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GENEVA TO WESTMINSTER

The Evolution of British Presbyterianism

1560 - 1645

by

CECIL J. KIRK

A Thesis
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Abstract

The definitive edition of Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion", issued in 1559, speedily became the norm for Reformed theology. During the reign of Edward VI this theology spread to England and subsequently to Scotland. In England there grew up within the national Church a strong group which advocated a Presbyterian polity. This group was particularly strong in the area around London and among the members of the House of Commons, but they were held in check by Elizabeth who refused to abandon her right to rule the Church as well as the State. Despite many setbacks Presbyterianism remained an active force within the Church of England. The Puritans (as they were called) objected to the High Churchmanship of the Stuarts and eventually, supported by the Parliament, were forced to show their opposition by throwing in their lot with the Scots and inviting them to invade England.

In Scotland Presbyterianism had become the form of government of the Church mainly due to the effort of John Knox. During the reign of James VI, and especially after he became ruler of the two countries, attempts were made to introduce episcopacy in Scotland. This led Andrew Melville to modify Calvin's teaching on Church and State into the more rigid doctrine of the Two Kingdoms. The climax of the struggle in both England and Scotland came with the Civil War.

Meanwhile Calvin's theology was being altered as a result of the political ethos in which it had to operate. This changing emphasis is traced through from Calvin's original standpoint to that other great landmark of Presbyterian thought, the Westminster Confession of Faith, with its modified scholastic approach to the definition of theology.
Preface

When the theological history of the twentieth century comes to be written it will almost certainly be characterized as the century of the ecumenical movement. Since the Edinburgh conference of 1910 there has been an unprecedented wave of "unionism" sweeping over the church. Nor is this attitude restricted to the Protestant churches; Vatican II has marked a change in the attitude of the Church of Rome and while the wheels of the Vatican may revolve somewhat more slowly than those of Canterbury or Geneva there is, nevertheless, a greater willingness on the part of the Roman Catholic church to co-operate and carry on discussions with those whom they classify as "separated brethren".

Canada, of course, has been in the vanguard of this movement towards union, indeed, it would be true to say that it was the experiment of 1925 which set the pace in this field. While the attitude towards church union may have cooled off somewhat in recent years, we have still not reached the stage where the subject has been dropped from our interchurch conversations, witness the current negotiations that are taking place between the Anglican and United churches in this country, to name but one example. Unfortunately, it would appear that there are those who seem bent on achieving union at any cost, even that of deserting proven doctrinal positions. A Presbyterian observer to the talks going on between the United and Anglican churchmen when asked his opinion on the progress being made suggested that the cart was being put before the horse and that it would be much better to clear up such major items of disagreement as the questions of apostolic succession and the validity of ordination within the two denominations before proceeding to the less
controversial issues rather than commencing with those points on which there was a fair amount of agreement and then dealing with the more contentious issues.

These were also the great questions that exercised the minds of the Puritans during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Unhappy with the changes imposed on the Church of England by Henry VIII and then forced to flee to the continent during the period of the Marian persecution, they saw there the Reformed Church in action—ecclesia reformata sed semper reformanda—and pictured in their minds what the church of their own land might be like. However, Mary's successor, Elizabeth, had different ideas and the Puritans were destined to spend their days like "a voice crying in the wilderness". Even at the death of Elizabeth their prospects did not brighten for James I, from whom great things might have been expected with his Scottish upbringing, proved to be every bit as intractable as Gloriana. It is surely one of the ironic points of history that at the very moment when Presbyterianism appeared to have reached its ascendancy in England with the Westminster Assembly and it seemed that it could look forward to a long "reign" as the accepted form of church government in that country, its death-knell had already sounded:

During this period of time, theology had not stood still, nor can it ever stand still. If theology is the Christian community's attempt to articulate its faith under the norm of the Christian revelation and in the context of a particular time and place, then it will be an endless task. The classical reformed theology is that of Calvin in the final and definitive edition of his "Institutes" and while this continued to form the foundation of the Puritan theology there were alterations made to it
until, when we reach that other bulwark of Presbyterian theological thought, the Westminster Confession of Faith, we have what might be described as a "modified scholastic theology". In the course of this thesis we will attempt to outline this changing character of theological thinking within its historical context.

Let me admit at the outset that I do not write dispassionately though, hopefully, that will not detract from my objectivity in examining one of the most critical periods of Reformed history. Standing, as I do, within the Reformed tradition my sympathies are wholeheartedly Calvinistic but I am also fully aware of the great benefits which have accrued to the Presbyterian church in having such a formulation of its tenets as that contained in the Westminster Confession. Unlike some present-day theologians I do not believe that it should be cast overboard as so much unnecessary cargo.

It would be remiss of me if I did not acknowledge my gratitude and indebtedness to a number of people for their assistance in this work. Father E. J. Crowley of Windsor University has been most kind to me in his encouragement and helpfulness during the time that I have been working in his department. Dr. J. W. Daly of McMaster University in Hamilton has taken time to correspond with me, suggesting reading materials and sharing his own insights into the historical background of the period with which this work is concerned. Working at some distance from the facilities available in Windsor has meant having to rely on the resources of other libraries; the librarians of Huron College in London have been most helpful in placing their books and their knowledge at my disposal. The members of my congregation have shown great forbearance to me and have actively encouraged me throughout the time I have been engaged in
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ministry of the Presbyterian Church down through the years to the glory
of His name and the extension of His Kingdom. To Him be glory in the
Church to all generations.

Easter, 1974

Cecil J. Kirk
INTRODUCTION

Thucydictes tells us that he wrote the history of the Peloponnesian War not simply because of the part which it played in his own career, but also because in the record of this conflict, waged between the leading city-states of the Greek world over a period of twenty-seven years, he saw principles and patterns of action which tended to recur in the fortunes of men and nations. So too, the story of the origins of Puritanism and the development of Presbyterianism in Britain, beginning in the reign of Elizabeth I and reaching its climax a century later in the persecution of the Covenanters, though it is limited in space and time, brings into sharp focus a crucial issue which the Christian Church has had to face from its earliest days and which is as acute today as ever it was.

The question at issue is not whether episcopacy or presbytery is the more apostolic church order. There are more than two possible answers to that question. The issue is rather the relation between Church and State. The highest authority that Christians recognize bids them "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22.21). But it is not easy to fix the limits of those things that are Caesar's and it becomes even less easy when Caesar himself turns Christian. Extreme positions were taken up on either side in this struggle when the divine right of kings was

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1 Thucydictes: History of the Peloponnesian War, translated by Rex Warner, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1954, p.24. "It will be enough for me, however, if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in the future."
opposed by the divine right of presbytery, but we have to remember that what was involved here ultimately was the divine right of presbytery not only in the church of one kingdom but of three, for England, Scotland and Ireland were all embroiled in the struggle. The English, with their kindly tolerance and easy-going ways, have often been bewildered, and many times exasperated, by the stubbornness and stiff-necked behaviour of the other nations that share the islands of Great Britain and Ireland with them. They have never been able to fully comprehend the Celts' inordinate sense of history and their contempt for any suggestion of reasonable compromise when principles are at stake. In the 16th and 17th centuries it was more than principle or even national honour that was at stake, it was nothing less than (what the Covenanters were later to call) the Crown Rights of the Redeemer - the claim of Jesus Christ to be Master in His own house.

Whether or not we like the interpretation which Andrew Melville and Thomas Cartwright and their followers put upon the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, it remains a fundamental Christian doctrine. On the one hand, there are times when it must be emphasized that the civil ruler as such, even when he is a Christian, has no more authority in the councils of the church than that of the humblest church member. On the other hand, the obedience which the Christian community, or the individual Christian owes to the civil ruler, even when he is a Christian, is never absolute. There are times when it may be not merely a Christian right, but indeed a Christian duty, to disobey the civil ruler. When his claims clash with those of God the Christian must take his stand with Peter and the other apostles and declare "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5.29).

Such ideas, however, are largely out of favour today - not because
they are strange, but because they are all too familiar, we try to assure ourselves that our present turmoil is pure foolishness by demonstrating how silly were the turmoil of an earlier age and all we succeed in doing is in failing to understand our contemporary situation and this, in turn, makes us all the more determined not to understand our forefathers. If we want to know what the Reformation was all about we have to go back to the fundamental beliefs and motives of that period. Above all, we have to remember what many people tend to forget, that the men of the 16th century were Christians to whom the truth of the Christian faith and the meaning of the Christian hope mattered, in the last resort, more than anything else in the world. And, further, they lived in a world that was very much in need of hope.

The Christian is a citizen of two kingdoms. He is, of course, a citizen of an earthly kingdom, but at the same time he is a citizen of the Kingdom of God. In one he is bound to obey and enforce the rules of the earthly state, in the other he has to measure his conduct by standards which are not recognized by those laws and which may even be at variance with them. How, then, does the Christian reconcile this dualism? Generally speaking there are three answers which have been given to that question. In the first place, one can look on this world as a place of probation for full citizenship which will be granted to us in the Kingdom of God established somewhere beyond this scene of time. Secondly, one can look forward to and pray for the establishment of God's Kingdom here on earth through a divine intervention in human history. The Kingdom will come in by Christ returning in person as king and judge, an event as much outside the ordinary realm of human experience as were His Incarnation and Resurrection. The first of these answers is that
of the man who is not deeply involved in human affairs and is given mainly in times of peace and little change. The second is more likely to be given when the times are threatening and as the trouble intensifies so does the conviction grow that the divine event cannot be long delayed; Christ must come for His elect before it is too late. When there is no concrete sign that this spirit of expectancy is going to be fulfilled then the situation is likely to disintegrate into lawlessness with the elect feeling that they should wait no longer but make themselves the forerunners of the new kingdom. The Puritan has become the Separatist.

Neither of these answers have had a great deal of appeal for the more active Christian of the "governing class" in either Church or State. Instead they take up the position that the City of God is already here among men and it remains only for it to be developed and organized. This can take place either through conquest or peaceful penetration; if by conquest, then the Church must assert its dominion over the State; if by peaceful penetration, then the Church and the State must become coterminous. There have been times when the former method has been used and when, through an alliance of Church and State, the Church's will has been imposed, but, by and large, it is through the means of peaceful penetration that the Church has sought to influence the affairs of the State. The Christian Church is a body of believers who are possessed by the Spirit of God and all men are invited to share in the life which He gives to the Church. This life is the only hope for the world. And so the individual Christian works as the agent of change, not in any conscious way as a set policy, but because the struggle is his own.

There have been a few moments in the history of the world when men have
seemed to stand on the verge of realizing this dream. Each time they have failed, but the world has been moved and transformed even in the moment of failure. One such moment was the 16th century and it is to that era that we must now turn.
It would not be stretching truth too far to state that since the age of the apostles two theologians have surpassed all others in their influence on the Christian Church. One is Thomas Aquinas and the other John Calvin. What Aquinas has been to the Roman Catholic church, Calvin has been to the churches of the Reformed faith. It was in March, 1536 that there burst on the world the first edition of Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion"; we can gauge some idea of the book's immediate success from the fact that the edition was completely exhausted a year after it first appeared even though it was written in Latin and its appeal would consequently be limited to a relatively small cultured public. ² Throughout the rest of his life Calvin revised and expanded his original work which grew from a slim volume of six chapters to the definitive edition of 1559 made up of some eighty chapters, a work which, Lindsay says "was to make the unseen government and authority of God, to which all must bow, as visible to the intellectual eye of faith as the mechanism of the medieval church had been to the eye of sense". ³ The "Institutes" was destined to be the theological "summa" of Reformed Protestantism. Immensely influential in Calvin's own lifetime, it was never discredited afterwards, and, undoubtedly, it was one of the chief causes for the rise of a Calvinist orthodoxy which later controversies have only managed to modify with great difficulty.


I. CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The fourth book of the 1559 edition of the "Institutes" deals with the question of the Church, not only by way of Calvin's definition of the idea of the Church according to Biblical texts, but also in relation to his theory of civil government. Calvin insisted that the Reformed Church was in true succession from the Church of the Fathers and the authoritative Creeds, and protested against the idea that those who had seceded from the Roman Communio had unchurched themselves. The Church of Rome had ceased to be a true Church of Christ, though there might be, and indeed were, within it many who belonged to that Church. It failed to satisfy the tests which every body claiming to be a Christian Church must pass. 4

The function of the Church is to nourish and guide the faithful, until they are mature and at last reach the goal of faith.

"In our ignorance and sloth......we need outward helps to beget and increase faith within us, and advance it to its goal. God has also added these aids that he may provide for our weakness. And in order that the preaching of the gospel might flourish, he deposited this treasure in the church. He instituted 'pastors and teachers' through whose lips he might teach his own; he furnished them with authority; finally, he omitted nothing that might make for holy agreement of faith and for right order. First of all, he instituted sacraments, which we who have experienced them feel to be highly useful aids to foster and strengthen faith." 5

The preaching of the gospel and the institution of the teaching ministry are intended to bring people to faith and to assist in the collective sanctification of the members of the Christian community by establishing


5 Inst. IV. 1. 1.
among them a mutual agreement in faith and outward order. In order to repair the broken relationship between men and himself, God used the means of the incarnation of his Son; in the same way he makes use of earthly means to assist in the sanctification of those to whom he has given the gift of faith. Those means are the different offices and functions found in the Church which is the mother of all believers. God is not bound by these means that he has chosen, but remains free to communicate his grace other than through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. However, the fact that God has called the Church into being means that we are bound to her and to the aids to sanctification that God has entrusted to her.

"Paul writes that Christ 'that he might fill all things' appointed some to be 'apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all reach the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to perfect manhood, to the measure of the fully mature age of Christ'. (Eph. 4. 10-13). We see how God, who could in a moment perfect his own, nevertheless desires them to grow up into manhood solely under the education of the Church. We see the way set for it: the preaching of the heavenly doctrine has been enjoined upon the pastors. We see that all are brought under the same regulation, that with a gentle and teachable spirit they may allow themselves to be governed by teachers appointed to this function......... Let us accordingly not in turn dislike to embrace obediently the doctrine of salvation put forth by his command and by his own mouth. For although God's power is not bound to outward means, he has nonetheless bound us to this ordinary manner of teaching. Fanatical men, refusing to hold fast to it, entangle themselves in many deadly snares."6

Calvin held a conception of the Church that was every bit as rigid as that of his Roman Catholic opponents. He would have generally agreed with them in the dictum: Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus.7 The Church to

6 Inst. IV. 1. 5.

7 Inst. IV. 1. 4: "Away from her bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation"
him was no haphazard collection of individuals held together by some common beliefs or sympathies. Nor was it an institution towards which one might adopt an attitude of indifference, or which a professing Christian might decline to enter. To stand outside the Church was to cut oneself off from God's storehouse of the bread of life, for the Church was the sphere within which the grace of God exclusively operated. It is only by the forgiveness of sins that entry can be gained into the Church, for without pardon we have no union with God, and "this benefit so belongs to the Church that we cannot enjoy it unless we abide in communion with the Church." The preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments by the ministers of the Church is the way in which faith is ordinarily communicated to us; and here chiefly stands "the power of the keys which the Lord has conferred upon the society of believers".

But the Church does not only appear in its visible form as the Christian community, it is also the communion of saints, the sum total of those who are elect. Here Calvin agrees with Augustine's thesis in "The City of God" that all who own and are motivated by the love of Christ constitute one religious and social community. And so he writes:

"Paul shows by these words (i.e. Eph. 4:8,10-16) that this human ministry which God uses to govern the Church is the chief sinew by which believers are held together in one body. He then also shows that the Church can be kept intact only if it be upheld by the safeguards in which it pleased the Lord to place its salvation...... This is the manner of fulfilment: through the

8 Inst. IV. 1.20

9 Inst. IV. 1. 22. cf. Comm. Rom. 13.8: "When we say that men are not justified by works, we do not deny that the observance of the law is true righteousness. But since no one performs the law, or has ever performed it, we maintain that all men are excluded from it, and that therefore our only refuge is in the grace of Christ".

gA Ibid.
ministers to whom he has entrusted this office and has conferred the grace to carry it out, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the Church; and he shows himself as though present by manifesting the power of his spirit in this his institution, that it be not vain or idle. Thus the renewal of the saints is accomplished; thus the body of Christ is built up (Eph. 4.12); thus 'we grow up in every way into him who is the Head' (Eph. 4.15) and grow together among ourselves; thus are we all brought into the unity of Christ, if prophesy flourishes among us, if we receive the apostles, if we do not refuse the doctrine administered to us".10

Time and time again we find Calvin returning to this concept of the Church as an organism. The Church is the body of Christ; it follows, then, that Christ is the sole head of the Church and can dispose of it as he pleases.

The Church is not only the creation of the Holy Spirit, brought into existence by the association of the elect; it is also the means of Christ's redemptive purposes in the world. He does not work in any purely mystical or intangible way but through the visible agency of the Church. The Church "is at once his product and his sole instrument. He brings it into being to realize his divine election making it the depository and distributor of His gifts".11 This point of view, however, could not be held in any rigid way but was regarded more as a general rule to which there might be exceptions. One such exception was forced on Calvin by his doctrine of election. He had to admit that there might be many who are called and chosen by Christ but who yet did not belong to the visible fold. A further exception resulted from his doctrine of Baptism. According to the Roman Catholic and Lutheran doctrines, God's saving grace was mediated through Baptism, by which the elect were

10 Inst. IV. 3.2.
11 Hunter op. cit. p.154
initiated into the Kingdom; apart from Baptism there was no salvation. Calvin denied the absolute necessity of Baptism for salvation, regarding it as the door by which one entered the Church and in so doing implied that divine grace mightsavingly be in operation outside the Church.  

These exceptions compelled Calvin to adopt a distinction between the visible and invisible Church:

"We have said that Holy Scripture speaks of the Church in two ways. Sometimes by the term "Church" it means that which is actually in God's presence, into which no persons are received but those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Then, indeed, the Church includes not only the saints presently living on earth, but all the elect from the beginning of the world. Often, however, the name "Church" designates the whole multitude of men spread over the earth who profess to worship one God and Christ. By baptism we are initiated into faith in him; by partaking in the Lord's Supper we attest our unity in true doctrine and love; in the Word of the Lord we have agreement, and for the preaching of the Word the ministry instituted by Christ is preserved. In this Church are mingled many hypocrites who have nothing of Christ but the name and outward appearance...... Just as we must believe, therefore, that the former Church, invisible to us, is visible to the eyes of God alone, so we are commanded to revere and keep communion with the latter, which is called "church" in respect to men".

