Neighbourhood who subscribed to Presbyterianism, the following characteristics were employed:

- those who subscribed to the SLC through the Joint-Testimonie of the Ministers of Devon;
- those who were members of the Presbyterian Second Division;
- those who received an augmentation in their living;
- those who were ordained by a Presbytery;
- those who, on the Restoration, refused to repudiate the SLC and subscribe to the re-established Church-of-England, or resigned or were ejected from their living.

A tabulated analysis of the Presbyterian Ministers and Post-Restoration Conformists of the Lower Dart Neighbourhood is provided in Appendix 2.

In use today, the term “Presbyterian” denotes a member of a Protestant denomination of a Christian church, not part of the established Church-of-England. There is no sense in which the term is used pejoratively, but that was not the case in the late seventeenth century.

Basis of the Assertion that Daniel Getsius was a Presbyterian or a Time-Server and Trimmer

The assertion that Getsius was a Presbyterian appears in Anthony Wood's First Edition of the Second Volume of *Athenae Oxoniensis*. It represents a few lines in the biographical entry for Valentine Greatrakes and describes how:

“...his mother, for his farther progress in literature, committed him to the charge of a certain Presbyterian called Joh. Daniel Getsius a High German, Minister of Stoke Gabriel...”⁴⁰

Wood references Greatrakes’ autobiography as the source for the information.⁴¹ But the source merely describes Getsius as a learned and reverend man, and not as a Presbyterian. Wood must have had good reason to make this change since otherwise he has simply lifted Greatrakes’ own words.

In the Preface to his book, Wood indicates that his biographies were compiled using the methodology described in the Preface to the First Volume. This in turn merely indicates that he undertook a ‘...search into ancient Records...’ and made enquiries of ‘...those Relations and Friends of the deceased Authors which had survived them.’⁴² However, it can be deduced from subsequent events that he made no contact with Getsius’ kinsfolk, so he must have formed his view of Getsius in another way.

Having seen Greatrakes’ entry in Wood’s book, Getsius’ son, Walter, objected to the description of his father as a Presbyterian. He wrote a letter to Woods on the 12 January 1692/3, in which he said:

“Finding lately in your 2^d vol: of Athen: Oxon: (viz in the account of the famous Irish stroaker M^r Val. Greatricks) that you have given to my hon^l Father the Epithet of Presbyterian Minister, which is a character he did not desire or deserve, and is not grateful at all to his prosperity, who are for Episcopal Governm^t as he was, I thought it my duty to give you a truer account of him to prevent such a stigma being fastened on him...”⁴³

He enclosed with his letter a ‘narrative’ of some memoirs of his father’s life and invited Wood to include an entry for his father in a future edition of the book.⁴⁴ Walter Getsius received a reply from Wood since he wrote him a second letter dated 16 February 1692/3 containing a ‘further account’ of his father, as requested by Wood.⁴⁵ The ‘further account’ was reproduced over one hundred and fifty years later in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*.⁴⁶ While the letters of Wood have not been found, Walter Getsius’ second letter makes it clear that Wood’s characterisation of his father is based on a presumption and not on actual knowledge.

As Walter Getsius admits in his first letter to Wood, the ‘narrative’ is open to objection that it is not impartial. However, the following points can be made in support of its accuracy. Firstly, the ‘narrative’ contains testimonials of his father, for which Walter Getsius obtained certificates of accuracy from ministers of neighbouring parishes known to Wood, none of which appears to have survived. Secondly, both the ‘narrative’ (and the ‘further account’ for that matter) mention numerous persons by name and contain much detailed information to justify their

verisimilitude. Thirdly, the 'narrative' refers to his father and himself in the third person as though he was writing about different people. Fourthly, in contrast to Calamy and Walker, Walter Getsius had no broad political agenda; he simply wanted to correct the characterisation of his father as Presbyterian.

The 'narrative' may also be criticised for hearsay. Walter Getsius was only born in 1647 and would have been too young to recall many of the events which he describes. In his first letter to Wood, he acknowledges that:

"...in ye enclosed 'narrative' drawn up some memoirs of my fathers life, which I gathered mostly from himselfe, & from se-veral authentick papers I have by me".

Hearsay it may be but the evidence is derived from the very person under consideration and is therefore a key record. In contrast, the 'further account' is mostly argument with some embellishment of the 'narrative'.

Wood undertook to publish a correction and include a biographical entry for Getsius since Walter Getsius reminded Wood of his 'promise' in a third letter dated 7 July 1694.⁴⁷ A new edition was not published until 1721, some twenty years after the deaths of Wood (November 1695) and Walter Getsius (June 1701). The title page indicates that the edition is '...very much Corrected and Enlarged...' and the book no longer describes Getsius as a Presbyterian.⁴⁸ As promised by Wood, the book also contains a separate entry for Getsius but there is a sense that Wood remained unconvinced since the entry is qualified by acknowledging Walter Getsius:

"...from whom I had this account of his Father, in vindication of what was said of him to be a Presbyterian, in the first Edition of the second Volume p.416.⁴⁹"

Wood is leaving others to form their own opinion and his own charge against Getsius seems to have evolved into one of time-serving and trimming. None of the letters of Walter Getsius refers to the charge as such but his second letter, especially the 'further account', does contain relevant arguments on the matter. *The Gentlemen's Magazine* indicates that the letter is:

"...worth printing as an attempt to clear his father's character from the charge of time-serving and trimming, urged against him by Wood.⁵⁰"

Curiously, the letter does no such thing as will become apparent.

Evaluation of the Evidence as to whether Daniel Getsius was a Presbyterian

A Protestant from an early age, Getsius was unpersuaded by his uncle to convert to Catholicism and elected to come to England in 1619. According to the 'narrative', Getsius referred to England:

“...in some short memoirs in latin written with his own hand,...the safe haven of orthodoxy, and heartily blesseth Gods holy name for bringing him to it.”

It was the established church - “the safe haven of orthodoxy” - that had appealed to him as an orthodox Protestant. Likewise, he was unpersuaded by Puritanism and chose to bring up his children within the faith of the established church. These significant commitments, involving Getsius and his family over a period of some forty years, are broadly indicative of Getsius’ faith. However, a fuller evaluation requires analysis of his churchmanship including his attitude to ecclesiastical governance and to worship and liturgy. It also requires analysis of his spoken and written word and whether, because of his faith, he was harassed or considered for eviction at any time. Finally, it requires an understanding of his loyalty and of the extent to which his parishioners were of similar faith and loyalty.

(i) Ecclesiastical Governance

Walter Getsius said in his first letter that his father was a supporter of episcopal government whereas, in his ‘further account’, he said that his father in relation to Presbyterian governance:

“...never sided with them, nor was guilty of any sordid compliance, he never took ye covenant, nor joyn’d with the Presbyterians in their mock ordinations, nor did he set up their discipline and lay elders in his parish...”

Included among the 73 ministers who signed the Joint-Testimonies of the Ministers of Devon were the clergy of the parishes of Paignton, Dartington, Berry Pomeroy and Totnes, but not Getsius (Appendix 2).⁵¹

The minutes from the first Presbyterian Provincial Assembly held in Exeter in 1655 list the names of the ministers and their parishes included in the Second Division. They include the ministers of Ashprington, Berry Pomeroy, Brixham, Dartmouth, Paignton and Totnes. Getsius and Stoke Gabriel are not mentioned.⁵² At a Divisional meeting in Dartmouth in 1657, the classis ordained several new Presbyterian ministers. While eight ministers from the Lower Dart Neighbourhood appear to have been present, Getsius was not among them.⁵³

The surviving parish records show no change in practice in the annual election of two people to the office of churchwarden for the full period of Getsius’ incumbency.⁵⁴ There is no identification of anyone as Elder.

The evidence supports Walter Getsius’ statement that his father did not participate in Presbyterian governance.

(ii) Liturgy & Worship

There are no surviving churchwarden accounts for the parish for the relevant period which, as mentioned previously, make it very difficult to discern whether and to what extent the PWD

was implemented. Gowers has compiled a list of 'some 22 churches' in Devon that were said to have continued with the BCP from 1645; it does not include any parish from the Lower Dart Neighbourhood.⁵⁵ But it is not clear how this list was derived and it is not exclusive of other parishes anyway.

Churchwarden accounts do survive for 1610-22, some fifteen years before Getsius' arrival in the parish, and these include expenditure associated with the regular washing of a surplus and the purchase of a cushion for the pulpit.⁵⁶ They also include a payment made in 1613:

"...to the tythingeman man of Paington towards the Kepeyninge of the Stoupe there⁵⁷."

It begs the questions: what was the parish doing with a Catholic stoup almost a century after the Reformation, and why were they putting it into safe-keeping? Did they hope that they might use it again in the future?