The invisible Church, which includes all the elect, coincides with the Body of Christ. But this is not the case with the visible Church because of the presence of both "wheat" and "tares" within it. Because the Church thus presents itself in two different aspects it does not follow that there are two Churches. Rather we are required to make a

12 In the light of these exceptions it would not be inaccurate to say that Calvin's real position is best expressed in the words of the Westminster Confession: "The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation". The Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, Chapter XXV, Section 2.

13 Inst. IV. 1. 7.
twofold judgment on the Church - on the one hand a judgment of love
which recognizes all professing Christians to be members of the Church,
and on the other hand a judgment of faith and experience which believes
this Church to be the Church despite the presence of those who are
reprobate within it. 14

In view of the place held by the visible Church in the redemptive
purposes of God it was essential that there should be means of distin-
guishing it from other bodies that falsely assumed that name: "accord-
ingly the Lord by certain marks and tokens has pointed out to us what
we should know about the Church". 15 Ordinarily, Calvin speaks of two
such "marks":

"Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and
the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution,
there, it is not to be doubted, a Church of God exists." 16

14 Calvin's doctrine of the invisible Church is closely linked with
his doctrine of election. The marks of the Church are necessary because
of its invisibility, but it is not from the "invisible Church" that
Calvin deduces them, cf. B. C. Milner, Jnr.: Calvin's Doctrine of the
Church, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1970, pp. 65-70. Here Milner disagrees
with Wendel, op. cit. p. 297: "This unity of the Church authorizes one
to pass a judgment upon the visible Church using the criteria of the
Church invisible", and W. Niesel: The Theology of Calvin, translated
takes over the ideas of Augustine, not in order to develop a doctrine of
two Churches, but rather in order to confront the 'empirical Church' which
we know with the concept of the invisible Church....to show clearly that
God is really the Lord of the Church". Milner is correct in his sugges-
tion that such interpretations assume that the invisible Church can be
known to man, for example, through the marks of the Church.

15 Inst. IV. 1. 8

16 Inst. IV. 1. 9 cf. Inst. IV. 1.10: "Where the preaching of the
gospel is reverently heard and the sacraments are not neglected, there
for the time being no deceitful or ambiguous form of the Church is seen".
It is important to note the phrase "where the preaching of the gospel is
reverently heard" cf. Comm. John 5. 24: "Now he declares that life is
obtained by hearing His teaching. By hearing He means faith, as He soon
says. But faith is situated, not in the ears, but in the heart".
One must say "ordinarily" because in his commentaries Calvin can speak of the preaching of the gospel as though it alone were sufficient to distinguish the true Church, and of the "four marks by which the true and genuine appearance of the Church may be distinguished", adding "fellowship" and "prayer" to the preaching and hearing of the Gospel and the Lord's Supper. Comments such as these do not throw in question the fixed position taken up in the "Institutes", they show rather that Calvin is more concerned with the marks as realities than as abstract criteria. And this is the reality: that in the moment these marks appear "the face of the Church comes forth and becomes visible to our eyes". The invisible, as it were, becomes visible in that moment because in the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments God is present to the Church:

"I say that the ministry of the word is like a mirror. For the angels do not need preaching, or other inferior aids, or sacraments. They have the advantage of another way of seeing God, for God does not show them His face merely in a mirror, but He presents Himself openly before them. But we, who have not yet scaled such heights, look upon the likeness of God in the Word, in the sacraments, and, in short, in the whole ministry of the Church... Therefore our faith now looks upon God, who is so to speak absent. How is this so? Because it does not see His face, but is satisfied with the likeness in the mirror".

17 Comm. 1 Timothy 3.15: "Paul will not acknowledge the Church except where God's truth is exalted and plain....the essential thing is that God's truths should be maintained by the pure preaching of the Gospel".

18 Comm. Acts 2.42
19 Inst. IV. 1. 9.
20 Comm. 1 Corinthians 13.12 cf. Comm. Isaiah 40.20: "God is not present with us by an idol, but by his word and by the power of his Spirit; and although he holds out to us in the sacraments an image of his grace and of spiritual blessings, yet this is done with no other intention than to lead us upwards to himself."
It can be seen, therefore, that the Church is not to be judged by the quality of life of its members but by the presence of those "notae" given by Christ. Calvin did not agree with the Anabaptists (nor would he have agreed with the later separatists of Elizabeth I's reign) that it was possible to form a community completely of those who were righteous. "Seeing that we cannot clearly distinguish the righteous from the reprobate and that Christians themselves remain sinners throughout their earthly life; it would be presumptuous and practically impossible for access to the Church to be restricted to the perfect alone."²¹

As we have already seen, one of the duties of the Church is to help its members in their sanctification. This was done through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, but if that preaching was not to be in vain and if the sacraments were to confirm the believers in their faith, the Church would have to carry on a continual process of self-examination in order to avoid all error, and, as far as its members were concerned, exercise some control over them; to achieve this end there would have to be a system of ecclesiastical discipline. Calvin had defined a Christian as one who displays "integrity of heart in the eyes of God and uprightness before men."²² To achieve this required training and education; only in this way could the social organism, whether it be individual, family, church or State, reach its "proper state".

"If no society, indeed, no house which has even a small family, can be kept in proper condition without discipline, it is much

²¹ Wendel, op. cit. p.298
²² Comm. John 1. 47.
more necessary in the Church whose condition should be as ordered as possible."

The Church cannot exclude those who are not elect because who these people are cannot be known to men but is known only to God. Neither can the Church tolerate disorder or scandal whether it be in questions of doctrine or in the lives of its members.

"The Lord so communicates his body to us.....that he is made completely one with us and we with him. Now since he has only one body of which he makes us all partakers, it is necessary that all of us also be made one body by such participation.....none of the brethren can be injured, despised, rejected, abused, or in any way offended by us, without at the same time injuring, despising and abusing Christ by the wrongs we do.....we cannot disagree with our brethren without disagreeing with Christ."24

This being the case, discipline was needed if the Church was to preserve its character as the true Church of Christ.

Despite this necessity Calvin does not regard discipline as being among the "marks" of the Church, as Bucer does,25 but thinks of it as "an appendix to teaching",26 as "adorning the doctrine of the gospel".27 However, the importance of discipline for Calvin is clearly set forth when he compares it to the sinews, through which the various parts of the body are held together. And he continues:

23 Inst. IV. 12. 1
24 Inst. IV. 17. 38


26 Comm. Matthew 18.18: "Here he is establishing discipline, which is an appendix to teaching."

27 Comm. Colossians 1.24: "Afflictions must be cheerfully endured, since they are profitable to all the godly, and promote the welfare of the whole Church, by adorning the doctrine of the Gospel".
"Therefore, discipline is like a bridle to restrain and tame those who rage against the doctrines of Christ; or like a spur to arouse those of little inclination; and also sometimes like a father's rod to chastise mildly and with the gentleness of Christ's Spirit those who have more seriously lapsed."28

Discipline pertains only to external acts of impiety and not to the "secret sins" of the heart,29 and even then a distinction has to be drawn between "light and grave sins."30 Depending upon which is the case, the Church has the power vested in her ministers and governors31 and is under the necessity of correcting and removing the fault.32

There are three different, yet complementary, aims of discipline. The first is that in order to prevent any possibility of Christ being blasphemed even within his Church, the Church should be able to take action against those who are in revolt against the Word of God and, as such, are putting the Church to shame and detracting from the honour of Christ. "Since the Church is the body of Christ it cannot be corrupted by such foul and decaying members without some disgrace falling upon its Head. Therefore, that there may be no such thing in the Church to brand its most sacred name with disgrace, they from whose wickedness infamy rebounds to the Christian name must be banished from its family."33

28 Inst. IV. 12. 1

29 Comm. 1 Corinthians 5.11: "No one can be punished by the judgment of the Church unless his sin is known... For ungodliness of the inner life, and anything secret, do not come under the Church's judgment."

30 Inst. IV. 12. 4

31 Inst. IV. 11. 1. Their power is that of the word, according to which they make their judgments, cf. Inst. IV. 11. 2.

32 Comm. 1 Corinthians 5.2: "The Churches are provided with this power, that they can correct or remove by strict discipline any fault that there may be in them; and those who are not vigilant about clearing away filth cannot be excused."

33 Inst. IV. 12. 5
Secondly, discipline was necessary for morality. It is incorrect to state, as Niesel does, that Church discipline does not exist in order to promote moral conduct in the Church. Calvin is quite adamant that the good can be corrupted by the constant companionship of the wicked. Discipline of this sort, however, was not intended simply to maintain public order; it was always a part of the cure of souls. And the third aim of discipline was to bring the sinner to repentance. "They who under gentler treatment would have become more stubborn so profit by the chastisement of their evil as to be awakened when they feel the rod."

To Calvin, discipline, while it may have been of the "esse" of the Church, was not of the "bene esse", and as such it belonged to the organization and not to the definition of the Church. While the Church remained on earth it would continue to be imperfect (simul justus et peccator, to use Luther's phrase), and so it must labour continuously and unremittingly at its own sanctification and that of each of its members at the same time. There is a collective sanctification on the part of the Church that parallels and corresponds to the sanctification of the individual. The Church is, undoubtedly, the Body of Christ, but because of the fact that its members are at present sinners, there is also a sense in which it must ever be striving to become the body of Christ.

"True, indeed, is Paul's statement: 'Christ....gave himself up for the Church that he might sanctify her; he cleansed her by the washing of water in the word of life, that he might present her to himself as his glorious bride, without spot or wrinkle.' Yet it is also no less true that the Lord is daily at work in

34 Niesel, op. cit. p.198
smoothing out wrinkles and cleansing spots. From this it follows that the Church's holiness is not yet complete. The Church is holy, then, in the sense that it is daily advancing and is not yet perfect: it makes progress from day to day but has not yet reached its goal of holiness..."\(^{35}\)

As far as the organization of the Church is concerned Calvin insisted that there must be a "fixed form", a "legitimate form" and a "firm polity".\(^{36}\) These details are prescribed by the Word of God and are not simply applicable to the earliest Christian communities but are of permanent validity. This fixed form of the Church order is not so rigid that it does not allow for growth and development; "(we learn from this story that) the Church cannot be formed all at once in such a way that nothing remains to be corrected, and that an edifice of such a massive size cannot be finished on the first day so that nothing needs to be added to make it perfect".\(^{37}\) Indeed, Christ "did not will in outward discipline and ceremonies to prescribe in detail what we ought to do (because he foresaw that this depended upon the state of the times, and he did not deem one form suitable for all ages), here we must take refuge in those general rules which he has given, that whatever the necessity of the Church will require for order and decorum should be tested against these. Lastly, because he has taught nothing specifically, and because these things are not necessary to salvation, and for the upbuilding of the Church ought to be variously accommodated to the customs of each nation and age, it will be fitting (as the advantage of the Church will require)

\(^{35}\) Inst. IV. 1. 17

\(^{36}\) Inst. IV. 2., 12., IV. 10. 27 cf. What Calvin wrote in one of his letters: "It is rather an odious thing to alter what has been hitherto received. But the order which our Lord has once delivered ought to be for ever inviolable. Thus when it has been forsaken for a season, it ought to be renewed and set up again, even should heaven and earth commingle. There is no antiquity, no custom which can be set up or pleaded in prejudice of this doctrine, that the government of the Church established by the authority of God should be perpetual to the end of the world, since he has willed and determined that it should be so." Quoted in T. F. Torrance: Kingdom and Church, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1956, p.134, n.3.

\(^{37}\) Comm. Acts 6. 1
to change and abrogate traditional practices and establish new
ones." 38

Although the latter part of this passage appears in some measure
to contradict what has preceded it and to permit almost complete liberty
of organization, we must remember that the ecclesiastical system
imagined by Calvin and his followers is distinguished by fidelity to
Biblical teaching.

Because of the sinfulness of human nature there is no ordinance
of God that is not corrupted by the fault of men. "We are amazed that
things are never so well ordered in the world that some evil is not
mixed up with things that are good......the corruption of our nature
is the cause of this". It is the constant sin of men in the Church
that they are "arrogating to themselves that power, from which Christ
himself abstained when he was in this world, of assigning to each his
place in the Kingdom of God". "Men mount the judgment seat, and, as if
they were gods, anticipate the day of Christ, who has been appointed
sole Judge by the Father; when they allot to each one his position of
honour, putting some in a high place, and relegating others to the
lowest seats". 39 In the light of this situation it is imperative that
the Church should regard her form and order and appearance before the
world.

The diversity of ministries within the Church is founded on the
corresponding diversity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and upon the
priesthood of all believers. From the scant references to ministries
in the Pauline epistles, Calvin deduced a logical classification of the

38 Inst. IV. 10. 30

39 Comm. 1 Corinthians 4. 3
different ecclesiastical functions though this classification was never rigid or definitive. He acknowledges, as having been scripturally ordained and faithfully preserved in the early Church, three such offices.

"We have stated that Scripture sets before us three kinds of ministers. Similarly, whatever ministers the ancient Church had it divided into three orders. For from the order of presbyters part were chosen pastors and teachers; the remaining part were charged with the censure and correction of morals; the care of the poor and the distribution of alms were committed to the deacons."41

The most important ministries are those of the pastors, who have succeeded the apostles and evangelists, and the teachers, who have taken the place of the prophets.42 Although the apostles and evangelists are to be honoured as "the first builders of the Church", and, unlike pastors, had the whole world for their parish, yet their function is essentially the same - to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.43

The choice of those called to be ministers was to be made on dual grounds. It is Christ, through his Holy Spirit, who confers the appropriate gifts to each and who, in that sense, makes the initial and

40 Inst. IV. 3. 2-9

41 Inst. IV. 4. 1. There are times when Calvin appears to distinguish four orders of ministry cf. The Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541 in J. Calvin: Theological Treatises, translated by J. K. S. Reid, SCM Press, London, 1954, pp. 58-66. The Ordinances speak of pastors, doctors, elders and deacons as opposed to the three offices mentioned above. The reason for the difference seems to be that Calvin sometimes includes the offices of pastor and doctor within the one person - as they were fused together in his own case in both Strasbourg and Geneva.

42 Inst. IV. 3. 5. "But if we group evangelists and apostles together, we shall then have two pairs that somehow correspond with each other. For as our teachers correspond to the ancient prophets, so do our pastors to the apostles".

43 Inst. IV. 3. 4-6
real choice. But those concerned have no right to set themselves to work of their own volition; an indispensable condition for being entrusted with any ministry is that the person must be regularly elected by the community.\textsuperscript{44} The call of the Church, then, ought to correspond to the internal calling of the Spirit, but the Church cannot guarantee this because it does not have first hand evidence of the minister's inner life. Here, Calvin ascribes to the already established pastors the function of examining the prospective candidate regarding the soundness of his doctrine and the integrity of his life, the two conditions set for those who would become ministers,\textsuperscript{45} but even then the consent of the people is necessary to the actual election of their pastors.

Besides pastors and doctors there are the elders and deacons. The principal occupation of the elders was the exercise of discipline in the name of the Church. When we recall the importance Calvin placed on ecclesiastical discipline it will be seen that this office was an important one in his system. As with pastors, elders were elected by the people, and together with the pastors, they were required to superintend morality and discipline among the Church members. Deacons were also named by election in the same way and they were charged with the care of the poor. Calvin defined two kinds of deacons: "the deacons who distribute the alms. But......second......those who devoted themselves to the care of the poor and sick."\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{44} Inst. IV. 3. 10; 11, 15.

\textsuperscript{45} Inst. IV. 3. 12 "Only those are to be chosen who are of sound doctrine and of holy life".

\textsuperscript{46} Inst. IV. 3. 9
Before we leave this examination of Calvin's doctrine of the Church it would be useful to say something of the office of "bishop" in view of the importance this question was to have during the period we are discussing. According to Calvin's reading of Scripture, the terms "bishop", "presbyter", "pastor", "minister" and "elder" are synonymous. 47 The office of bishop, therefore, cannot be different from that of the pastor. Calvin approves of the word because of its Scriptural usage, but suggests that it be set aside because of the corruptions that have become associated with it, or if it is used that it be with considerable restraint and with added clarification:

"It is clear.....how much deference has been paid to human opinions, since the language used by the Holy Spirit has been set aside and the usage introduced by the will of men has prevailed. For my own part I find no fault with the custom which has prevailed from the very earliest days of the Church whereby each assembly of bishops has one man as moderator. But to take the title of the office which God has given to all and to transfer it to one man and deprive the rest of it is both unjust and absurd. Besides to pervert the language of the Holy Spirit so as to make the very words have a different meaning from the one he has chosen smacks of excessive and unholy temerity." 48

Calvin approves of the system of having a moderator, primus inter pares, of delegated authority within the assembly, and of political distinctions and proliferations of office within the Church insofar as these things are simply human divisions used for the sake of the order of the Church. "Arch-bishops", "patriarchs", "arch-deacons", "sub-deacons" - all are acceptable to him so long as there is no question of hierarchy ("for the Holy Spirit willed men to beware of dreaming of a principality

47 Inst. IV. 3. 8. cf. Comm. 1 Peter 5. 2
48 Comm. Titus 1. 7
or lordship as far as the government of the Church is concerned\textsuperscript{49}),
and so long as the divinely ordained ministry of the word is not
debilitated.

The way for tyranny was opened, according to Calvin, when the
Church confined the title of bishop to those who presided over the
presbyters; as a result what was originally a political distinction
came to be invested with divine sanction and as a result the equality
of the ministry was infringed and Christ's glory diminished. All
presbyters are bishops and all bishops share equally in the authority
of Christ. If distinctions prove necessary in the ordering of the
Church those distinctions have their ground in the joint authority of
all presbyters.\textsuperscript{50}

II. THE RELATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IN CALVIN

The present century is not the only one which has observed a rising
tide of nationalisms; the later Middle Ages saw the same thing and among
other items affected by it was the conception of the Church. "Luther
reversed the Roman Catholic idea according to which the Church was
divinely empowered to dominate the State. He not only freed the State
from this domination but put it in control of the Church in respect of
all matters that were not purely spiritual, while entitling it to dis-
charge its own office without let or hindrance from any alien ecclesias-

\textsuperscript{49 Inst. IV. 4. 4}

\textsuperscript{50} cf. J. T. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism,
Oxford University Press, New York, 1962, p. 217. "(Calvin) is primarily
cconcerned to guard against a condition in which one minister may lord it
over others. The episcopacy that is admissible is that which is free
from 'dominion', 'principalities' or 'tyranny'. . . . Any doctrine of a
succession from the Apostles of bishops as a distinct order is, of
course, remote from his view."
tical authority...the Church thus became part of the organism of the State and a national institution." 51 It was left to Calvin, however, to define a different relationship between the two. He was the first to claim and assert the Church's freedom from any kind of subjection to the State. Luther regarded the Church as being the State discharging religious functions; for Calvin, it was the associate of the State in regulating the morality of the community. For Luther the Church was the keeper of the State's conscience; for Calvin it was the instructor of that conscience. Luther asserted the right and duty of the State to intervene in ecclesiastical matters; Calvin demanded the right of the Church to be master in its own house, exercising its spiritual functions unhindered by the State.