Additionally, an association has been shown between the survival of church ales and festival culture, on the one hand, and religious conservatism, on the other.⁵⁸ In the accounts for 1622, the last year of the period for which they survive, an income is recorded from the sale of church ales at Whitsun and an expenditure is recorded for rushes, presumably for a rushbearing festival.⁵⁹ All these entries indicate that the parish was Prayerbook Protestant before Getsius came to Stoke Gabriel. Moreover, shortly after the Restoration, censuses indicate that there was no significant non-conformism in the parish.^{60,61} Overall, therefore, the evidence points to a parish that was Prayerbook Protestant during Getsius' incumbency.

In the 'further account', Walter Getsius says that his father:

"...was one of the first that read ye common prayer before it was re-establish'd..."

This does suggest that Getsius might not have been using the BCP previously or that Getsius was one of the first openly to use it whereas previously its use might have been surreptitious. Either way, it is not conclusive.

The 'further account' also states that Getsius baptised a child in Totnes according to the BCP, after the Restoration but before the re-establishment of the Church-of-England. The BCP baptism had been requested by a local gentleman because the local Presbyterian minister had refused. While there is no evidence for this in the Totnes parish records, it was the case that Totnes did not have an incumbent who conformed to the re-established Church-of-England until 1663, thus providing a factual consistency (Appendix 2).

The will of a local gentleman, Josias Full, provided for payment to Getsius of '...Forty shillings to preach my Funerall sermon...' ⁶² The will is dated 1646 and was proved in 1647 following his death. The PWD requires for the burial of the deceased that the '...body be immediately interred, without any Ceremony...' although reflection and meditation were countenanced.⁶³ In

contrast, a sermon typically forms part of a service. However, the will is not evidence that a service took place, only that one was requested which may or may not have been provided at a time when the PWD was the relevant authority.

There is no evidence to indicate that Getsius implemented the changes introduced by the PWD.

(iii) Declarations, Sermons and Writings

Along with all adult male members of the parish, Getsius was obliged to sign the Protestation Return of 1641, a declaration of support for Protestantism, the King and Parliament.⁶⁴ In the following year, he signed a petition to Devonshire JPs in support of the fishermen whose trade was being threatened by Turkish pirates, the Irish Rebellion and a Popish rising.⁶⁵ And on 13 March 1663, he subscribed to the 39 Articles of Religion of the Church-of-England.⁶⁶ Significantly, he did not sign the Joint-Testimonies of the Ministers of Devon.

In 1643, Prince Maurice, a Palatinate nephew of Charles I, secured a Royalist victory at Dartmouth and, according to the 'narrative', wanted a preacher for a commemorative service at Townstall.⁶⁷ The local incumbent, Anthony Harford, a Parliamentarian and Presbyterian, had fled the town and so Prince Maurice invited his fellow countryman, Getsius, to oblige. Choosing as his text, Acts 27: 21-22 ('The ship in danger'), Getsius used the opportunity to reflect upon the activities of the Parliamentarians and to speak his mind on the events of the times. Although a transcript has not been found, Walter Getsius refers to it in the 'narrative', as follows:

"And as it was then so now adays we have had experience of such lying Cretians, who have led away many into precipices, and he instanced in those three things

1. The very gross and false calumny against the King of his designing and endeavouring to bring in Popery, which was forged on purpose to render him odious to his people, & to withdraw their affection and allegiance from him
2. That in matters of reformation, we are not to stay for order from the Magistrate
3. Their holding the lawfulness of taking up arms against the Lords anointed, which he called a false and pernicious doctrine detested by pious antiquity, abhorred by all true Protestants, and avouched by none but Jesuits and Anabaptists"

In unequivocally nailing his colours to the Royalist mast, his sermon was bound to provoke a Parliamentarian response if circumstances were to change in their favour.

One surviving tract of Getsius, written in 1658, reveals his love for the Church-of-England, his gratitude for his denizenship, and articulates the importance of unity between church and state '...seeing that when the Churches quiet is disturbed the Commonwealth will not be long settled...'⁶⁸ He also expresses his concern for the growth of the radical sects, especially the

Anabaptists, but, treading a careful line, avoids any discussion of issues dividing the Church-of-England itself.

The evidence shows that Getsius put his name to causes which he supported but not to those which he did not. In particular, he did not write or put his name to anything that reveals a Presbyterian sympathy. He was openly Royalist but his tract reveals a tactful line.