In Calvin's view, however, Church and State have an intimate relationship. "It has not come about by human perversity that the authority over all things on earth is in the hands of kings and other rulers, but by divine providence and holy ordinance." 52 This does not mean that the authorities of this world have their origins in God, but "they have a mandate from God, have been invested with divine authority, and are wholly God's representatives, in a manner, acting as his vice-gerents". Yet as representatives of God they enjoy no independent power but are entirely the officials and servants of God. Because of this unique position that they occupy all magistrates and rulers should humbly subject themselves to Jesus Christ as their king. "Their government can be nothing other than a service under this one Lord. It can

51 Hunter, op. cit. p. 193
52 Inst. IV. 20. 4
have no other aim than that this One should tower far above all others and exercise his sovereign sway over all."\(^{53}\)

It is the duty of the civil government:

"to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the position of the Church, to adjust our life to the society of men, to form our social behaviour to civil righteousness, to reconcile us with one another, and to promote general peace and tranquillity."\(^{54}\)

Although the civil authorities have a secular duty, yet it is not their main task to care for the physical welfare of men, rather it must be "that a public manifestation of religion may exist among Christians, and that humanity be maintained among men."\(^{55}\) The task of the secular authorities, therefore, has two aspects which cannot be separated from one another. Peace is threatened in a country where God is not worshipped and his commands obeyed; likewise, the worship of God is endangered where there is conflict among men.

The foremost duty of the secular power, then, consists in two parts. First, it is obliged to protect the pure preaching of the gospel and thus the Church, whose duty it is to perform this service. It must prevent "idolatry, sacrilege against God's name, blasphemies against his truth, and other public offences against religion from arising and spreading among the people,"\(^{56}\) and, if need be, the magistrates must take action with the sword against open despisers of God's name.\(^{57}\)

\(^{53}\) Niesel, op. cit. p. 232.

\(^{54}\) Inst. IV. 20. 2

\(^{55}\) Inst. IV. 20. 3

\(^{56}\) Ibid.

\(^{57}\) For this reason, Calvin, while he may, and, indeed, did, object to the type of death meted out to, say, Servetus, was not opposed to the nature of the punishment; it was the form to which he took exception.
Then the government has the duty of caring for the Church which preaches the pure gospel. It is not enough for the civil power to protect the Church, it must support the Church in its endeavour to establish sound doctrine and it must recognize ecclesiastical decisions. Whether the government actually does these things, however, may be another matter. It is its duty to do them and if the government does not decide for Christ it takes sides against him. Whether or not it recognizes and furthers the cause of the true Church is a decision for or against faith. When the secular authorities perform their duty of advancing the cause of Christ the spiritual character of that realm is not impaired.

It must be pointed out, however, that the laws and observances of the civil authorities have no power over the inner life of men; God alone has the ability to search a man's heart and the right to call him to account for his secret thoughts. Human laws have no power to constrain consciences. Calvin takes Paul's command (Romans 13. 5) that we must be subject to the powers that be for conscience sake to mean not that secular law is binding on a man's conscience, but is simply a reminder that, in general, the divine law bids us honour civil authority since it is based on the ordinance of God and because there must be harmony among the various people who together make up society. The judgment seat of God is certainly not the same as that of the local magistrate.

58 Inst. II. 8. 6

59 cf. Westminster Confession, XX. 2: "God above is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in any thing, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship."

60 Inst. IV. 10. 3, 5.
Nor, of course, must the State take upon itself the task of preaching the gospel - that is the business of the Church alone. 61 Magistrates must fulfil their good offices towards the Church precisely as holders of civil authority. Calvin was strongly critical of the situation that existed in Germany during his lifetime where the princes encroached overmuch in the spiritual sphere. He contended that if the magistrates do not keep within their proper limits, but try to usurp ecclesiastical control and thus set themselves up as judges in matters of doctrine and spiritual government, their service to the Church will quickly degenerate into disservice.

Since Jesus Christ is the Lord of all it follows that his dominion extends to the civil rulers. If the rulers of this world are to bow before him, they are also called to recognize the truth and authority of his gospel. No doubt there are times when they would like to be free from every type of law, but they are subject to the Word of God and so must allow themselves to be enlightened by the ministers of the gospel. They are obliged to be obedient to that gospel, and must continually ask themselves whether their actions are in harmony with the divine Word.

Citizens, by the same token, are obliged to honour and obey those whom God has set in authority over them; "the first duty of subjects

61 cf. Westminster Confession XXIII. 3: "The civil magistrate must not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed."
towards their rulers is to entertain the most honourable views of their office, recognizing it as a delegated jurisdiction from God, and on that account receiving and reverencing them as the ministers and ambassadors of God. For this reason, Christians must gladly and without constraint yield obedience to the civil authority, whatever form it may take. This does not mean that the Christians should be indifferent as to whether they are God-fearing or godless men who exercise the rule over them. Far from it. Every Christian has a responsibility for securing a God-fearing government and whenever the opportunity offers itself he should help see that upright men obtain the office. Those who will not allow themselves to be governed by the order which God has established are guilty of resisting God himself.

In return for this obedience the civil authorities must recognize their responsibility for the common good:

"if they remember that they are vicars of God, they should watch with all care, earnestness, and diligence, to represent in themselves to men some image of divine providence, protection, goodness, benevolence and justice."

This means, in effect, that the rule which authority exercises over the people is by its very nature nothing other than a service. "The people have submitted to authority and authority is subject to the people it serves. This reciprocal relationship of mutual service is founded on the fact that the sovereign Lord himself stands over rulers and ruled and has established civil government for the good of men."

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63 Inst. IV. 20. 6

64 Niesel, op. cit., p. 240
But what if the government is not exercised to this end? Calvin does not regard as legitimate those rulers who have eliminated God from their sphere of authority and have set themselves up in his place. This does not mean that they are no longer in authority; the order instituted by God cannot be upset by the wickedness of man, thus "even if those who stand in power and hold the sword of justice in their hands perform their functions never so badly, even if they cause greater distress and confusion than would such as have no office or duty, even if they are the declared enemies of God, it must still be recognized that God has set up kingdoms, principalities, and the throne of justice in order that we may peaceably pass our day in his fear and lead an honourable life: and this is something which the wickedness of men can never frustrate." Subjects are required to obey the government even if that government is a bad one, indeed they should consider whether it is their own fault if God withdraws the benefits of good government from them:

"If we are cruelly tormented by a savage prince, if we are greedily despoiled by one who is avaricious or wanton, if we are neglected by a slothful one, if finally we are vexed for piety's sake by one who is impious and sacrilegious, let us first be mindful of our own misdeeds, which without doubt are chastised by such whips of the Lord." God has placed a means of help at our disposal in such a situation - "to implore the Lord's help, in whose hands are the hearts of kings"; those who are oppressed must pray that God will remove the evil which has come upon them as a result of their sin.

65 There is a marked difference here between secular and ecclesiastical authority. If the latter rebels against God it not only loses its claim to legitimacy but also its claim to obedience.

66 Quoted in Niesel, op. cit., p. 242

67 Inst. IV: 20. 29
Calvin states quite clearly that it is not for the subject to remedy the situation, holding that since all contracts have been made before God this precludes the right to revolution on the part of the individual subject. In this sense Calvin is a strict legitimist when it comes to the question of removing a government or ruler which is patently in default. However, there is one way in which a bad ruler may be deposed:

"sometimes (God) raises up open avengers from among his servants, and arms them with his command to punish the wicked government and deliver his people, oppressed in unjust ways, from miserable calamity. Sometimes he directs to this end the rage of men who intend one thing and undertake another." 69

Because the former have received a special call from God their action does not violate the dignity of the civil order; but the latter commit a crime because they have led a revolt against a legitimate authority, even though, unwittingly, they are performing the work of God. Calvin holds that only holders of subordinate office have the right to proceed against a tyrannical government 70 if such resistance is required for

68 The disciples of Calvin did not follow their master on this point, perhaps because, in their day, as in our own, the real extent of Calvin's liberalism is open to question. C.f. Lord Eustace Percy: John Knox, John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1966, p.43: "The old doctors of the medieval church and the new doctors of the Reformation were scrupulous about sanctioning rebellion, but, in so far as they recognized the subject's right in the last resort to overthrow a tyrant, it did not occur to them to kill him.......Knox......was no less scrupulous about the main question. He would have been shocked at the Victorian liberal's levity in encouraging insurrection; but he would have utterly failed to understand why the men who were ready to run guns for Garibaldi should have been horrified by the story that Mazzini had once given money to an assassin. And he would have been at least as right as the Victorian liberal: In this matter of assassination morality draws a different line."

69 Inst. IV. 20. 30

70 Inst. IV. 20. 31
the sake of public welfare.\textsuperscript{71}

However, there is one limit to the obedience of even the lowliest subject:

"If princes forbid us to serve and honour God, if they command us to sully our conscience with idolatry, and to concur and engage in abominations which are contrary to the service of God, then they are not worthy to be regarded as princes or to be recognized as having any sort of authority. And why so? Because there is only one foundation for the power which princes may legitimately enjoy. This is that God has placed them in their office. And if they would dethrone God, must we continue to pay heed to them?\textsuperscript{72}

The fear of God must be the subject's prime concern and this alone is the foundation of obedience. Once that is destroyed there are no longer any ties binding subjects to their rulers. Calvin realized how difficult it was for a man to prove himself a Christian when involved in a conflict between the divine command and human authority; for it was a struggle he himself had had to resolve. He advised those Christians who found themselves in real danger to take the course he had taken and go into exile in a country where the name of God was honoured and the Word of God was preached. While this thought of passive resistance comes to the fore in the "Institutes" Calvin is more open in his sermons and commentaries where he speaks out clearly for the duty of active resistance against any government that defies God. It was this thought that was to be further developed by some of Calvin's followers who, as Georgia Harkness has stated so well,\textsuperscript{73} "took literally the injunction to

\textsuperscript{71} As Carlyle stated: "The truth is that Calvin makes a sharp distinction between the position of private persons and that of those who hold a public and constitutional office in the State". Quoted in Mueller, op. cit., p.155.

\textsuperscript{72} Quoted in Niesel, op. cit., pp. 243-244, cf. Inst. IV. 20. 32

\textsuperscript{73} Georgia Harkness: John Calvin, the Man and his Ethics, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1958, p.231.
have no respect for persons when God's honour was at stake. Such doctrine had a sword in it, and was to cost Charles I his head and George III a fair dominion.
II

ELIZABETH I AND THE PURITANS

The English Reformation, unlike that in Scotland or on the continent of Europe, was the result of political expediency rather than theological conviction. The Pope's opposition to Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon gave the king the opportunity to rush through Parliament the Act of Convocation which declared that the Church of England could neither make any rules for its own guidance without the king's permission, nor act according to the common law of the medieval Church when that, in the king's opinion, invaded the royal prerogative. This Act was followed by several other strong pieces of legislation which completed the separation of the Church and people of England from the see of Rome; principal among them being the Supremacy Act of 1534 which declared the king to be the rightful Supreme Head of the Church of England.

Despite his appointment of Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry VIII was not sympathetic to the changes in theological thinking that were going on in Europe. Cranmer survived the reign partly because he was quiet, partly because he was a useful instrument in the king's hand, and partly because he was prudent. It was really only in the latter part of Henry's reign that Cranmer finally attained decision in his Protestant convictions. By 1546 he had come to believe in the doctrine of justification by grace alone and to abandon that of transubstantiation. On January 28, 1547, Henry died and the gates were open for the reforming party that had been growing in the country.
Under Edward VI the English Reformation took a much more positive form. Protestant divines were permitted to preach and teach Protestant doctrine; tracts were published; images were removed; injunctions were issued requiring the reading of the gospels and epistles in English; well known Reformed theologians were invited to teach in the universities and bishops who refused to take part in these reforms were removed from their sees and replaced by men such as Hooper and Coverdale who had long been in exile and were adherents of the teachings of Geneva and Zurich. Perhaps the greatest benefit of Edward's short reign (1547-1553) was the publication of a reformed liturgy contained in the Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552. It is important at this point to make mention of one incident connected with the 1552 book. Although many of the old ceremonial practices connected with the eucharist were abolished this Prayer Book still called the minister a priest and retained kneeling to receive the sacrament. John Knox preached against this practice and publication of the book was suspended while Cranmer reconsidered the question. The Archbishop refused to give way but a compromise was reached by the insertion in the book of the so-called Black Rubric which declared that in requiring communicants to kneel "it is not meant thereby that any adoration is done, or ought to be done........unto any real and essential presence there being of Christ's natural flesh and blood."

This explanation never fully satisfied the reformers who accepted only the Scriptural warrant for everything in the Church. And there were other problems. The obvious inheritance from the medieval liturgies that hung over the Prayer Book, the use of the sign of the cross in baptism and the ring in marriage, the retention of kneeling at the
Lord's table - all these were anathema to the Calvinist and the Zwinglian.

By 1553 the Reformation was still external to most of the people, it was an affair of legislation and had not advanced as far as the king and his advisers had hoped. There was much still remaining to be done to ensure its completeness and more general acceptance - and yet this could not be done until the king had reached a riper age and could bring his full influence to bear both on the nobility and the people. But already the Reformation had been pushed beyond its native strength. Favoured by the king, many of the educated classes and the burgesses of the larger towns (particularly London) it had still only partially permeated the nobility and the uneducated masses in the provinces. Despite the strenuous labours of the itinerant preachers, and especially the royal chaplains, the country was still only partially evangelized. Where the people were not positively hostile (as in the north-west) they were largely indifferent and quite unprepared to stand by the new faith when the approval of authority was withdrawn. In 1553 England was by no means a Protestant country and a terrible reaction set in when Edward's sister, Mary, ascended the throne, and yet it was made more nearly Protestant by her reign.¹

The persecution that was visited on the English Protestants during the reign of Mary Tudor baptized the English Reformation in blood and only served to establish it more fully. Henceforth the Church of Rome was associated with ecclesiastical tyranny. People began to realize

that resentment of clerical governments, the hatred of Wolsey and the old anticlericalism were all justified. Whereas five years earlier Protestantism had been regarded by many people as involving robbery of churches, destruction, irreverence and religious anarchy it now began to be identified with virtue, honesty and loyal English opposition to foreign domination.

The religious settlement achieved under Elizabeth I was partly dictated by her own private religious opinions and partly by the political demands of the situation she found herself in. The kingdom she succeeded to contained sharply opposed religious convictions which threatened political division and social disturbance. Externally the country was weak and its viability as an independent state open to question. The circumstances, then, demanded a policy in religion that would cause the minimum offence to the great powers of Europe, such as France and Spain, which had already rejected the Reformation, while at the same time attempting to heal the internal divisions of the country. Elizabeth's own personal views probably leaned towards a modified Catholicism. Her real intentions may have been conveyed in the remark she made to the Spanish ambassador that she was "resolved to restore religion as her father had left it", by which she meant that she wished to exclude the pope and assume supreme power over the church, but to do nothing to define its doctrine and worship along Protestant lines.²

² P. Collinson: The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, Jonathan Cape, London, 1971, p.30 (hereafter referred to as "Puritan Movement"); cf. Mitchell, op. cit., p.39: "She had a natural predilection for the mongrel faith and worship of her father's later years....but little sympathy with the practical side of Puritanism and with that inner experience and holy, self-denying life which were its crown and glory."
It has been suggested\(^3\) that the settlement resulting from the Act of Uniformity and the Prayer Book of 1559 is a measure of the extent to which the queen was unwillingly driven in a Protestant direction by the opposition to her original proposals offered by the Marian bishops who resisted her assumption of ecclesiastical supremacy and by the vigorous Protestant party in the House of Commons which demanded an immediate and thoroughgoing reform. Even if this should be the case, the Elizabethan settlement bears all the marks of design rather than of accident. Elizabeth was supremely Erastian;\(^4\) she was determined to rule as well as reign and the end result was a "via media" steered between the Scylla of Rome and Charybdis of Geneva. Right from the beginning of her reign she took into her own hands, with as much imperiousness as her father had shown, the whole question of the reformation of the Church and the regulation of worship within the country. Although she scrupled to assume the title of "Supreme Head on earth, under Christ, of the Church of England" she certainly did not scruple to exercise all the power implied in the title. While professing to re-establish the second Prayer Book of Edward VI, Elizabeth did so with a number of changes which made it even less acceptable to the Protestant party. In particular she took care to remove the Black Rubric and to prefix to the sentences addressed by the minister to the communicants at the distribution of the elements in the Lord's Supper certain words from her brother's first Book which might, at least, leave room for the very


\[^4\] "Her one principle was that she must be head of the Church; her prejudices were Catholic and she utterly detested puritanism as a cultural phenomenon". Dr. J. W. Daly (McMaster University), in a personal communication.
view which the rubric was designed to exclude. 5 Equally offensive was the importation into the Book of the Ornaments rubric which required the use of the eucharistic vestments which the Puritan party associated with the popish priesthood rather than the ministry of the reformed churches overseas. 6 Further, the queen prevailed on Parliament when passing the Act of Uniformity to recognize her right to add, to those already appointed, such further rites and ceremonies as she would judge to be for the glory of God and the honour of religion. Elizabeth was every inch a Tudor and not in the least inclined to yield her prerogative in matters civil or ecclesiastical. Even when the dangers that threatened at the beginning of her reign had passed she still played the despot and endeavoured by every means at her disposal to stamp out what was, in fact, an intensely held conviction on the part of a sizeable proportion of her people that the reform of the Church must be pressed further, a conviction which, handled more gently, would have added strength to her throne (despite her views to the contrary) and to the institutions of the land.