(iv) Eviction of Incumbents

The incumbents of Berry Pomeroy, Dartington, Dartmouth and Totnes all conformed to Presbyterianism by 1648 and were therefore secure in their livings (Appendix 2). The incumbents of Brixham with Churston Ferrers, Dittisham and Paignton did not conform and were evicted because of their Prayerbook Protestantism and replaced by Presbyterian ministers over a period from 1645-1647. The incumbent of Ashprington did not conform but managed to retain his living until his natural death in 1650. The incumbents of Stoke Gabriel and Cornworthy also did not conform but were not evicted from their livings. For Getsius, this raises the important question, probably the question that so vexed Wood: how was it that he retained his living when so many loyal clergy were evicted?

According to the 'narrative', once the Parliamentarians re-captured Dartmouth, Getsius was imprisoned for his loyalist sermon. He was threatened to be sent to Goldsmith's Hall (the headquarters of the Central Committee for Sequestrations) and to be deported from the country for malignancy. Getsius sought a favourable testimonial from Anthony Harford, the minister who had fled from his Dartmouth parish in 1643. Harford was a member of the local Committee who '...professed a great kindness for him...' However, he refused to help '...because of some awkward words put forth and applied to my church before enemies...' referring of course to Getsius' sermon.

In 1646, his case came before the local Committee. The chairman moved for his deportation from the country but Sir Arthur Upton, who lived at Lupton Park in the adjacent parish of Brixham with Churston Ferrers and was a friend of Getsius from the time they were at college together, argued in his defence. According to the 'further account', he said:

"That they would doe themselves and their cause a greater prejudice then to him an injury, and be very odious to ye world if they should deal so hardly with a confessor that was eminent for learning and piety..."

Evident from his academic record, Getsius was indeed a learned man and a preacher, a talent valued by the Presbyterians but not universally shared among clergy of the time. Having Upton vouch for his learning and piety saved him from eviction since, according to the 'narrative', the case was:

“...dismissd with an admonition to live quietly without meddling with such matters, as he preached against any more...”

In the ‘further account’, Walter Getsius argued that the value of the living was an additional reason why his father and other loyal clergy escaped eviction. He quoted from the Royalist Bishop of Winchester, George Morley, who wrote in 1683 that:

“...many livings were so poor, that the haughty Presbyterians disdained to stoop to them...I can name divers whose interest and reputation for piety and learning was so great in ye countrys where they lived, that their enemies thought it better to expect their deaths, then by depriving them of their benefices to contract so much hatred as they should have done unto themselves.⁶⁹”

A value assessment of the livings across the country was undertaken in 1695.⁷⁰ The recorded values for the livings of the Lower Dart Neighbourhood range from £12 8s 8d (Totnes) to £52 14s 6d (Brixham with Churston Ferrers) with a value (£16 11s 8d) for Stoke Gabriel. This is not the full picture since the living of Stoke Gabriel was a vicarage and the great tithes at least went to the lay rector. Some similar adjustment is probably required to the value of the other livings. There is a risk therefore in reading too much into these valuations other than to conclude that the living of Stoke Gabriel was at the poorer end of the range. On his death in 1672, Getsius left a meagre estate including title to lands most of which had been mortgaged.⁷¹ Walter Getsius was probably correct in suggesting that the Committee’s decision might have been different if the value of the living had been greater.

Additionally, in reaching its decision, the Committee was probably mindful of other considerations. There was a shortage of Presbyterian ministers at the time and a rural parish with a small population would not have been a high priority for them. Perhaps, as with Ashprington, they decided the better option, all things considered, was to replace Getsius when he died. The patronage was held by Sir William Walter and subsequently by Sir John Kelland and, while the Committee had the power to evict Getsius, it would not have had a free hand in the choice of his successor. Whatever the full reasons, Getsius survived the attempt to evict him and was allowed to keep his benefice, continuing to teach, preach and write several tracts without engendering further controversy.

(v) Harassment of Incumbents

The loyal incumbents of Ashprington and Dittisham both experienced harassment by local Presbyterians prior to their death or eviction.⁷² In addition, some 33 Devonshire incumbents experienced harassment without eviction and the question arises as to whether this also applied to Getsius.⁷³

According to the ‘narrative’, following the Committee’s decision not to evict Getsius:

“...some furious zealots of ye Neighbouring Ministers, envying that he should so easily escape, were resolved to renew his troubles and sought to turn him out of his benefice...”