It is not possible to say exactly when the Puritan party first came into existence; "there were Puritans before the name was invented, and there probably will continue to be Puritans long after it has ceased to be a common epithet" 7. The names Puritan and Precisian were probably

5 The restoration of this rubric was repeatedly requested by the Puritans during the reign of James I, but in vain. It was certainly omitted from the Prayer Books of Charles I. Archbishop Ussher and other moderates urged its insertion in 1640 but it was not until 1661 that it was authoritatively restored, and then only in a somewhat weakened form.

6 Collinson; Puritan Movement, p.34

originally nicknames applied as a form of reproach to those they were intended to designate, because they claimed to adhere more purely or precisely than their neighbours to the Word of God as the only necessary and authoritative rule in matters of doctrine, worship, church polity and Christian life. The points of difference between the Puritans and the other members of the Church of England were at first few in number and relatively unimportant. Both parties were one in their agreement as to the sufficiency and the supremacy of the Holy Scriptures in matters of faith and even as to the general import of its doctrinal teaching. This principle was embodied in the Sixth Article of the English Church:

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever was not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." 8

Almost all those who really valued the Reformation in England held to the evangelical system as taught in early times by Augustine and handed down through Anselm, Bradwardine and Wyclif. It was the Anglo-Catholic party which, as it developed, broke up this doctrinal harmony and drifted further and further from the standpoint of its early leaders until "the Supralapsarianism of Whitgift passed into the minimized Augustinianism of Hooker, and that into the Arminianism of Laud and the semi-Pelagianism of Jeremy Taylor." 9 As far as worship and Church polity were concerned the only expression at variance with the principles of

8 The emphasis here was that placed on the Article by the members of the Puritan party in opposition to the other members of the Church of England who were to depart from this point of view.

9 Mitchell, op. cit., p.5
Puritanism was that contained in the Twentieth Article asserting the power of the Church to decree rites and ceremonies. The rites and ceremonies to which they objected were not, they claimed, things purely indifferent, which the Church, under such a clause, might claim to enjoin, but things that were unlawful in that they had become abused for purposes of superstition and idolatry and as such were contrary to the spirit if not to the letter of the Scriptures. 10

It should not be presumed, however, that the Puritan movement was monolithic in structure. As time went on it became increasingly clear that there were divergences of opinion among those subsumed under this name, and even changes of mind among its leading members. When it became clear that no support could be expected from the queen two distinct parties arose - those who continued to believe that the work of further reform could only be done slowly and quietly inside the Church, and those who believed that Parliament was the hope of the Church and that reform would have to be legislated despite the wishes of the monarch. The more radical members of this latter group were to separate from it and become the Brownists, the forerunners of the Independents of the next century.

With the accession of Elizabeth the exiles returned. For the most part they were men of learning and Christian experience and had the ability and will to put both to use in popular preaching and didactic argument in defence of the Reformed faith. Despite the fact that there

10 On this matter the amount of agreement between the Puritans and those who stood apart from them was greater than is sometimes thought. Many of the first Elizabethan bishops were of the same mind and would willingly have abandoned the "obnoxious ceremonies" if the Queen would have consented.
was a great gulf dividing the queen's church policy from that of many of her subjects, things went well for a time. According to the Puritan view, the ministry of the Church should be an energetic force, converting people to a godly obedience by the proclamation of the Word and discipline. There could be no security without subjection to the gospel and no understanding of the gospel without preaching. But Elizabeth was of the opinion that three or four preachers were enough for any one county and expressed her content with a ministry of "such as can read the scriptures and homilies well unto the people". Notwithstanding this divergence, the Puritans, at first, had little cause to complain that their claims were overlooked. Their metrical psalms were allowed to be sung before and after prayers and sermons, their translation of the Bible (i.e. the Geneva Bible), while not formally permitted, was widely circulated and often reprinted. "Their earnest labours and solid learning, wisely and generously directed, and their scruples reasonably yielded to or winked at, would with God's blessing have sufficed in a single generation to change the face of England, and make the common people no less educated and zealously Protestant than the people of still ruder Scotland became".

Such was not to be the case. The first attempt to enforce uniformity came in 1564-5 on the orders of the queen. It was carried out submissively, though reluctantly, by several of the prelates and especially by Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Grindal, the Bishop of London, in whose diocese many of the leading Puritans were settled.


There, by their consistent Christian living and efficient pastoral work, the Puritans were commanding a good deal of popular sympathy. Some thirty men, including several of the best, as the Archbishop himself acknowledged, appeared before the court and consented to be suspended or deposed rather than subscribe to observe the proposed uniformity.

The attempt to make the ministers conform was rather half-hearted and the presbyterian ideas, imported from the continent, took root and began to grow. Conferences, or prophesying began to flourish - meetings at which a number of ministers from a district would join together periodically to preach to the people and then afterwards spend time together in an examination of each other's sermons. Eventually these conferences were to develop into what has become known as the Classical Movement, which was, in effect, nothing less than the setting up of a presbyterian system of church government within the existing structure of the Church of England. The queen, either taking umbrage at the setting up of such meetings without permission, or fearful of the effect they might have in promoting discussion, encouraging greater liberty in the expression of opinion and fostering a desire for a more popular organization either in the church or state, determined to suppress them rigorously. By this time (May, 1577) Grindal, who was sympathetic to

13 Among those deposed at this time were Sampson, Humphreys, Lever and Foxe, cf. Collinson, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

14 These meetings were based on the prophesying of the Apostolic Church and were designed to further the acquaintance of the clergy with the Scriptures and increase the number of preachers. They were sanctioned by several of the bishops. cf. A. F. S. Pearson: Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, 1535-1603, Peter Smith, Gloucester, Mass., 1966, p. 156. (Hereafter referred to as "Thomas Cartwright").
the movement, had succeeded to the see of Canterbury and now he found himself in the unenviable position of having to put an end to something of which he wholeheartedly approved, or of disobeying the queen. He chose the latter course and set about preparing a reasoned rejection of her commands. His letter was a spirited defence of the exercises and of the necessity of preaching, which the queen had denied, and an affirmation of the limits to royal authority in the spiritual realm:

"I am forced, with all humility, and yet plainly, to profess, that I cannot with safe conscience, and without the offence of the majesty of God, give my assent to the suppressing of the said exercises; much less can I send out any injunction for the utter and universal subversion of the same.........If it be to your Majesty's pleasure, for this or any other cause, to remove me out of this place, I will with all humility yield thereunto, and render again to your Majesty that I received of the same........Bear with me, I beseech you, Madam, if I choose rather to offend your earthly majesty than to offend against the heavenly majesty of God."15

He ended with two requests: that Elizabeth should refer all matters touching religion, or the doctrine and discipline of the Church to her bishops and other divines, and that she should refrain from speaking "quasi ex auctoritate" as she did in civil matters. The archbishop's comments closely parallel those addressed by Knox to Mary, Queen of Scots, or by Andrew Melville to James I, but Grindal was no Knox or Melville and certainly Elizabeth was not a Stuart monarch. For his trouble Grindal incurred the extreme displeasure of the queen; but for the unpopularity of the measure she would have deprived him altogether. With this fall from grace the hopes of the Puritans for a peaceful reform passed away and a reaction set in. The older bishops were being replaced by younger men who were glad to adopt as their own the queen's

view that the status quo must be strictly and equally maintained against both papists and Puritans. The climax came a few years later (1583) with the death of Grindal when Elizabeth was able to surrender the Church to Whitgift, "a strict disciplinarian who shared her detestation of all faction and disobedience".16

The bishops now began to assert, over against the Puritan position, that while Scripture supplied an absolute rule of faith, and no doctrine not drawn from it was to be imposed on the consciences of the members of the Church, yet it was not meant to be a complete or absolute rule in matters of worship and church constitution, but that much for which scriptural precedent might be alleged could now be unnecessary or inexpedient, and much which Scripture had left undetermined might be necessary to be regulated and that the Church had authority to regulate all such matters and to require obedience to her regulations, provided they were not positively contrary to Scripture. They asserted that the Church had a right to retain her polity and form in accordance with those of the state in which her members dwelt and that agitation for a more popular form might be not only inexpedient but also unlawful and against the monarchy. This was the position held by Whitgift and Cooper and, with certain modifications, by Hooker in his treatise on Ecclesiastical Polity. As the controversy became more embittered, defence of this position prompted some zealots to advance beyond the lines of Whitgift, or even Hooker. They claimed for the constitution and government of the Church of England a "jus divinum" and maintained that the episcopate was by divine right above the presbyterate and that to assert the opposite was

not merely an error but a heresy.

Space does not permit us to follow this struggle between the Presbyterian members of the Puritan party and the Church of England in its historical form but it is important to see the arguments they presented against those of the bishops. This can best be done by looking at the two men whose writings were to supply the intellectual stimulus to the Presbyterian movement and of whom it has been said: "Allowing Mr. Cartwright for the Head, Mr. Walter Travers might be termed the neck of the presbyterian party."

I CARTWRIGHT ON CHURCH AND STATE

Cartwright's distinction between church and state is expounded when he deals with the questions of the magistrate's authority in ecclesiastical matters and the holding of civil offices by ministers of the church and was put forth as part of his reply to Whitgift's response to the "Admonition" the Puritans had hoped to present to Parliament in the summer of 1572. His conclusions are that, as far as church affairs are concerned, the authority belongs to the ministers and "that it is


19 Cartwright's response to Whitgift came in a trilogy of writings: "A Replye to an Answere made of M Doctor Whitgifte Agaynste the Admonition to the Parliament by T. C." (this work is undated), "The Second Replye of Thomas Cartwright agaynst Maister Doctor Whitgiftes second answer, touching the Churche Discipline" (1575) and "The Rest of the second replie..." (1577).
unlawful in an established estate of the church that a minister of the
church should bear civil office."20 He points out that there is a dis-
tinction between church and state; a man who is excommunicated by the
church does not lose his citizenship in the state, nor does one who is
banished by the state forfeit his membership in the church. This
theory, of course, ran counter to the Elizabethan religious settlement,
but Cartwright invokes evidence from the Old Testament, the teaching of
Jesus, the early church and the writings of the reformers to support
his argument.

He does not draw all his support from ancient and modern author-
ities, however. Differentiation of function and purposes makes for
greater efficiency. If kings or mayors officiated in the pulpit and
administered the sacraments or if ministers served as justices of the
peace the end result would be confusion. The civil and spiritual est-
ates ought to be kept distinct because the minister's office

"is of greater weight then the strongest bak can bear, of wider
compass then the largest hands can faddam: a soliderfare that
wil be onely attended upon: seing also it tendeth to the
destruction of the body when one membre encrocheth upon the
office of another: and that the civil Magistrate may by the
same right invade the office of the Minister as he the office
of the civil Magistrate."21

A fundamental reason for the recognition of church and state as two
distinct societies is their difference of nature and purpose. The one
is concerned with eternal life, the other with life in this world. The
rule of the church is spiritual and has regard to the conscience and

20 A. F. Scott Pearson: Church and State, Political Aspects of
Sixteenth Century Puritanism, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge,
1928, p. 9. (Hereafter referred to as "Church and State").

21 Ibid., p. 14.
the inner man, that of the state has to do with outward behaviour. This is not to deny that the civil magistrate should have a concern for the salvation of the souls of his people; he does this by ensuring that they have peace and security in which to live, but the ecclesiastical leaders "have all their whole care set upon that only which pertaineth to the world to come". Likewise, the difference in end is seen in the different forms of punishment used by the church and state; the one tries by admonition and excommunication to bring the soul into willing obedience to God, the other uses coercive means to control the outward man.

Because there is an intimate relationship between the church and God's will it follows that the church is divine in a sense not applicable to the state, that it enjoys a priority to and superiority over the state, and that it is complete, self-sufficient and free.

"As the house is before the hangings and therefore the hangings which come after must be framed to the house which was before, so the church being before there was any commonwealth, and the commonwealth coming after must be fashioned and made suitable unto the church. Otherwise God is made to give place to man, heaven to earth, and religion is made (as it were) a rule of Lesbia, to be applied unto any estate of commonwealth whatsoever." 22 Cartwright even goes so far as to identify the church with the rule of God. As the agent of his unchanging will the church must have an invariable and universal form of government and according to Cartwright's reading of Scripture this means the Presbyterian form.

While Cartwright distinguishes between church and state he does not divide them into two absolutely separate societies; there are vital and necessary bonds of relationship between them. He likens them to the

22 Pearson: Church and State, p. 17.
twins of Hippocrates who were sick and well together; when one laughed
the other laughed, when one cried, both cried. Thus when there are
deficiencies in the state they stem from troubles in the church — the
state cannot be expected to flourish unless the church is properly
reformed,23 they are bound together by the principle of reciprocity.
Cartwright believes that the church depends on the state. He affirms
that the civil magistrate is more necessary to the church than the sun
is to life. But the state needs the church much more. If the word of
God is despised rulers and states go to wreck and decay. While the
benefits conferred on the state by the church are primarily spiritual
and moral the regeneration of heart affected by the church makes itself
known in social and political action. True religion expresses itself
in good citizenship; loyalty to God and his laws produces men and women
who are loyal to and seek to improve the state.

As early as 1570 Cartwright had written to Cecil requesting the
Chancellor's close examination of the system of government and disci-
pline in the church24 and pointing out that the welfare of the state
depended on the proper and efficient exercise of such government. Here
we must note that the Presbyterian Church as advocated by Cartwright
made the inculcation of obedience one of its chief aims. A member's

23 Whitgift agreed with Cartwright on the question of the inter-
dependence of church and state but approached it from the other direc-
tion; he suggested that the Elizabethan church must be in a healthy
condition because of the fact that the nation of England was flourishing.
Cartwright, however, insinuated that there were a number of cracks in
the commonwealth which could only be repaired following a further
reformation of the church.

duty was to obey the commands of the church as though they were the commands of God.

In opposition to Whitgift's proposal that the polity of the church should be of the same form as that of the civil government, Cartwright suggested a doctrine of harmony between church and state which presupposed the priority and freedom of the former. To Whitgift this was, naturally, a dangerous point of view. He argues that Cartwright calls the Apostolic Church popular because of the people's interest in it and aristocratic because of the presence in it of ministers and elders, and then goes on to suggest that the framing of the civil government according to that of the church government will mean the overthrow of the monarchy and the institution of a popular and aristocratic state. 25 Whitgift cannot conceive of the possibility of several forms of government coexisting peacefully within the one state because of his belief that God has committed the care of both church and state to one person. Cartwright contends that, since the notion that the church government should be of the same kind as the civil is incompatible with the liberty of the church, it is therefore absurd. Whitgift has taken his house and hangings analogy too far. He did not mean that the form of civil government must be made the same as the ecclesiastical. He protests that he does not mislike the present civil rule and that the abolition of the episcopacy would not hurt it at all. His point is that the constitution of the state must be consistent with, and must harmonize with that of the church. The civil institutions must be accommodated to and must not clash with the government of the free, prior, eternal church of God.

The hangings must be adapted to the house and not vice versa.

One large problem presented by such a theory is that of the lines of demarcation between the civil and ecclesiastical spheres of jurisdiction. Cartwright's high view of the church led him to point out that the ruler's function in relation to the church is chiefly that of a servant of God. The only true sovereign is God and it is the duty and privilege of earthly rulers to obey his commands and to yield allegiance to the church described by God in his Word. For Cartwright this means the submission of the magistrates to the Presbyterian Church. When Whitgift pointed out that such a doctrine was an attack upon the freedom of the state and the absolute authority of the civil magistrate and meant in practice the reign of clericalism and the subordination of kings to elders, Cartwright denied the charge by stating that he did not mean that rulers must literally throw down their crowns before the elders of the church. He does not mislike the existing form of government but, because of his overriding belief in the sovereignty of God and in the church as a divine institution, he is compelled to reaffirm the limitation of the civil magistrate's authority. Besides being an earthly ruler the godly magistrate is a member of the church and, as such, is subject to the ordinary ecclesiastical discipline; as a sinner he is to be treated in the same way as other sinners.

Whitgift contended that the magistrate is the head of the church.

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26 This, of course, ran contrary to Whitgift's theory that the ruler delegated his authority in ecclesiastical matters as he did in civil matters to lawyers and judges without forfeiting his own supreme authority.

27 "Note this suspicious speech of the kind of government". Pearson: Thomas Cartwright, p. 95.

28 Pearson: Church and State, p. 27.
In order to make this claim consistent with the Biblical statement that Christ is the head of the church he distinguished between visible and spiritual rule. In the visible rule there may be many ministers, archbishops, princes but in the spiritual rule Christ is the only minister, the only archbishop, the only prince. Against this point of view Cartwright insisted that although the godly magistrate might be the head of the government and "a great ornament unto the church" yet he is still only a member of the church. His theory of the two kingdoms demands one head for the church and that Christ. To allow the magistrate headship is to create a two-headed monster. This absurdity appears even more obvious to Cartwright when he considers a state based on republican principles: "If the church be planted in a popular estate, then forso-much as all governe in common and all have autoritie, all shall be head there and no body at all: which is another monster."²⁹

It is the privilege of ministers to interpret God's laws, it is the duty of the magistrate to see that they are put into practise:

"The prince and civil magistrate hath to see that the laws of God, touching his worship, and touching all matters and orders of the church, be executed and duly observed, and to see that every ecclesiastical person do that office whereunto he is appointed, and to punish those which fail in their office accordingly."³⁰

For this reason it is the duty of the civil ruler to establish the true church and to initiate a religious reformation. Cartwright acknowledges the debt the Church of England owes to Elizabeth for leading it out of the spiritual Egypt of popery³¹ but he desires the removal of those

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²⁹ Pearson: Church and State, p. 29.
³⁰ Ibid., p. 30.
³¹ Pearson: Thomas Cartwright, p. 95.
corruptions that still exist and advocates an ecclesiastical polity more akin to that of the Reformed churches. When the true church is set up it is the civil magistrate's duty and responsibility to defend and maintain it; it may be established without the magistrate's help, but without his aid it cannot enjoy peace and security. And when the true church becomes sick and diseased, when its representatives become corrupt and fail to carry out the ordinances of God, Cartwright looks to the godly ruler to play the role of arbiter and use his authority to enforce the divine decrees and so keep the church in order.

Cartwright states that it is the duty of God's rulers to keep God's interpreters in order, but this is not an absolute authority; their ruling must be acceptable to the principles of the true church. They may intervene in the case of possible disorder in the election of ministers, for example. The use of this authority, however, is a last resort. Cartwright shows that the church provides a rising series of courts of appeal to which differences of opinion can be brought before a final appeal is made to the civil magistrate. These courts are the Consistory (Kirk Session), Presbytery, Synod and National Assembly and Cartwright hoped that any disorders would be settled by persuasion in these courts and that it would not be necessary to employ the power of the sword.\footnote{32 Pearson: Church and State, p. 36.} In effect, then, Cartwright is suggesting that Presbyterianism is the scheme of ecclesiastical polity enjoined by Scripture. He is confident that, introduced into England, it will cure a great many of the evils that afflict both church and state. Sects, such as the Anabaptists, are rife because the ministers are not efficient;
discipline is lacking because there are no elders to assist the ministers; immorality, drunkenness and blasphemy are rampant because there is no eldership to watch over and admonish offenders; rogues and beggars abound because the office of the deacon has not been established. Geneva is eulogized as a city that has been purified and exalted by the adoption of the Presbyterian discipline.\textsuperscript{33}

The question of the two kingdoms is an ancient problem, and one which was affected by the growth of nationalism. It was easier for a Protestant than a Roman Catholic to recognize the combined temporal and spiritual power of a Protestant monarch. But if the subject is different in religion from his king he was faced with a dilemma — disloyalty to either his heavenly king or his earthly king. Calvin's solution to the problem was that the ecclesiastical government is entirely different from the spiritual, that church and state are two distinct kingdoms and that the distinction rests upon the constitution of man. Cartwright accepted the distinction but elaborated upon it. His treatment of the problem is coloured by the circumstances in which he lived. He sought to do justice to the authority of the state as well as that of the church and to recognize the autonomy of both as well as the relationship between them. But his theory was bound up with notions of sovereignty and included possibilities of clericalism that made it impracticable and unpopular in the circumstances in which he found himself, and particularly so "in an age when uniformity was a virtue and toleration a crime."\textsuperscript{34}

It is not surprising that Elizabeth would not look kindly on a man who uttered such opinions. The whole system advocated by Cartwright was,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{33} Pearson: \textit{Thomas Cartwright}, p. 100.
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Pearson: \textit{Church and State}, p. 40.
\end{itemize}
in many points, at variance with the claims of the autocratic Tudor queen.

II TRAVERS' ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE

One should not look at Cartwright without considering Walter Travers who was so closely linked with him in the same movement. While Cartwright is generally regarded as the protagonist of the Presbyterian movement in Elizabeth's reign, it is true to say that Travers contributed more to the thinking of the movement. His views are set out methodically in his writings while those of Cartwright are scattered among lectures and replies to his opponents, and further, he can claim to be the first to have systematized the tenets of presbyterian discipline in an orderly and persuasive form. His position is unique in that he is the bridge between Geneva and Westminster spanning the gap between Calvin's first practice of Presbyterianism in Switzerland and its establishment by the state of England. Travers' first book on discipline was written in Geneva;\(^{35}\) his second was published posthumously during the sitting of the Westminster Assembly\(^ {36}\) and its main principles were adopted as one of that Assembly's standards.

Cartwright was expelled from Cambridge in 1571\(^ {37}\) and it is likely that Travers also left at the same time, indeed it may even be the case that they fled together.\(^ {38}\) While he was there Travers completed his magnum opus on Presbyterianism, the "Explicatio", which appeared in 1574.

36 Ibid., pp. 397-398.
37 Ibid., p. 47.
38 Knox, op. cit., p. 27.
Cartwright wrote the preface to the book and in it he begins by expressing surprise that any man would be unwilling to accept the discipline of Christ since all men unquestioningly accept civil discipline and for many years accepted the cruel domination of the papacy over body and soul. He commends the book as a jewel and a treasure which the people of England ought to read, testing it by the truth of the Bible, and with minds unprejudiced "by the vain noise and pomp of bishops." 39

The object of Travers' book is to uphold the necessity of discipline and he starts from the premise that the only authority for true and proper church discipline is the Bible which is, literally, the Word of God. Because of this every detail of ecclesiastical government can be found within its pages. If this authority is accepted, along with his choice of texts from the Scriptures, then his conclusion must be accepted, that presbyterian government is the only one that is approved of God for his church. The reason why the church of Rome has declined into "popish dreams and fantasies" lies in its disregard of the discipline described in the Bible. There must, therefore, be a return to the Scriptures in order to discover the form of government God intended for his church. 40

In the New Testament church all members were divided into two groups - those who held office and those who did not. The office bearers were responsible for the church's government and they were distinguished from the other members by their divine call to office. This

39 Knox, op. cit., p. 31.

40 The description of Travers' doctrine of church discipline that follows is based on Pearson: Thomas Cartwright, pp. 140-144, and Knox, op. cit., pp. 32-35.
call came first through an inner assurance and then those who had received it must be elected to their office in a democratic way such as was used in the election of Matthias, the successor of Judas Iscariot, or the seven deacons. After election, the office-bearer receives ordination which is the outward sign and recognition that he has the gift of the Holy Spirit. In itself ordination has no supernatural effect; it consists of prayer and the laying-on of hands on the part of more than one of those who are already ordained.

While all offices in the church should be of equal status and honour there are differences of suitability according to the gifts a man possesses. Some of the offices mentioned in the New Testament, such as that of apostle, prophet and evangelist, were of a temporary nature and disappeared with the death of the holder. Two offices, however, became perpetual because they were necessary for the church's life and witness - those of bishop and deacon. Each of these offices has two functions. First, there is the bishop who is a pastor and whose primary duty is to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and pray. He should be neither pompous nor poor and should be provided with a congregation of people to whom he ministers. The Bible does not give specific directions regarding the dress of a bishop so this matter should not be one of compulsion; a true shepherd is known by his voice rather than his clothing. However, in view of the fact that the surplice has been associated for so long with the superstitions of the mass, the wearing of black gowns would be more appropriate. The other type of bishop is

41 And it came only to men since women were commanded to remain silent in church (1 Timothy 2. 11-12).
42 This point is important in relation to the vestiarian controversy during Elizabeth's reign which marked the beginning of the reaction to the Puritans cf. Collinson: Puritan Movement, pp. 71-83.
the teacher or doctor whose duty it is to expound the true doctrine of
the Scriptures and whose work will be mainly carried on in the colleges.

Likewise, there are two kinds of deacons. The name deacon is used
to describe any office in the church not belonging to the ministry of
the word and sacraments. It must not, therefore, be regarded as a
degree in the ministry though the person called to the office should be
ordained in the same way as the bishop. Among deacons there are those
who give and those who rule. First, there are those who are appointed
to look after the poor, and, secondly, there are those deacon-elders
who rule over the church along with the minister or pastor in the Cons-
sistory. This latter group are responsible for admonishing offenders,
examining those wishing to be admitted to the Lord's Supper and ensuring
that the purity of the church is maintained.

Bishops and deacons have a collective function as well as separate
duties for the New Testament speaks of the presbytery and the church in
an official sense which means that these office bearers have a combined
work for which they are unitedly responsible. Travers states that the
church should have two courts, the Consistory and the Synod. The Con-
sistory is a court within a local congregation; it is made up of the
bishop or bishops (both pastors and teachers) and the deacon-elders, but
not the deacons proper (the distributors) whose main concern is not with
the spiritual affairs of the church, and its function is to rule the
congregation. The term "elders" can be applied to all members of the
Consistory whatever their office since the New Testament refers to them
as "elders" or "presbyters" irrespective of individual function. Be-
cause the elders act as the custodians of the gospel they can be regard-
ed as the successors of the apostles and thus the eldership is an office
that can claim to be instituted by Christ himself. The second court of the true church is the Synod.43 Its membership consists of all the elders in a geographical area and so it co-ordinates the work of all the consistories in that area. Its duties are of the same nature as the Consistory, but on a larger scale. In cases where severe censure seems necessary this is not to be undertaken without the consent of the ordinary members of the congregations "so that while the government of the church is in the hands of an oligarchy, its weighty decisions must be endorsed by democratic methods."44

Travers' work is marked by a close adherence to Scripture, which is his sole authority, but his interpretation of the Bible emphasizes the literal rather than the spiritual meaning of its contents. He is sure that he has found the "true" discipline of Christ's church. While he agrees basically with both Calvin and Cartwright his treatment of the subject is more systematic and, at the same time, marked by a certain caution, for he sees the discipline of the church neither as an oligarchy nor a democracy, but as a blend of both, a kind of democratic theocracy. But Travers does not simply echo the views of the other presbyterian writers. Calvin began with the office of the elder as basic to ecclesiastical discipline and proceeded to develop his structure from there. Travers starts from a point more like that of the Roman Catholics and the Church of England who posited the offices of bishop and deacon as being essential to the "true" church, and it was

43 In the present day Presbyterian Church the corresponding courts to the Consistory and Synod, as outlined by Travers, would be the Kirk Session and the Presbytery respectively.

44 Knox, op. cit., p. 35.
this nearness to their position which made his theory so difficult for them to refute. When the Church of England and the Roman church spoke of the bishop they did so in a diocesan sense as one set over other ministers in a certain area, but Travers showed that in the New Testament the word was used of the pastor of a local congregation and not of a minister who was superior to his fellows. He also pointed out that the first deacons did not hold a ministerial office but were set to serve tables.

It is at this point that Travers displays his originality. His division of the office of deacon into "deacon proper" and "ruling elder" is a clear break from both Calvin and Cartwright who held that the deacon had a separate office from the elder. Again, Travers differed from Calvin on the question of ordination. Calvin held the view that the laying-on of hands in ordination was effectual in imparting the gift of the Holy Spirit, but Travers believed it was merely the recognition that a man had already received that gift. If Travers parts company with Calvin on certain aspects of church discipline, the difference with Beza is less marked. Both men agreed on such subjects as diocesan bishops, vestments, and the power of the civil magistrate, yet this agreement was only because Travers believed those views to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God. There is one important subject omitted from Travers' book and that is the relationship between church and state. Travers seems to have assumed that the civil magistrate will always be a godly person who will be interested in furthering the witness of the church and maintaining the colleges to ensure the training of able ministers. He did not foresee the possibility of a state which was divorced from or antagonistic to religion - but then Travers was
writing in Geneva where such a possibility was unthinkable at that time.

From 1585 onwards, Cartwright and Travers appear as the chief leaders of the Presbyterian movement, the former as the administrative head and the latter as the intellectual force. But things were not progressing as had been hoped. There were still those who looked for a moderate reformation from within the Church of England, but Field, the organizing secretary, and other leading Puritans were now advocating that the people should take the law into their own hands and bring in the new church government. According to Travers was encouraged to edit a draft Book of Discipline which would be the basis of the church's polity and discipline. The book appeared in March, 1587, at a psychological moment, for the presbyterian prospects seemed bleak indeed with the idea of approaching Parliament for assistance in the reformation apparently doomed to failure. Attached to the Book of Discipline was a form of subscription to its contents (probably composed by Field) requesting conferences to subscribe it as "agreeable to God's Word", to promise to work for its establishment and to undertake to practise it.

The importance of the book lies in the fact that it is the first statement in England of what the essence of Presbyterianism exactly was. It was meant to be a practical guide to all who wanted the life of the church to conform to the discipline intended by Christ himself. Here was a definite and systematic account of the kind of church the Presby-


46 Collinson: John Field, p. 155.

terians wished to see set up in England. Scotland already had its "Second Book of Discipline" and the French Huguenots had their also; Travers' proposal was an independent work, based on his own first-hand study of Scripture.

For the most part the Book of Discipline was an abbreviated form of Travers' earlier work, the "Explicatio". He begins with the bold assertion that Christ has fixed the proper form of church government for all time and this form was found in the Bible. All ministers must be regarded as equals and each should be called to a particular congregation by its members. There should be four offices in the church: ministers, who are to preach the Word and administer the sacraments; teachers, who are to be concerned with doctrine; elders to guard the life of the church and the behaviour of its members and deacons to care for the poor. There should be a presbytery composed of ministers, teachers and elders to look after the general direction of the church. The people qualified to attend the meetings of presbytery are to be chosen by the congregations having a share in it; the presbytery is to be presided over by a moderator chosen from among its members.

The second part of the book gives in detail the ecclesiastical discipline outlined in the first part. It deals with such things as the necessity of a calling to the ministry, liturgy in worship, the catechism, duties of elders and deacons, order of business at consistory meetings, duties of presbyteries, provincial synods and the national assembly. Finally, it points out that the discipline set forth in the first part of the book cannot be altered since it is taken directly from God's Word, but the synodical discipline, being inferred from rather

than stated in Scripture, can be altered in those things not belonging to the essence of the discipline.

There is one clear and important alteration between the Book of Discipline and the "Explicatio". In the earlier book the office of bishop is divided into that of doctor and pastor and the office of elder is a sub-division of that of deacon, the other sub-division being that of deacon. The elder has a seat in the consistory or presbytery along with the doctors and pastors while the deacon does not. Apparently Travers had second thoughts on this point and saw a certain obscurity in it for in the Book of Discipline we find that the elder has a separate office from the deacon, making it more understandable why he should be a member of presbytery. This alteration in his thinking brings him more into line with both Calvin and Cartwright.

The book added nothing to what Travers had written previously; it is merely a reiteration of the statement that government by elders is the only right and proper form of church government. There is a dogged determination to find in Scripture a justification for all the Presbyterianism advocated earlier by Calvin. But, unlike Calvin, Travers identifies the discipline so closely with the gospel that he is forced into the position of seeing every other form of church government as anti-Christian (a trap Calvin did not fall into). This served to

49 See Appendix A below.

50 Bancroft was not slow to point out this difference between Travers and Calvin: "Master Calvin loved the eldership as well as the best of them, because it was the workmanship of his own hands; but yet he thought it not meet to make it an essential note of the Church or a matter of the importance of salvation". Quoted in Knox, op. cit., pp. 114-115 n.7.
inject into English Presbyterianism a stubbornness and a sense of divine rightness which brought it more and more into opposition with the Church of England and forced the Queen to take severe measure against it.

The movement to establish a Presbyterian Church in England during the reign of Elizabeth came close to succeeding. "If three or four hundred ministers had been still under suspension when Parliament assembled in November 1584, episcopacy might be unknown in the British Isles today". What, then, caused the movement to collapse? There were a number of factors that contributed to it. Whitgift, for example, was able to distinguish between moderate and militant Puritanism and pressed his attack only against the latter of these two positions. And there were other causes: the extreme position of the queen, who was resolved that she, and she alone, would be head of church and state, the bitter hostility of the bishops, the anti-national character of a movement that was imported from Geneva, the fact that it was never a majority movement within the English Church, the inability of its supporters to agree among themselves, as is evidenced by the fact that the Book of Discipline, which could have unified the movement, never received approval except among a few members, and we must not forget the untimely deaths of such Parliamentary leaders as Leicester, Walsingham and others. These were all contributory factors to the decline and fall of what bid fair to be a success for Presbyterianism.

It would be wrong to suggest, however, that nothing was achieved. The movement was successful in drawing attention to the many wrongs

existing in the English Church and this forced Whitgift and Bancroft to take steps to remedy the situation. The attacks made by men such as Travers on the Church's polity, and in particular his famous controversy with Hooker, compelled the church leaders to clarify their position, and drew forth the "Ecclesiastical Polity" which has been the standard work on episcopacy ever since. By their courageous stand before the High Commissioners on opinions that were matters of conscience, the Presbyterian leaders roused the thinking of many common people and kindled a love for liberty, especially in matters of religion. Again, its leaders, by their planned approaches to parliament, became the pioneers of the modern parliamentary party organization and roused ordinary people to take a deeper interest in its doings. Perhaps if, instead of remaining a party within the Church of England, its supporters had taken a leaf from the book of the Brownists and Barrowists, to whom they were strongly opposed, and erected a separate form of church throughout England, they might have had better success in their plans.

52 Knox, op. cit., pp. 70-88.
III

THE TWO KINGDOMS

When John Knox died in 1572 he left behind a Reformed Kirk that was the National Church of Scotland. There were still parts of the country where its services were not held either because there was no one qualified to conduct them or because a powerful noble or chief adhered to Roman Catholicism. The new system of worship set out in the "Book of Common Order" was well established within ten years of the Reformation. So was the supreme government of the Kirk by the General Assembly. Although this was not mentioned in the first "Book of Discipline" it had functioned continuously from the beginning. The first Assemblies were modelled on the Scottish Parliaments: they had representation from the Three Estates - ministers (in place of prelates), barons and burgesses. They worked largely through committees which carried on a thorough supervision of the life of church and nation. There were also superintendents or commissioners of the Assembly whose duty it was to oversee the old dioceses.

Alongside this active, functioning church there was a shadow church which for years had done no spiritual work at all except where a few of its officials helped to carry on Roman Catholic services more or less in secret. There were still bishops, abbots, priors and other orders who drew two-thirds of the old church's revenue but had no place in the new church except perhaps as simple members. According to an Act of the 1567 Parliament this shadow church should have gradually liquidated itself; as the holders of benefices died qualified ministers should have been admitted to them and in this way the revenues of the old
church would have passed slowly into the hands of the Reformed Church of Scotland.

Such a plan was altogether too much of a good thing for the men who ruled the country in the name of the child James VI. The wealth of many of the monasteries, even the incomes of parishes, were in the hands of themselves and their friends and they realized that the appointment of laymen to these positions could be useful in winning themselves further support. The wealth of the bishoprics were equally tempting. In 1571 the last Roman Catholic Archbishop of St. Andrews was captured and hanged as a traitor and the Archbishop of Glasgow fled to France where he worked on behalf of Mary, Queen of Scots. Two new archbishops were appointed by the Regent without the permission of the Kirk and while it is true that the men in question were ministers it was obvious that most of the monies from these great sees was to go to the men who had appointed them.1

Greed was not the only motive behind this action, there was also the question of political power. Of the three estates in the Scottish Parliament the Spiritual Estate was the first. By bringing in bishops chosen by themselves the rulers of Scotland hoped to control the other estates. But there was a problem - there was really no place in the Kirk for bishops of the old school. To avoid further scandals, Erskine of Dun, one of the first and most faithful leaders of the Reformation, argued that the office of bishop was a spiritual one according to Scripture and that no ruler had a right to appoint men to spiritual offices without the Kirk's consent. Such an argument could only be for the

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1 For this reason such bishops have been known as "tulchans" from the Scottish word for a stuffed calf-skin placed beside a cow to induce it to give milk.
occasion. Calvin did not regard the monarchical episcopacy as an order appointed by God for the church. However, a rather irregular General Assembly did agree to accept bishops on condition that the lords who held the right of presenting them agreed to appoint only ministers who were acceptable to the Kirk. These men were to have no powers beyond those of superintendents and were to be subject to the General Assembly. The plan proved to be quite ineffective, but the idea that bishops chosen by the government should, somehow, be brought back to real power lingered on in the minds of the rulers of Scotland.