While the ‘further account’ describes how Getsius:

“...lived in their envy and hatred which extended also to his son Danl ; in ye excluding him 3 years from his benefice till ye restauration...”

The deterioration in relationships between Getsius and the neighbouring ministers seems at odds with Walter Getsius’ statement, also in his ‘further account’, that his father:

“...was in great esteem with ye well affected Gentry and clergy of the neighbourhood during life, and his death was much bewayled by them...”

Possibly, Walter Getsius is making a distinction between episcopally ordained clergy and Presbyterian ordained ministers, but many of the former had conformed to Presbyterianism (Appendix 2). Or, given that his father was the incumbent of the parish for 36 years, he was referring to the neighbourhood clergy either side of the troubles. It does appear that Getsius viewed his friendships with people uncompromised by their political and religious affiliation, as evident from his friendships with Upton and Harford, both of whom were Presbyterians and Parliamentarians. Upton seems to have taken a similar view of his friendship with Getsius, but not Harford. In token of his gratitude for their support during his troubles, Getsius even dedicated his published tract to three Presbyterians including Upton, which probably further coloured Wood’s view of him. Whatever the explanation, this statement sits uncomfortably with the rest of the ‘further account’ and ‘narrative’ without some qualification, the nature of which is not immediately obvious.

Given that the Committee’s decision regarding Getsius was made in 1646, it is surprising that the only instance of harassment reported by Walter Getsius relates to events that occurred more than a decade later. According to the ‘narrative’, another of Getsius’ sons, Daniel Getsius Jr, was due to be presented in 1658 to the rectory of the South Devon parish of Bigbury. The patron was the Marquess of Winchester but, because he was a Papist, the Parliamentarian’s broad seal was obtained. At this point, the presentation stalled allegedly due to the intervention of George Hughes of Plymouth. He apparently encouraged and supported George Hamond of Totnes to secure the living for himself, which he did until the Restoration when he was ejected and Getsius Jr replaced him. Such harassment of Getsius Jr warranted an entry in Walker’s publication.⁷⁴ Calamy was dismissive of the harassment, stating as follows:

“A very pretty Story! That a Man of Mr *Hughes*’s moderate Principles...should so far abuse his Power or Interest, as to act against a Man of Mr *Getsius*’s dear and unspotted Reputation. *Credat Judaeus Appella, non ego*. Besides, ‘tis perfectly ridiculous to

suppose that Mr Hughes's bare Authority would have been significant against a Broad-Seal.⁷⁵

Calamy fails to address the case made against Hughes and Hamond and his use of sarcasm undermines his own case. Significantly, Matthews does not make any use of Calamy's response in his revision of Walker's publication.

But, even if the allegation is true, it relates to the harassment of Getsius Jr, not Getsius Sr, and there is still no evidential connection between such harassment and the Committee's decision. In contrast to Walker's publication, it is Getsius Sr who is included in Matthews' revision and also in Gower's further revision applicable to Devonshire clergy.^{76,77} However, both subsequent entries have mistakenly conflated the facts and incorrectly attributed the harassment to Getsius Sr. In conclusion, there is no evidence that Getsius Sr was harassed at any time between the Committee's decision and the Restoration.

(vi) Loyalty of Daniel Getsius and Stoke Gabriel

There is little doubt that Getsius was loyal to the king. It was the king who granted him denizenship, without which he could not have become a parish priest. He was presented to the parish by a loyalist patron. Subsequent events, especially his Dartmouth sermon, affirm his strong loyalist credentials. In his book on Greatrakes, Elmer describes Getsius thus:

Far from being a supporter of Parliament or advocate of puritanism, Getsius was a loyal defender of the religious and political status quo.⁷⁸

Likewise, the parishioners of Stoke Gabriel showed a popular allegiance to the King during the Civil War in contrast to other parishes of the Lower Dart Neighbourhood. According to Stoye, it was '...one of the few Royalist strongholds in the South Hams.'⁷⁹ Indeed, using the records of the Devon Court sessions relating to maimed soldiers of the Civil War, Stoye reveals that it was among the 35 most loyal parishes in the county.⁸⁰

The Prayerbook Protestant and Royalist sympathies of Getsius and the parish may well have been mutually reinforcing, especially given the polarised political and religious sympathies that existed within the Lower Dart Neighbourhood.