In Scotland, of course, the church had enjoyed a remarkable freedom since the beginning. It began its life under a Roman Catholic queen who could not pretend to be part of it and this freedom continued under the regents because their government was so weak. The Kirk could also be free because it was poor. Under John Knox's "Book of Discipline" its people elected its own ministers and it was only when it began to inherit some of the old church's wealth that the powerful laymen who controlled appointments to benefices were able to insist on their rights to name the ministers who would draw this new income.

In 1572, however, the great question was whether the Kirk was to continue to rule itself through its own representative councils or was to be controlled by officials appointed by the government. Two men were largely responsible for the course of events that followed.

The first of these was George Buchanan, James VI's tutor. In 1579


4 J. M. Reid: Kirk and Nation, the Story of the Reformed Church of Scotland, Skeffington and Son Ltd., London, 1960, p. 46.
he published the treatise "De Jure Regni Apud Scotos" and this, in effect, marked the beginning of that conflict in Scotland which was to tear the country apart and end up more than a century later with the overthrow of the House of Stuart and the subsequent fulfilment of practically every point of the political doctrine advocated by Buchanan. The work was dedicated to the king, ".....that it may guide you beyond the rocks of flattery and not only give you advice, but also keep you in the road you are so happily entered, and in case of any deviation, replace you in the line of duty." Buchanan taught that kings are chosen by the people and continue in office at their will, that they are subject to both human and divine laws and that Scotland had always claimed and exercised the right to call wicked rulers to account. The only point at which he was at variance with those who had preceded him was on the question of tyrannicide. Buchanan held that a tyrant is a public enemy who may be lawfully slain by any subject whose conscience would justify the act. He writes of an ideal kingship: "I wish to see him beloved by his subjects; and guarded not by terror but by affection; the only armour that can render kings perfectly secure." The other, and probably better known figure was Andrew Melville on whom the mantle of John Knox fell. Returning to Scotland from Geneva in 1574 Melville immediately joined in the work of setting up a detailed


6 Ibid. Buchanan's work was to have far-reaching effects in the following century. His theory of government was taken up by Samuel Rutherford and used by the persecuted Covenanters against the Stuart kings, but probably the pinnacle of its success came in 1776 in the hands of Thomas Jefferson.
constitution for the Church of Scotland; the result was the second "Book of Discipline", a logical, precise and uncompromising manifesto. It declared that the Church's power of self-government is drawn directly from God according to the Scriptures. It can have no temporal head on earth. Kings and magistrates have their rights in temporal affairs — theirs is the power of the sword, the Kirk's is the power of the keys. The same man cannot hold both of these powers. "As ministers are subject to the judgment and punishment of the magistrate in external things, so ought the magistrates to submit themselves to the discipline of the Kirk if they transgress in matters of conscience and religion".

There are four offices in the Church — those of pastor (or minister or bishop), of the doctor (or teacher), of the elder and of the deacon. All ministers are equal. Elders, who are elected for life, hold a spiritual office like the minister; indeed, the minister himself is an elder (presbyter). The most important function of the elder is to take part in Church assemblies which govern the Church at large. There should be an assembly for the parish, one for the province, one for the nation and also assemblies "of all diverse nations professing one Jesus Christ". The General Assembly of the Scottish Kirk is to be supreme in all ecclesiastical matters within Scotland.

The one aspect of church government that was not fully developed in the second Book of Discipline was the presbytery, the court that comes between the local Kirk Session and the provincial synod. Presbyteries were just beginning to appear when the book was written. Their development followed along somewhat parallel lines to their English counterparts: neighbouring ministers and elders met for the "Exercise", a time of Bible study and prayer and mutual help. The areas they covered
were small enough to make attendance at the meetings fairly easy and the numbers of the members manageable. Presbyteries soon took over the powers of supervision that had been vested in the bishops prior to the Reformation.

The second Book of Discipline was not accepted by the Scottish Parliament until 1581. It had previously been accepted by the General Assembly but the "shadow Church" was beginning to show signs of a new life under the leadership of Patrick Adamson, a former opponent of episcopacy who had been offered the see of St. Andrews and accepted it in the hope of winning for the Scottish bishops the sort of authority those within the Church of England had never lost. Adamson received strong backing from the king who was now beginning to try to govern and was showing a strong reaction to the teaching of his former tutor, Buchanan. James was beginning to discover the seductiveness of power and also its limitation so far as an almost bankrupt King of Scotland was concerned. No doubt he was strengthened in his thinking by what he saw south of the border, where in her latter years Elizabeth gave the impression of being virtually an absolute monarch. The king could not like the teaching of the Book of Discipline which stated that the power of the Kirk was completely independent of his own and so he encouraged Adamson's ideas of episcopacy because he saw bishops whom he appointed as a means of breaking down this independent power.

At this time the young James was very much under the influence of his half-French cousin, Esme Stuart, Seigneur d'Aubigny, who was almost

7 Reid, op. cit., p. 50.

certainly plotting to make him and Scotland Roman Catholic. 9 When the plot was discovered there was widespread alarm and as a result the General Assembly was able to proceed with the organization of presbyteries and the condemnation of bishops. With the ebb and flow of Scottish politics, however, in 1584 Arran's Government was able to push through Parliament the Black Acts which declared, contrary to the teaching of Knox, that the king was head of the Church as of the State, that there should be crown-appointed bishops in the Church of Scotland, that ministers should not discuss public affairs under pain of death, and that presbyteries and General Assemblies should not meet without the king's consent. 10 In spite of clerical opposition James had his way and in 1587 he was able to persuade Parliament to declare that all church property belonged to the crown except for glebes and manses. For a period this satisfied him and he even showed a tendency to favour Presbyterianism on a modified scale. At the 1590 General Assembly the king "praised God that he was born in such a place as to be king in such a kirk, the purest kirk in the world." He went on to condemn the service of the Church of England as "an ill-mumbled mass in English." 11 In 1592 the Presbyterian polity was formally restored by Parliament and the Black Acts were abrogated in so far as they interfered with the church's authority in matters of religion. The Golden Act, however, did not herald the Age of Gold. The phase lasted four short years and at the end of that time the weakness which grew out of the very strength of

10 Reid, op. cit., p. 52.
Melville and his form of Presbyterianism began to make itself manifest.

The Kirk was really a victim of its own popularity. No ruler had supported it for any length of time and so it could not hold its own without the active support of great numbers of the people. It was a force, not because of any physical power, but because of its prestige; the people belonged to the Kirk and believed in it even though they might grumble or tremble at its discipline - and also because it worked through men whom the people had chosen. At a time when most positions were filled by appointment the Kirk was remarkably democratic. It did not aim at political democracy, although there was a strong radical strain among the first reformers. The object of the men who made it was to reproduce the sort of Church they found in the Bible.\textsuperscript{12} In doing this through ministers and elders elected by each congregation it came about that the General Assemblies could speak for the whole nation with far more popular backing than any Parliament of those days, and the leading spokesmen of the Church had far greater influence over popular opinion than any politician in the king's court. As far as the Church's work in religion was concerned, this was as it should be. Knox, Melville and the others created an organization which was so strong and elastic that no ruler was able to break it down completely. But the church leaders had not learned how to control or modify their use of this power. In the early days of the Reformation when the Kirk was struggling to grow and survive it was necessary for them to preach often about public

\textsuperscript{12} This is well witnessed by John Knox's famous description of Geneva: "I neither fear nor ashamed to say, (it) is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in earth since the days of the Apostles. In other places, I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion so sincerely reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place". cf. Ridley, op. cit., p. 215.
affairs which concerned the State as much as the Church, but once the Kirk had been firmly established preaching about politics should have become more rare and moderate. If there were to be two equal powers in Scotland, King and Kirk, then they had to respect one another. Unfortunately, the ministers were of the opinion that their advice to the king should be given from the pulpit and when they were accused of speaking treason they insisted that they should be judged on the matter by ecclesiastical courts rather than those of the king.  

In the circumstances it is not hard to understand James's exasperation and his resolve not to be the tool of the ministers. Despite all his previous fine words he had come to that place where, in his eyes, Presbyterianism was to monarchy what the devil was to God. During an interview with the king in 1596 Melville took him by the sleeve and called him "God's sillie vassal" and "through much hot reasoning and many interruptions" reminded James:

"There are two Kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is Christ Jesus the King, and His kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose Kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. And those whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over His Kirk, and govern His Spiritual Kingdom, have sufficient power of Him, and authority so to do, both together and severally, the which no Christian King nor Prince should control or discharge, but fortify and assist, otherwise they are not faithful subjects, nor members of Christ. And, Sir, when you were in your swaddling clothes Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land in spite of all His enemies, and His officers and ministers convened and assembled for the ruling and weal of His Kirk, which was ever for your welfare, defence, and preservation also,  

13 Conditions in Scotland began to approach anarchy when some of the ministers supported the rebellious nobles, including the Earl of Bothwell, who repeatedly tried to kidnap the king and was himself a sort of secret king of witches. cf. Willson, op. cit., pp. 102-114.  

14 Weak.
when these same enemies were seeking your destruction and cutting off."  

Melville's statement closely paralleled the view of Cartwright, his contemporary in England. The natural outcome of this position came later in the theory of the divine right of Presbytery; Melville had drawn an arbitrary distinction between matters civil and ecclesiastical which was to be taken up by many of the Covenanters in the following century.  

James remained self-controlled throughout. Melville's address though he undoubtedly resented it, but from this point on he contrived to advance his own and the episcopal cause by persuading Parliament to agree that such ministers as James made bishops should have the right to vote in the legislature. "The object of this was given out as the necessity to uphold the dignity of the ministerial office, not to emulate Romans or Anglicans." The more discerning members of the state were not deceived by this ploy, but once again events played into the king's hands. A complicated, though bloodless; riot in Edinburgh gave him his chance. He threatened to make some other town his capital and the opposition of both Kirk and nobles suddenly collapsed.  

For the next six years before he became King of England, James was almost as supreme in Scotland as he thought he ought to be. He began to manipulate the General Assemblies, mainly by calling them to meet in such towns as Perth and Dundee where ministers from the north who dis-

75 Wilson, op. cit., p. 123; Douglas, op. cit., p. 19.


17 John Davidson said: "Busk (dress) him, busk him as bonnifie as ye can, we can see him wel1/eneuch. We see the horns of his mitre".

18 Wilson, op. cit., p. 124.
liked the "Popery of Edinburgh" were likely to be in the majority. The Kirk accepted the idea that it should have its own representatives in Parliament and these soon turned out to be bishops nominated by the king. These new bishops had no other power beyond their right to speak and vote in the legislature.¹⁹ In 1606 the Scottish Parliament gave the new bishops some of the income which those of the old Church had had, and described the king as "absolute prince, judge and governor over all persons, estates and causes both spiritual and temporal."²⁰ The principle of the independence of the Kirk, of the two co-equal Kingdoms, the power of the sword and the power of the keys, seemed to be overthrown.

The accession of James to the English throne on the death of Elizabeth in 1603 marked another stage in his controversy with the Church of Scotland as we shall see. Meanwhile, south of the border great expectations were being built up in the minds of the Puritans at the prospect of James's succession to the throne, and it is highly probable that Presbyterians in both kingdoms were working towards this end.²¹ The English Presbyterians had high hopes that a king of Scotland, reared under the tutelage of Buchanan and further instructed by Melville, would be sympathetic to their cause. The supreme optimism of their point of view finds it culmination in the Millenary Petition presented to the king shortly after he came into his new kingdom: "God, we trust, has appointed your highness our physician to heal these diseases; and we

¹⁹ Wilson, op. cit., pp. 124-126.
²⁰ Reid, op. cit., p. 54.
²¹ Wilson, op. cit., p. 149.
say with Mordecai to Esther, 'Who knoweth whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time?" 22

Although Puritanism had been firmly rejected by Elizabeth it still had a firm hold within the Church of England, and the Millenary Petition - so called because a thousand clergy were supposed to have signed it - was a further attempt to obtain the reformation of worship and doctrine denied by the late queen. This petition was all the more important because it was the plea not of "factious men, affecting a popular parity in the Church", nor of "schismatics aiming at the dissolution of the State ecclesiastical", but of "faithful servants of Christ and loyal subjects of the King". 23 Furthermore the demands they made were moderate. In the first place, they asked for certain modifications in ceremonial: the discontinuance of the use of the sign of the cross in baptism, of confirmation, of the ring in marriage, the wearing of the surplice, and of the use of the terms "priest" and "absolution". They also asked for the shortening of the order of service in order to make more room for preaching. This was in accordance with the Puritan emphasis on the importance of the sermon. The petitioners asked too that only "able and sufficient men" who were able "to preach diligently, and especially on the Lord's Day" should be admitted to the ministry. They requested that bishops should not be allowed to hold livings "in commendam" with their bishoprics and that "double-beneficed men" should not be allowed. The final section of the petition

22 Collinson: Puritan Movement, p.447.

dealt with the question of Church discipline: excommunication should not be in the name of lay officials; members of the church should not be excommunicated "for trifles and twelvepenny matters"; that the delays of ecclesiastical courts be restrained; that "the oath ex officio, whereby men are forced to accuse themselves, be more sparingly used"; and, finally, that there should be greater strictness in keeping the Sabbath. 24

The statesmanship of a man like Francis Bacon enabled him to see the danger that lay in a breach between the Crown and the Commons and caused him to favour concessions to the Puritans in order to preserve the unity of English religious life. There may even be cause to believe that there might be some substance in the promises that James made. The king understood by the ministry, a ministry of the word; he had been reared in a church with few ceremonies and in 1603 it might have been expected that relations between the Churches of England and Scotland would become more intimate. It is also true to say that, at the time of his accession, James knew little of the English bishops and they, in turn, were known to have been nervous of his intentions. 25 On the other hand, included in the king's entourage were men like Patrick Galloway, one of his Scottish chaplains, who could interpret the mind of the Puritans to the king and his to them. Furthermore, in the summer of 1603 there was some sign that the wind of reform might begin to blow through the English church. James had written to the universities of Oxford and

24 Tanner, op. cit., p. 50.

Cambridge announcing his acceptance of a puritan remedy for the lack of a learned ministry and Archbishop Whitgift was sufficiently disturbed by the Puritan propaganda to institute "a thorough survey of preaching ministers, and later, to require of his suffragans an extensive statistical account, parish by parish of communicants, recusants, pluralists, non-residents and impropriations." Whitgift was also aware that the number of complaints of corruption in the ecclesiastical courts was greater than at any other time during his occupancy of the see of Canterbury.

In some ways the Churches of England and Scotland were nearer to one another at the beginning of the seventeenth century than they have ever been since. Both were Calvinist in theology; the teaching of the reformer appears almost as clearly in the Thirty-Nine Articles, to which Anglican ministers are still expected to give assent, as it does in the first Scots Confession. The Church of England had always had bishops, but until just before James's own day those bishops had scarcely begun to claim that their office was essential to the proper organization of a Christian society. To Elizabeth and her government it was a convenience and not much more. James had given the Church of Scotland bishops, of a kind, even though it was against the will of the Scottish ministers and of the Scottish Presbyterians in general. But many Englishmen—perhaps just short of a majority—objected to episcopacy as strongly

26 Collinson: Puritan Movement, p. 450.

27 Tanner suggests that the system of discipline advocated by Calvinism was unsuitable to the temper of the English people "and had failed to take any root" though a great many religious people accepted the doctrines which Calvin stated, almost as if they were self-evident. It seems to me that Tanner has underestimated the strength of the Pur-
as the Scots did. Most of the Puritans were Presbyterian in principle and had hoped that the coming of James would favour them. It would not have been difficult for him to establish in England, as in Scotland, a Church which governed itself through courts and assemblies in a Presbyterian way, and in which bishops, if they existed at all, would be of small importance.

But this was the very "democratic form of government" which the king so disliked. As early as 1598 in his book, "Basilikon Doron", James had set out his design for the governing of the church. In a famous passage denouncing the zealots in the Kirk he declares that one of their weapons is the parity of all ministers, "whereby the ignorants are emboldened" to cry down their betters. The remedy is to "advance the godly, learned and modest men of the ministry to bishoprics and benefices [and thus] not only banish their conceited parity but also re-establish the old institution of three estates, which can no otherwise be done."28 The English Church was ready-made for a monarch of James' views. The English bishops were Erastian, accepting the supremacy of the State in ecclesiastical affairs and this filled James with delight after years of fighting against Melville and company. He was pleased to find the bishops in control of the Church of England and yet ready to

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28 Willson, op. cit., p. 126.
accept the divine right of kings with enthusiasm and completeness. "A close, abiding and fateful alliance of Church and Crown was formed at once. The Church exalted the power of the King and sanctified his person, denounced criticism of the monarch as blasphemous, and preached the religious duty of passive obedience. The King was quick to defend the Church; and attacks upon it were punished as offences against the Crown." 29

In the course of his progress from Edinburgh to London when he had received the Millenary Petition, James had agreed to hold a conference at which the question of church reform might be discussed by the Puritans in the presence of the king. The conference met on January 14, 1604 at Hampton Court. From the Puritan angle it was a failure as might have been anticipated when the king decided to have nineteen representatives from the established church as against only four from the Puritans, James himself nominating all twenty-three. 30 This meant that from among the Puritans he was able to choose a less extreme type than they might have chosen themselves. Among those nominated to represent the Puritan party were Cartwright and Travers, 31 but both names met with a cool reception on the part of the king.