Evaluation of the Evidence as to whether Daniel Getsius was a Time-Server or Trimmer

Within the Lower Dart Neighbourhood, there were just three incumbents who escaped eviction during the Commonwealth, the Protectorate and the Restoration. These were the incumbents of Berry Pomeroy, Cornworthy and Stoke Gabriel (Appendix 2). The incumbent of Berry Pomeroy signed the SLC in 1643 and then subscribed to the re-established Church-of-England in 1661. The accommodation of his convictions according to the Protestant religion of the day is an overt indication of a time-server and trimmer. In contrast, this was not the

pattern of conduct of Getsius who subscribed only to the re-established church. While that does not preclude the possibility that Getsius may have been more covert in his behaviour, there is no evidence in support.

While no direct evidence exists, Wood's charge goes to Getsius' character and in particular his integrity, about which some evidence does exist. There is in the manuscript parish burial record for Getsius an entry in Latin, which in translation reads that:

“...when he died he had done his pastoral duty with great praise for his integrity for almost 40 years...⁸¹”

The use of Latin suggests that it had been written by a priest and the handwriting is similar to that of Walter Getsius. Notably, the reference to his father's integrity was made some twenty years before it was challenged by Wood.

The 'narrative' contains testimonials as to Getsius' piety, learning and behaviour that were obtained from various dignitaries including the Bishop of Exeter. These testimonials may be true, but they say nothing about his integrity. Much more significant is Getsius' stand against his uncle's attempts to convert him to Catholicism. According to the 'narrative', the uncle:

“...hoping to win him over to the Romish Religion by preferment, made him large overtures, and promised to procure for him some considerable church dignities if he would follow his example and turn papist, besides the hope he would have by so doing of being restored to the several estates that were taken from him.”

The offer of substantial bribes was to no avail, resulting in his uncle turning him out of the house. Demonstrably a principled man, Getsius decided to come to England where, although he seemingly knew no-one and had few resources, it offered the “safe haven of orthodoxy”. Such actions are not those of a man with a weak commitment to his faith but of a principled man who would not compromise his beliefs for his own betterment. It cannot be ignored however that Getsius' circumstances were very different then to those which existed during the troubles. At this later period, he was the incumbent of Stoke Gabriel with responsibilities for his family and the pastoral care of his parish and vulnerable, given his denizenship rather than citizenship, to deportation. As a result, he could not easily escape from the Presbyterian institutions under which he lived and worked.

In his 'further account', Walter Getsius neither accepts nor refutes Wood's assertion but addresses a different proposition. Without making specific mention of his father, he argues in justification of the behaviour of time-servers and trimmers in general. He makes particular reference to the position taken by the Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Sanderson, who ‘...likewise kept his benefice until ye restauration...’ and as indicated previously would dispense with the BCP while creatively retaining its substance. In a letter of 1652, the bishop confronted the

dilemma faced by would-be time-servers and trimmers of the period and wrote ‘...with a good Conscience...’, that he would even:

“...forbear the use of the Common Prayer Book, so far as might satisfy the letter of the Ordinance, rather than forsake my station.⁸²”

The alternative option, according to the bishop in the ‘further account’, would be tantamount to ministerial betrayal of his flock and:

“...a delivering over the sheep of Christ, that were under ye hands of faithful shepherds, into the custody of ravening wolves.”

The bishop’s position raises the question whether it is possible not to be a time-server or trimmer if one’s motives are entirely unselfish. But, as indicated previously, the strict meaning of the terms does not require motive to be taken into account. As a result, such terms would be as applicable to a bishop with a clear conscience as to a clergyman whose conscience may have been compromised by self-interest.

Walter Getsius concludes his argument in the ‘further account’ thus:

“And this may suffice to vindicate ye keeping of benefices in those times of usurpation from either disloyalty or schism.”

The fact that Walter Getsius defends the actions of time-servers and trimmers in general may be because he suspected his father of the practise. Yet, the exchange of correspondence between Wood and Walter Getsius occurred in 1692/3, more than thirty years after the actual events, when Walter Getsius was no more than fifteen years old. He probably had no knowledge of his father’s liturgical practises at the time and it would seem unlikely, if it were true, that his father would acknowledge any such time-serving practise to his son. Walter Getsius’ response to Wood may therefore be of academic interest but it has no specific relevance as to whether his father was actually a time-server and trimmer, irrespective of any general justification for such behaviour.

Wood’s charge is merely speculative, an unsubstantiated presumption, and there is no evidence, either adduced by Wood or found independently, in its support.

Conclusions

A. Was Daniel Getsius a Presbyterian?

Getsius was drawn to England because of its orthodox form of Protestantism. He was a loyalist, recognising the King – “the Lords anointed” – as the Head of the Church and State. He survived the attempt of the Presbyterian Committee to deport him. He did not sign the SLC, played no part in the development of a Presbyterian organisation, and received no

augmentation in his living. There is no evidence at all that he had Presbyterian sympathies. On the contrary, all the evidence points to the view that he was a Prayerbook Protestant. Wood was wrong to characterise him as a Presbyterian and was right to withdraw it in the second edition of his book.

B. Was Daniel Getsius a Time-Server and Trimmer?

Having experienced imprisonment and having much to lose, Getsius would have been a cautious man. It would be wrong however to infer from this and his retention of the living that he was a time-server and trimmer without some evidence in support. To establish that he was not a time-server and trimmer requires proof of a negative. The charge was made by Wood and the onus of proof lay with him or any other making the charge. In the absence of such proof and notwithstanding what the circumstances might suggest, he should be presumed innocent.

C. General

A man of no great historical importance, Getsius distinguished himself from his contemporaries by his Palatinate origins, his education, and his teaching and preaching skills. A more distinguishing feature perhaps is that he held office throughout the Civil War, the Commonwealth and Protectorate while remaining a Prayerbook Protestant, a feat accomplished by a very small number of loyal Devonshire clergymen. If there had been no Civil War, he would have probably seen out his priestly ministry quietly, without leaving a mark. As it was, the conflict revealed his true nature and his principled commitment to the faith of the established church. Across the country, Prayerbook Protestantism did not wither and die under the Presbyterians but proved to be remarkably resilient. Some recognition seems due to the clergy who continued to provide a faithful and enduring ministry in challenging circumstances. The fact that the Church-of-England was restored so quickly was probably due in no small part to them.

Appendix 1

Map of the Lower Dart Neighbourhood

(in which the relevant parishes are underlined)



Reproduced with permission of GENUKI from:
<http://www.genuki.org.uk/files/eng/DEV/Maps/ParishesSE.GIF>

Appendix 2

Presbyterians & Post-Restoration Conformists

Lower Dart Neighbourhood (1640-1663)

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Incumbent, Minister or Lecturer</u>	<u>Period of Ministry</u>	<u>Pre-Restoration Presbyterian</u>	<u>Post-Restoration C-of-E Conformist</u>	<u>Reason for Vacating the Parish</u>
Ashprington	John Lethbridge	1639-1650	No - Parish sequestered on death; Walker p118, f345	-	Natural death
	John Burges	1650-1662	Yes - Div 2 class member; Calamy Rev p88	No	Ejected. <i>d.</i> 1677
	Thomas Clelland	1662-1706	-	Yes-19 Sep 1665	Natural death
Berry Pomeroy	William Randall	1637-1681	Yes - Subscribed to SLC; Div 2 class member	Yes-1 Mar 1661	Natural death
Brixham with Churston Ferrers	John Travers Jr	1617-1647	No - Parish sequestered; Walker p125, f48/301	-	Deprived of living
	John Morris	1647-1654	Yes - Subscribed to SLC	-	?
	John Kempster	1654-1662	Yes - Div 2 class member; Calamy Rev p304	No	Ejected
	Daniel Escott	1662-1663	-	Yes-13 Mar 1663	Moved to Totnes
Cornworthy	William Amyett	1637-1682	? - Walker f245	?	?
Dartington	Thomas Loveys	1636-1661	Yes - Subscribed to SLC	-	Natural death
	Henry Skynner	1661-1669	-	Yes-2 Jan 1661	Natural death
Dartmouth	Anthony Harford	1636-1662	Yes – Living augmented; Walker f422	No	Natural death
	Nicholas Battersby	1662-1685	-	Yes-13 Mar 1663	Resigned
	Allan Geare*	1656-1662	Yes - Div 2 class member; Calamy Rev p219	No	Ejected. <i>d.</i> 1662
	John Flavell*	1653-1662	Yes - Div 2 class member; Calamy Rev p200	No	Ejected. <i>d.</i> 1691
	James Birdwood	1658-1662	Yes - Calamy p57	No	Ejected
Dittisham	John Strode	1632-1645; 1662?-1668	No - Parish sequestered. Walker p124/5, f422 but re-instated on Restoration	?	Deprived of living; Natural death
	Edmund Tooker	1645-1662?	Yes - Walker f422	No	Ejected
Paignton & Marldon Chapel	David Davies	1604-1645	No - Parish sequestered; Walker p111	-	Deprived of living
	Nathaniel Terry	1645-1668	Yes - Subscribed to SLC; Div 2 class member	No	Natural death
Stoke Gabriel	Daniel Getsius	1636-1672	No - Walker f330	Yes-13 Mar 1663	Natural death
Totnes	John Garrett	1635-1663	Yes - Subscribed to SLC; living augmented; Calamy Rev p218	No	Ejected
	John Ford	1663-1664	-	Yes-15 Apr 1664	Natural death
	George Hammond	1653-1654	Yes – Living augmented; Div 2 class member	No	Moved to Bigbury
	Francis Whiddon*	1657-1662	Yes - Div 2 class member; Calamy p523	No	Ejected