"The good professors in England were putt in hope of a good beginning of reformation; and so much was pretended when the conference was appointed, but, nothing lesse meant, yea, rather, under colour of conference, to procure farther confirmation to the corruptious and abuses. Good Mr. Cartwright, one of the number that was appointed for the conference, was hardlie taikin up by the King, when he went to him to salute him. The King said; 'What,

29 Wilson, op. cit., p. 199.
30 Knox, op. cit., p. 143.
31 Collinson: Puritan Movement, p. 455.
are yee the man that wrote against the Reverend Father, the Bishop of Canterbury? The honest man tooke this reproofoe verie heaulie; and forseen there was no hope of reformaution, but rather a confirmaution of all abuses, departed this life before the holding of the conference. What sinceritie was there meant, when, for the sincere parte, were nominated two that were verie corrupt? Apprearandlie, they were nominated onlie to be spyes, and to prevaricat."32 Travers, too, was rejected. James was well aware of Travers' views and had mentioned them in a speech before the Synod of Lothian on his way south to claim his new kingdom. There can be little doubt that he consciously passed over one who would almost certainly oppose him at the conference in favour of more moderate voices.33 The four members chosen to represent the Puritans were John Reynolds of Oxford, Laurence Chaterton of Cambridge, Thomas Sparke of Bletchley and John Knewstub from Suffolk.

On the first day of the conference34 the Puritans were not even admitted to the discussions which were carried on between the king and bishops and ranged over a number of theological topics which gave James the opportunity to display his grasp of the subject. When permitted to speak on the following day, the Puritans presented their grievances under four heads: doctrine, a learned ministry, the Prayer Book and the government of the church. Under the first of these headings Reynolds asked that the doctrine of predestination be more clearly acknowledged in the church, that laymen be prohibited from administering the sacra-

32 Pearson: Thomas Cartwright, pp. 390-391. Cartwright's old antagonist, Whitgift, was to survive the conference by a month.

33 Knox, op. cit., p. 143.

34 The account of the conference that follows is based on Collinson: Puritan Movement, pp. 455-459, Tanner, op. cit., pp. 50-51, and Willson, op. cit., pp. 203-209.
ments and that the whole matter of confirmation be re-examined. At
this Bancroft, the Bishop of London, "poured forth a torrent of bitter
and insolent invective" against the Puritans claiming that their aim
was not the reform but the overthrow of the Church. James protested
Bancroft's truculence but decided against Reynolds' position in the
ensuing discussion. The Puritans next asked for a more learned ministry.
James answered that a learned ministry was the desire of all men but
that for the present it was impossible; the Church would do what it
could, the rest must be tolerated. At this point Bancroft, who was the
inveterate opponent of the Puritans at all times, defended a ministry
which emphasized the prayers in the Prayer Book as opposed to one which
placed greater value on preaching. Taking up the question of the Prayer
Book, the Puritans opposed its command to read the Apocrypha in church;
they also requested a new translation of the Bible, and while Bancroft
again expressed his opposition the king approved—with highly signifi-
cant results. 35

By this time the hour was growing late and the king suggested an-
other session on the following day—the Puritans would have been wise
to have agreed for James was beginning to grow irritable. Instead they
persisted in presenting the final division of their grievances, the sub-
ject of church government. In the course of his speech Reynolds used
the word "presbytery" at which James, with the memory of Scotland still
vivid in his mind, flew into a rage.

"A Scottish Presbytery . . . . agreeth as well with a monarchy as God
and the Devil. Then Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet,

35 The one enduring monument of the Hampton Court Conference was
the publication, in 1611, of the Authorized Version of the Bible to which
James consented on this occasion, and which was "to be used in all the
churches of England."
and at their pleasure censure me and my Council and all our proceedings. Then Will shall stand up and say, 'It must be thus'; then Dick shall reply and say, 'Nay marry but we will have it thus'. Stay, I pray you, for one seven years, before you demand that of me; and if then you find me pursy and fat and my wind-pipes stuffed I will perhaps hearken unto you. For let that government be once up. I am sure I shall be kept in breath. Then shall we all of us have work enough, both our hands full. But, Dr. Reynolds, till you find that I grow lazy, let that alone. How they used that poor lady my mother is not unknown, and how they dealt with me in my minority you all know."

The bishops were delighted, and when James reiterated what he had said to them in private session on the first day, "I approve the calling and use of bishops in the Church, and it is my aphorism, 'No Bishop, no King'." 36 the Puritan leaders must have realized that there was little hope of any concessions being made on this point. "Were the bishops once out of power", cried James, "I know what would become of my supremacy...... When I mean to live under a Presbytery I will go into Scotland again, but while I am in England I will have bishops to govern the Church." And turning in his rage to the Puritans, he went on, "If this is all they have to say, I will make them conform themselves or I will harry them out of this land or else do worse."

On the third day the king again met with the bishops before the Puritans were admitted to a short final session. Bancroft presented the articles of faith to which they objected; the king declared that conformity was essential in every well-governed church and that if the ministers of the church would not obey then the church would be better off without him and he deserved to be hanged. The Puritans were then admitted and informed of the king's pleasure. To their request for leniency, James replied that no minister would be removed from his charge before he had been fully admonished.

The conference ended with a few minor concessions to the Puritans but James refused to meet the petitioners on any of the main points. The representatives of the Puritan party had a tendency to deal with matters of scholarly interest and did not present a very impressive indictment of established religion - a fact that was damaging and even fatal to their cause. What was designed as a once-for-all confrontation between two opposed parties became a sort of round-table conference. The bishops present were no more monolithic than the Puritan party itself; a number of them were Calvinist in their theology and were not opposed to the hopes of the Puritan ministers, indeed, they were more in sympathy with them than they were with their episcopal colleagues Bancroft and Bilson. Nor was the Puritan cause helped any by the king himself who proved to be neither a correct nor an impartial chairman.

Far from achieving what was hoped for the conference did the Puritans positive harm. It was now clear that James was as hostile to the principles of dissent and nonconformity as ever Elizabeth had been. A lifetime of acquaintance with "the pertinacity of the puritan conscience" in Scotland had taught him to make no concessions whatsoever to this spirit. In Scotland, militant Calvinism was a force which James was obliged to respect even while he opposed it, but a number of his pronouncements at Hampton Court suggest surprise that the case presented by the English Puritans was so weak and expounded with such mildness and deference (one cannot help but wonder whether the outcome might have been different had Travers and Fen represented the Puritan party). The performance of Reynolds and his associates evidently offended the king without convincing him that they were a force to be seriously reckoned with. "Hampton Court can only have confirmed the king's grave
underestimation of the strength and potentiality of English puritanism, and this error on his side was to have damaging consequences for the whole Church and nation." 37

Bancroft became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1604 and proceeded to attempt to crush nonconformity with his campaign of subscription to the new canons. But the sympathies of the Commons were with the Puritans. In June, 1604 in the "Form of Apology" they stated their opposition to the ecclesiastical supremacy and to the Tudor position generally by putting forward the parliamentary position in matters of religion:

"For matter of religion it will appear, by examination of truth and right, that your Majesty should be misinformed if any man should deliver that the Kings of England have any absolute power in themselves, either to alter religion...... or to make any laws concerning the same, otherwise than as in temporal causes, by the consent of Parliament 38...... Neither desire we so much that any man in regard of weakness of conscience, may be exempted after Parliament from obedience to laws established, as that in this Parliament such laws may be enacted as by relinquishment of some ceremonies of small importance, or by any way better, a perpetual uniformity may be enjoyed and observed." 39

The Commons, then, proposed to take the religious settlement out of the king's hands and to make by statute those concessions to the Puritans which he had refused to make by supremacy - and after that, conformity was to be enforced. Bacon objected to this transfer of power over religion from the king to Parliament, regarding the crown as the depository of existing constitutional authority. For this reason also, there was always at least a minority in the country who were ready to support the crown's supremacy. The Commons' plea went without success and Bancroft

37 Collinson: Puritan Movement, p. 462.

38 This is not to suggest that the ecclesiastical system contemplated by the Commons would permit religious liberty or "toleration".

39 Tanner, op. cit., p. 51.
continued his policy of "ecclesiastical reconstruction". However, Calvinism was anything but a dying cause in England during the lifetime of James. Despite the failure at Hampton Court Puritanism was not totally repudiated in the country.

The differences of opinion within the Puritan ranks now began to be more apparent. There were those who continued to state that the nature of the Prayer Book ceremonies and the episcopacy were inherently evil, but the majority were moving to a position of moderation and suggesting that these were really matters of indifference. Sparke, one of the Hampton Court disputants declared that his opinion had always been that "ceremonies were to be yielded unto rather than that a man should be deprived of his ministry on their account." 40 After showing some inclination to oppose Bancroft's campaign for uniformity the greater part of the Puritan ministry came round to Sparkè's way of thinking.

The others were faced with a dilemma: they had to choose separation or they had to assimilate the thinking of the non-separating congregationalists who denied that the ecclesiastical laws of the country either made or un-made the churches of God in England in their true essence. In effect, both paths lead to independency - and the convictions of the independents were among the factors that were later to frustrate the work of the Westminster Assembly and deprive English Presbyterianism of its long-delayed hour of triumph.

James now determined to assimilate the Scottish Church to that of England by building up the episcopacy in Scotland. Bancroft declared that episcopacy was ordained by God and that there could be no valid church without bishops who were linked by consecration to the original.

apostles. Every bishop must have been given his powers by other bishops in a series which could be traced back to the imposition of hands by the apostles in the first century. It is doubtful whether James took this doctrine of Apostolic Succession very seriously from a purely religious point of view, but from the political standpoint he was anxious that the Scottish bishops should have as much authority as their English counterparts. In 1606 a very irregular General Assembly agreed that each Presbytery should have a permanent Moderator and that a bishop should always be Moderator in the Presbytery whose bounds included his cathedral. Soon bishops were presiding over synods and Spottiswoode, the Archbishop of St. Andrews, was moderating the General Assembly and selecting its members. In 1610 he and two other Scottish bishops were called to England and duly consecrated in the Anglican form and when they returned home they passed on this Apostolic succession to their colleagues.

And the king had some other tricks up his sleeve. He marked out the opponents of his ecclesiastical policy and lured them to England on the pretext of holding a conference on the pacification of the Kirk. Nothing could have been further from James's mind - his real purpose was to trap them into words or actions that could be used against them. When the dust of battle settled Andrew Melville was a prisoner in the Tower of London as a result of his audacious speeches and destined never

41 Wilton, op. cit., p. 319.

42 Ibid.

43 From the strictest Anglican point of view this consecration was scarcely valid since the Scottish bishops had never been ordained priests. However, the procedure seems to have satisfied the king and his advisers.
to set foot in his native land again. James Melville, his nephew and staunch supporter, likewise banished and twenty other leading ministers either deposed or in exile. Well might James boast to the English Parliament: "This I may say for Scotland, and may truly vaunt it. Here I sit and govern it with my pen. I write and it is done and by a clerk of the Council I govern Scotland now — which others could not do by the sword." By 1612 episcopacy was an accomplished fact in Scotland — but Presbyterianism was far from broken.

The new bishops were simply the king's servants and had little real support from the parish ministers or people except in the northeast where a learned and spiritually-minded group of university theologians, the Aberdeen Doctors, and the saintly bishop, Patrick Forbes, won real influence and respect. Elsewhere the Kirk continued to act through its presbyteries, actively and vigorously fighting the bishops and not without success. The ritual remained the same; congregations remained

44 Melville has been referred to as the Hildebrand of Presbyterianism. To the Church of Scotland he bequeathed High Church principles, which, though acquired under Calvin in Geneva, stemmed ultimately from the Roman Church, especially in so far as they dealt with the autonomy of the Kirk. There was no hint of the Erastianism found in Lutheranism and the Church of England. And yet in some respects Melville's contact with Geneva was a mixed blessing from the point of view of Church-State relations in Scotland. The Genevan model caused the Scottish Reformers to make demands on the State for support and protection — but these demands were in many cases impracticable in the political milieu of sixteenth century Scotland; they were feasible in Geneva only because Calvin had drawn up the civil codes there. Further, in Geneva both Church and State were republican and after an initial period of minor dissension they got on well together, but it was a very different situation in Scotland. Presbyterianism was suspect at court because it had its origins in a republic and so was held to be a potential danger to the Crown.


46 Reid, op. cit., p. 56.
seated to receive the communion, the observance of holy days was rare, the clergy continued to wear their black Geneva gowns and followed Knox's "Book of Common Order". And always they looked to men who were in permanent opposition to the king's plans, men such as Robert Bruce who had succeeded Knox and Lawson in the pulpit of St. Giles' in Edinburgh and had been a member of the Council of Regency when James crossed the North Sea to marry the King of Denmark's daughter. 47 Bruce was driven from St. Giles' when James began to take control of the Church but because he was a landowner as well as a minister he was able to preach throughout Scotland for a considerable length of time, often not in churches but in houses and the open air. Young men, like Alexander Henderson, 48 who were to guide the Kirk after James's day were his disciples.

Beneath the surface of conformity Presbyterianism in Scotland was pushing out deeper roots. Religion was becoming a more personal thing, and at the same time convictions about the proper form of Church government were hardening. The first real crisis came when James began to interfere not merely with the organization of the Church but with its worship. It was for this reason that he decided to visit Scotland in 1617. 49 The king came with his English bishops and immediately decided to modify the fittings of the Chapel Royal at Holyrood. He introduced an organ, which was sent on by sea from England. John Row sets out the


48 Ibid., pp. 177-178.

49 The declared reason, however, was a salmon-like instinct to see once more the land of his birth. cf. Willson, op. cit., p. 389.
view of the Presbyterian opposition:

"And therefore (he) caused repair the Chapel Royall, in Holyrud-
hous, Wherein was a glorious altar set up, with two closed Bibles, two unlighted candles and two basins without water set thereon, organs put up, and His Majestie's Choristers appoynted to sing and say the English Service daily."50

Wooden figures of the patriarchs and apostles were also brought in, and the Scottish councillors and bishops were commanded to kneel at the com-
munion.

Nor was this the end of the matter. The General Assembly of 1618, meeting in Perth, was "subjected to outrageous pressure"51 and forced to accept the notorious Five Articles which were a startling innovation in the Scottish ritual and mode of worship. These Articles decreed that the traditional great holy days of the church, Christmas, Easter, Whit-
sunday and Ascension Day should be regularly observed; that baptism could take place in private homes instead of in church, when this seemed necessary; that children should be confirmed by a bishop; that the sick could be given Communion at home;52 and that the people must kneel when they took the Sacrament. In all this "the Scots saw the hand of a despot tearing the crown from the head of Christ, the only King of His Church";53 it appeared as another step along the road that led to the restoration of Roman Catholicism. The holy days had been given up by

50 Quoted in Mathew, op. cit., pp. 257-258.

51 Willson, op. cit., p. 320.

52 Such was the eventual reaction to the Article on private Communion that it was not until 1954 that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland formally revoked the Act of 1690 which prohibited the private celebration of Communion.

the Reformers because they could find no warrant for observing them in the Bible. Special arrangements for baptism and Communion suggested that, as the Romanists argued, there could be no salvation except through these sacraments. Kneeling at Communion seemed to imply that the bread and wine were the physical body and blood of Christ and for Presbyterians this was idolatry - they would have no part of either the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation or the consubstantiation accepted by the Lutheran churches on the continent. James soon discovered that the resentment against these alterations in ritual was deep and universal and that the people now supported the clergy against the crown.

Opposition to the king's policy intensified. The new rules were widely disobeyed. Presbyterians deserted the churches that observed them while those churches which defied them were eagerly attended. Young men who had been educated for the ministry left Scotland or preached outside the churches rather than accept ordination by a bishop. The High Commission could not cope with the task of enforcement and wise bishops often did not try to implement the Articles. It had become clear that the spirit of the Melvilles was not dead and that Presbyterianism would reassert itself fully in Scotland at the first opportunity which opened for it.

It is surely ironic that the man who was to be foremost in the fight against prelacy and the Five Articles should himself have accepted the beginnings of James's new episcopacy and been presented to his first parish by one of the king's Archbishops. Like many a presentee in the later days of patronage Alexander Henderson found himself locked out.

when he came to Leuchars Kirk for his induction and he and his friends had to find their way in through a window. Probably this experience was the beginning of a change in his way of thinking. Some years later he heard Bruce preach on a text that was singularly appropriate to his own case: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). That sermon had its issue in a lasting conversion for Henderson and this great crisis of faith led to his support of the Presbyterian cause. 55 Henderson became a successful parish minister; in Church courts, and particularly in the General Assemblies that debated the Five Articles he became the leader of the opposition to the king and his bishops.

At the same time that James was imposing his Five Articles on the Church of Scotland a theological discussion of a different nature was coming to a head in Holland. For many years there had been a mounting tension in that country between the Calvinists who accepted the doctrine of predestination and the followers of the theologian Arminius who asserted instead the doctrine of the free will of men and speculated, daringly and not infrequently, sacrilegiously, on the essence of God and the limitations of His power. The discussion was one that interested James and he suggested that a conference be held, along the lines of the Hampton Court Conference, at which the two parties could present their points of view. To this Synod of Dort James sent delegates from the Church of England, 56 telling them to soften the Calvinist line, even though the

55 Loane, op. cit., p. 15.

56 As a result of James's church policy, the Scottish Kirk, which had clearly stated in the second "Book of Discipline" that there should be international Protestant Assemblies above national ones, was excluded from the Synod of Dort, which was the only seventeenth century council of this sort.
very calling of the Synod rendered the prospect of moderation unlikely.

The Anglo-Catholic party within the Church of England was sympathetic to the Arminians and it appeared that they had suffered a severe blow following the publication of the canons of Dort. But Arminianism in the English Church recovered quickly. The number of anti-Calvinists among the "upper clergy" increased rapidly and in 1621 Laud, who was to become the leader of English Arminianism, became bishop of St. David's. A number of points of controversy developed in the latter years of James's reign which pitted the Calvinism of the Puritans against the growing Arminianism of the Church of England. The Puritans had always emphasized preaching over against the Church of England's emphasis on the sacraments. It was one of the notable achievements of the Puritans under Elizabeth that they had succeeded in reviving preaching; as a result a certain amount of power fell to the Puritans since "those who hold the helm of the pulpit always steer people's hearts as they please." On the other hand, one of the great preoccupations of those in positions of authority was the curtailment of preaching and in 1622 James issued detailed regulations with regard to what might be preached from the pulpit.

The other issue was the Sabbatarian Controversy. The fundamental

57 The canons of the Synod of Dort may be summarized under what have become known as the Five Points of Calvinism - total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints. McNeill, op. cit., p. 265.