The ministers whose names are marked with an asterisk were ordained by a Presbytery.

Sources:

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- (ii) The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835, <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/> (Accessed 9 August 2016)
- (iii) Matthews, A.G, *Calamy Revised*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1934)
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- (v) Tatham, G. B, *Dr John Walker and the Sufferings of the clergy*, (Cambridge, CUP, 1911) which contains a list of folio (f) numbers relating to clergy in respect of whom Walker had corresponded
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- (vii) Worth, R. N, *Puritanism in Devon and the Exeter Assembly*, Transactions of the Devonshire Association, 1877, Vol IX, 250-291
- (viii) Shaw, William, Arthur, *A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth, 1640-1660*, (London, Longmans, Green and Co, 1900), especially Appendices III, VI, VII & IX
- (ix) Gillespie, J.T. (1943) *Presbyterianism in Devon and Cornwall in the 17th Century*, M.A. Thesis, Durham University, http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/10460/1/10460_7257.PDF?UkUDh:CyT (Accessed 31 May 2016)
- (x) Adams, J. H, *A MS Volume of Clerical Subscriptions after the Restoration*, Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries, Vol XXVIII, 1961, 141-229

Endnotes

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- ¹ The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835, <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/> (Accessed 9 August 2016). The number of priests who retained their living is significantly higher in the rest of the country.
- ² Boggis, R. J. E, *A History of the Diocese of Exeter*, (Exeter, William Pollard, 1922), Chapter XVIII, The Puritan Tyranny, 405-417
- ³ Before the collapse of the episcopal polity of the Church-of-England, Stoke Gabriel was included in the Deanery of Ipplepen together with Berry Pomeroy, Brixham with Churston Ferrers, and Paignton and Marldon Chapel while Ashprington, Cornworthy, Dartington, Dartmouth (Townstall, St Saviours and St Petrock), Dittisham and Totnes were included in the Deanery of Totnes. All these parishes were included within the Archdeaconry of Totnes, as it was then and is now, and all came within the Presbyterian Second Division, as constituted in 1655. Today, the seven parishes of Ashprington, Berry Pomeroy, Cornworthy, Dartington, Marldon, Stoke Gabriel and Totnes constitute the Totnes Mission Community.
- ⁴ Young, John T. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, OUP, 2004) "Getsius, John Daniel (1591/2-1672)", edited by Lawrence Goldman, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/10575> (Accessed 30 January 2016)
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- ¹³ Worth, R. N, *Puritanism in Devon and the Exeter Assembly*, Transactions of the Devonshire Association, 1877, Vol IX, 250-291
- ¹⁴ Moorman, J. R. H, *A History of the Church in England*, (New York, Morehouse Publishing, 1994), Third Edition, Chapter XIV, The Early Stuarts, 221-242
- ¹⁵ Maltby, Judith, Suffering and surviving: the civil wars, the Commonwealth and the formation of "Anglicanism", 1642-60 in *Religion in Revolutionary England*, Edited by Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby, Chapter 7, 158-160, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006)
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- ¹⁸ *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God....and for the taking away of the Book of Common Prayer...*, (London, Evan Tyler et al, 1644),
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- ¹⁹ Bishop Sanderson's Works, Collected by William Jacobson, (Oxford, OUP, 1854), Vol V, 37-57
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- ²⁶ Gowers, Ian, *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries*, Vol XXXVII, 1993, 142
- ²⁷ Calamy, Edmund, *An Abridgement of Mr Baxter's History of his Life and Times*, 2nd Edition Vol I, (London, John Lawrence et al, 1713), Chapter IX, pages 181-195,
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