58 Tanner, op. cit., p. 49.

59 Willson, op. cit., pp. 400-401. This problem was another manifestation of the discussion on the matter of worship. The Puritans argued that no ceremonies might be imposed on worship which were not authorized by the Bible; the bishops, on the other hand, maintained that such ceremonies might be imposed by the authority of the Church, providing they were not in opposition to the spirit of Biblical teaching.
issue was between those who contended for the exclusive authority of the Bible and those who argued for the co-ordinate authority of the Church in matters of Sabbath observance. The Puritans claimed for Sunday the characteristics of the Jewish Sabbath and in this they were supported by the Commons who expelled one of its members over the question of dancing on Sunday. Once again, however, James opposed the Puritan position and issued a declaration on the subject which he commanded to be read in all churches. As a result no games were to be permitted until the people attended church, but after that they might have their lawful sports.60

As the end of his reign approached it appeared on the surface, at least, that James had succeeded in doing what he had set out to do. The government of the Church of Scotland had been changed and its ritual modified to conform to that of England; the Puritans within the English Church were subdued and the bishops in authority; the king was content with his achievements and the recognition of his supremacy. He knew his own strength and he never quite overstepped the mark in his dealings with the Church, particularly in Scotland. In 1625 James died and was succeeded by his son, Charles I. There was a world of difference between father and son in their attitudes to their bishops, whether English or Scottish. "For James I the consecrated and anointed king was God's shadow in his kingdom. He was...a learned man and could appreciate and value a learned prelate. For the rest it seems he took them as they came, noting that the Scots had this disadvantage that they had all been ministers of the Kirk".61 Charles, on the other hand, showed a sense of dependence on the judgments of his "fathers-in-God" in all religious matters. This

60 Willson, op. cit., p. 401.
61 Mathew, op. cit., p. 256.
was the High Church approach and was destined to lead to Laud, the loss of his own life, and the ultimate downfall of the Stuart dynasty.
IV

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

Charles I succeeded to his father's throne - and to his belief in the royal supremacy in all things. He was well-meaning, indeed even saintly, but not very clever. He took his father's ideas a good deal more seriously than the man who had gathered them. Charles was the first English sovereign after the Reformation who regarded the Church of England as the "almost perfect, divinely inspired pattern of what every Church should be". He accepted unquestioningly the claim of his bishops to apostolic authority and his own right to protect and guide them. He was prepared to die for his faith and he did.

In England, the people became alarmed at what they regarded as the resurgence of Popery under the influence of Queen Henrietta. This was seen in the cordial welcome extended to Papal nuncios and in the many proselytes who went over to the Church of Rome. The situation was only exacerbated in 1633 with the appointment of William Laud as Archbishop of Canterbury. James I had always retained a profound suspicion of Laud and it was against his better judgment that he raised him to the rank of bishop; now with his appointment to the top ecclesiastical position in the kingdom the first step was taken to Charles' downfall.

"Laud was personally blameless in life, vigilant in the discharge of duty, earnestly religious according to his light, devoted to his sovereign, almost the only one of his trusted counsellors who was above taking a bribe or using his power for purposes of mere favouritism or self-aggrandizement; but narrow-minded, unscrupulous, haughty, by no means free from irascibility and vindictiveness, blindly ritualistic and cruelly despotic. For years he was the king's most confidential advisor in State as well as in Church affairs....... in lieu of (the Puritans') ideal of regulated freedom (he set up) the system to which he himself gave the name of
THOROUGH - thorough absolutism in the State, thorough despotism in the Church. King and bishop held to the point of view that serious harm was being done to religion by the differences that had for so long been tolerated in regard to the minuter matters of ritual and church arrangement, and that there was no remedy to this situation but absolute submission and unreserved obedience to the king and to the injunctions issued by him through his counsellors. The result of this revival of persecution for nonconformity was to nourish the seeds of disaffection already existing in the English Church. Those who had difficulties with Laud's ceremonial or who held a Calvinistic theology in opposition to the bishop's Arminianism were haled before the Court of the High Commission; the more fortunate escaped to the continent, particularly to Holland, or decided to emigrate to the American colonies.

Both Charles and Laud wished to bring the Scottish Church into conformity with that in England. It seems fairly certain that their aims went even beyond that. It was difficult to make far-reaching changes in the Church of England without the consent of Parliament - but the English Parliament had not shown itself very much inclined to obey the king, and so, for eleven years he governed without it. But the Scottish Kirk and Parliament looked weaker and the king recalled their submissiveness in the days of his father. If the king could impose his will on the people of Scotland he might set a precedent which could be

1 Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 85-86

2 The Massachusetts-Bay charter was granted by the crown in 1629 and about 350 people, chiefly Independents, sailed in the first fleets. Under the Laudian persecution so many followed that it is reckoned that the New England settlements had drawn nearly half-a-million pounds sterling from the mother country before the English civil war.
followed in England later on. Here Charles and Laud were living in a dream world; although a Scot, by birth, Charles knew nothing about Scotland except what he had learned from his father. It is true that both Laud and he had visited the country twice and had seen the English Prayer Book and English ceremonies used in the chapel royal; it is true that the king had appointed as bishops in Scotland, young men who had English backgrounds and were Laud's disciples, but apart from this there was no real support for the king's ideas anywhere in the country, except possibly among the Aberdeen doctors. The Church of Scotland was still run and managed by its Kirk Sessions and presbyteries.

In 1635 Charles took another step towards his own destruction when he ratified the Book of Canons for the government of the Scottish Kirk. These laws had not been approved by either a Parliament or a General Assembly, they were a royal book of discipline imposed "by our Prerogative Royal and Supreme Authority" and based on the canons of the Church of England. In effect, these canons would have overturned the whole constitution of the Church of Scotland as it had been worked out by the General Assembly and approved by Parliaments. There was no provision for presbyteries, Kirk sessions or elders; General Assemblies were abolished and replaced by National Synods, which might have been their equivalent, but these gatherings were not able to alter the rules for the worship, doctrine or discipline of the Church as these would be laid down in a new Royal Book which was to be used at all services.

The Canons made little impact, although the more discerning in Scotland detected a drastic exercise of the royal power; the full explosion

3 Reid, op. cit., p. 65.
came in 1638 with the publication of the Scottish Book of Common Prayer. The new book was substantially the Church of England Prayer Book revised by the Scottish bishops in consultation with the king and Laud. Certain revisions were said to have been made to meet Scottish prejudices but the book was plainly less Protestant than the English one; with its elaborate set prayers and a full calendar of saints' days it was far removed from the Book of Common Order that had been in use in Scotland for nearly eighty years. The political implications behind these measures were far-reaching. The Canons required explicit acknowledgement of the royal supremacy and swept away the remaining framework of the Presbyterian church at which James had been chipping sporadically for years. Full power was given to the bishops. Those who rejected episcopacy or condemned the liturgy on Biblical grounds were threatened with excommunication - and all was done in striking defiance of the wishes of the people.

Well aware of the danger, the Scottish Privy Council advised the king not to attempt to impose a more rigid episcopacy on the country, in fact as well as in form, but Charles rejected the advice and censured the Council for its temerity in questioning his actions. He further commanded that no one should hold office in Scotland unless he became an Episcopalian. This was Charles at his most obstinate, inviting trouble; and it soon came. When the Prayer Book was used for the first time in St. Giles' a riot broke out and it soon became obvious that king and Kirk were on a collision course. At first the leaders of the nation limited themselves to formal protests against the bishops, but Charles retorted by accusing the people who opposed the bishops of rebellion against himself. In February, 1638 Alexander Henderson asked for a
national subscription of a common bond of faith and action. In itself this was not a new idea, James VI himself had subscribed the Covenant of 1581 in favour of the Reformation doctrines. The new covenant began by repeating the King's Confession of 1580 which had condemned Roman Catholic errors and "the usurped authority of that Roman antichrist upon the Scriptures of God, upon the Kirk, the civil magistrate and consciences of men; all his tyrannous laws made upon indifferent things against our Christian liberty". It then went on to mention the various Acts of Parliament which had established the Reformed faith and church government; finally, the subscribers bound themselves to maintain the freedom of the Church, to defend the Presbyterian religion, "and the King's majesty...... in the preservation of the foresaid true religion, liberties and laws of the kingdom". The National Covenant was signed by the leaders of Church and State on February 28, 1638. On hearing of it, Archbishop Spottiswoode of St. Andrews remarked: "We have been making a tub these forty years, and now the bottom thereof is fallen out." 

At first Charles pretended to yield and instructed Hamilton, his Commissioner in Scotland, to flatter the Scots with hopes, "your chief end being now to win time until I be ready to suppress them......I will rather die than yield to those impertinent and damnable demands." The Covenanters were not to be denounced as traitors until the king's fleet

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4 Loane, op. cit., p. 28.
5 See Appendix B.
6 The latter section of the National Covenant is given in Appendix C.
7 Douglas, op. cit., p. 25.
had set sail for Scotland. In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that no reconciliation was ever effected with a monarch who could resort to such blatant subterfuge. But the Covenant was not a rebellious docu-
ment. Charles's legal advisers in Scotland pointed out that the action of the Covenanters was not a contravention of law - more than sixty Acts of Parliament are cited in defence of the action. The General Assembly met in November to decide the question of the headship of the Scottish Church and when Hamilton declared the proceedings illegal the Assembly continued without royal consent. Henderson was elected Moderator and replied to the king's claim to control the Church with a defence of Christian liberty: "Whatsoever is ours we shall render it to His Majesty, even our lives, lands, liberties, and all; but for that which is God's, and the liberties of his House we do think, neither will his majesty's piety suffer him to crave, neither may we grant them, although he should crave it."9

War was now inevitable and the Scottish army made ready for battle. In England the king was without money. The English Parliament could have granted the money, but it had not met for ten years because of the king's determination to be sole ruler. Even when he did call the Short Parliament, it refused to vote the necessary supplies, so Charles promptly dissolved it again. The bishops, however, did come forward (under Laud's guidance) with large scale contributions, thus in England this became known as the Bishops' War. The Scots went forth under a banner bearing the motto "For Christ's Crown and Covenant".10 A settlement was reached


10 Smellie, op. cit., p. 134.
with the Pacification of Berwick, the terms of which made it clear that
the affairs of Church and State were now to be treated as one; it con-
formed the abolition of the Perth Articles, approved the abolition of
the Book of Canons and the Prayer Book, affirmed that the bishops were
answerable to the General Assembly and agreed that a General Assembly
and a national Parliament should meet at least each year. 11

Meanwhile, in England events were developing along parallel lines.
In 1640 a long list of theological and ecclesiastical grievances; known
as the Root and Branch petition, was presented to Parliament by the
people of London and the surrounding counties 12 and it was followed by
numerous other appeals for reformation and for a synod to redress eccles-
iastical complaints. In 1641 the House of Commons presented the king
with the Grand Remonstrance drawing attention to the various grievances
and again calling for a synod to deal with them.

"And the better to effect the intended reformation, we desire there
may be a general synod of the most grave, pious, learned and jud-
icious divines of this island; assisted with some from foreign
parts, professing the same religion with us, who may consider all
things necessary for the peace and good government of the Church,
and represent the results of their consultations unto the Parlia-
ment, to be there allowed of and confirmed, and receive the stamp
of authority, thereby to find passage and obedience throughout the
kingdom." 13

The following year Parliament began the selection of the members of the
prospective Assembly and a bill was introduced in the House of Commons
calling, officially for the Assembly, a bill from which the king with-

11 Loane, op. cit., p. 37.
12 Haller, op. cit., pp. 324 ff.
13 Quoted in J. H. Leith: Assembly at Westminster. Reformed Theo-
held his approval.

That same year the English Civil War broke out and both sides sought the help of the Scots, who were still camped in the north of England following the second Bishops' War. Although divided among themselves on the issue, the Scots were largely favourable to the Parliamentary side. When Vane, Nye and Marshall journeyed to Edinburgh as advocates of the Parliament they also brought with them a request that the General Assembly should send delegates to the Westminster Assembly of Divines. With the approval of the Scottish Estates, the General Assembly put forward the Solemn League and Covenant as the condition of an alliance and at the same time they accepted the invitation to send representatives to the Assembly. 14

The subscribers to the Solemn League and Covenant were to bind themselves to preserve the Reformed religion in Scotland and to secure in England and Ireland a reform in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the "Word of God and the example of the best Reformed Churches". As Douglas rightly observes, "it is incredible that the lynx-eyed Presbyterians did not spot the surreptitious monkey-wrench which had been cunningly slipped into the works." 15 To the Scots the phrase in question had only one meaning: Reformation according to the Word of God would necessarily result in the adoption of Presbyterianism; they could not imagine that it might convey something different to the English Puritans - the possibility of Independency. This was the first difficulty the Scottish delegates encountered when they came to West-

14 Loane, op. cit., pp. 42-43
15 Douglas, op. cit., p. 32.
minster and then they could not change their patterns of thought or undo what they and their predecessors had brought about in their national life. The Covenant also bound its subscribers to seek the extirpation of Popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy and schism, to defend the privileges of Parliament and the person and authority of the king (this last an important point in the light of future English actions).

The die was now cast. The next six years saw the Civil War with the balance of power swinging to the Parliament except, for a time, in Scotland where the romantic adventures of Montrose continued to hold out some hope for the king; the rise of Cromwell and his ultimate victory with its end product, the execution of Charles; the renunciation of the Solemn League and Covenant by the English; the increasing strength of Independency, backed by Cromwell and the New Model Army; and the tragedy of the fall of English Presbyterianism at the moment of its apparent triumph in the publication of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

I THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES

The Westminster Assembly began deliberations in July, 1643 and continued its work until its final plenary session in February, 1649. Over the next three years members of the Assembly met occasionally to examine and license candidates for the ministry. The evaluation of the

16 This fact was brought home to the Scots by the small group of Independents who exercised an influence out of all proportion to their numerical strength in the Assembly. The original group was made up of Goodwin, Nye, Simpson, Burroughes and Bridge, but they were joined later by others. See W. Haller: Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution, Columbia University Press, New York, 1955, p. 114. (Hereafter referred to as: Liberty and Reformation).
Assembly's membership has varied though the majority of critics have spoken highly of the delegates. John Milton adopted a negative attitude, but Richard Baxter remarked: "As far as I am able to judge by the information of all history of that kind, and by any other evidences left us, the Christian world, since the days of the apostles, had never a synod of more excellent divines than this and the Synod of Dort." It is true that the Assembly did not include any theologian whose brilliance would entitle him to a great place in the history of Christian thought, but it is also true that its membership was composed of highly competent men who were able to draw together and utilize the teaching and the theological work of the period since the Reformation. For the most part they were preachers and teachers who wrote treatises and pamphlets rather than major theological works, and on this level they were unsurpassed.

Typical of the delegates were men like Tuckney, Arrowsmith and Marshall. Nor must we forget that not all the members were ministers; there were also a number of laymen, among whom Selden, generally recognized as one of the most learned men of the age and an expert Hebraist, was the most prominent. The Church of Scotland, while not having actual membership in the Assembly, did have commissioners present throughout and these included such men as Henderson, Gillespie, Rutherford and Baillie.

It has to be recognized that the major parties and affiliations within the country were reflected in the membership of the Assembly.  

18 Ibid., pp. 45-46.
First, there were the Presbyterians who had led the attack on absolutism and dominated the early phase of the struggle with the king. No longer militarily strong, the Presbyterians still commanded a majority in Parliament and looked for the establishment of its polity through the work of the Assembly. But English Presbyterianism must not be confused with Scottish. The Presbyterian party in Parliament still relied on the Erastians to make its majority effective and many of its members were themselves Erastian. They wanted a national church on Presbyterian lines, but a church that would be controlled by the state. "The Presbyterians wished to limit the objectives of the revolution: to assert the effectual sovereignty not of the people but of Parliament, and to preserve at all costs the sanctity of property, whether real, personal, or political (the historic rights of the Crown and the material possessions of the Church alone excepted). The monarchy, shorn of its power, they would cherish in the interests of a lasting settlement - an assurance that the revolution had not been so very revolutionary after all, and a guarantee that it should go no further." 20 The Independents agreed with the spirit of the civil policy of the Presbyterians but were alarmed that it should be joined with an ecclesiastical point of view that was so different from their own. They were the heirs of the Presbyterians' former military ascendency, and between winning victories and opposing the Scots they were sometimes able to win a majority in Parliament. Independency, with its ideal of an exclusive and divinely appointed church, was of course opposed to Erastianism, but their opposition to Presbyterian clericalism was even greater and so

from time to time the Independents were forced to forget their principles and seek the help of the Erastians in Parliament. Partly through force of circumstances and partly through a development of their own basic doctrines the Independents became the party of toleration, a fact that gave them a tremendous advantage outside Parliament for it enabled them to draw support from the army. As time went on the rift between Independents and Presbyterians in ecclesiastical matters spread also to the question of the civil settlement. There were other smaller sects within the country but these were not represented at Westminster. There the majority of representatives were Presbyterian but the Independents though small in numbers were vocal and could not be overlooked in the debates.

The work of the Assembly began with the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles. By October fifteen Articles had been revised but this work was brought to an end by the signing of the Solemn League and Covenant which gave the Assembly new tasks. Attention was now centred on the form of church government, which was not only a critical necessity for a unified society but also the issue on which the Assembly was most divided.

The Scottish commissioners naturally argued in favour of Presbyterianism. English Presbyterianism had been amorphous, and loose in its ideas with the result that the distinction between it and Congregationalism had not been clear cut. But now Independency was hardening into a more rigorous congregational doctrine and the Scots, fighting tooth and nail against the Independents, succeeded in bringing the English Presbyterians and some Episcopalians round to their way of thinking. In some matters, however, such as the nature of the elder’s office, they were nearer to the Independents than to their English allies. It was in the matter of the ascending courts of the church that they fell foul of the
Independents. Many of the English divines were reluctant to admit "lay" elements to the ecclesiastical courts - but the Scots pointed out that there was no such thing as a lay elder. Ordination did not have a sacramental value for men like Gillespie and Rutherford; it was a setting apart to an office. Elders and ministers were alike ordained servants of the Church, but ordained to different functions, one to preach and the other to rule.

Baillie wrote that the people of England conceived of Presbyterianism as a "strange monster", which was hardly surprising since it embraced every shade of opinion from primitive Episcopalian to near Independent. The reasons for the fixity of the Scottish and the fluidity of the English form of Presbyterianism are obvious. The former was modelled on the French Protestant Church and despite James's attempts at establishing an episcopate had years of national working experience; the latter went back through Cartwright and Travers to a more purely Genevan theory - and it was only a theory, for neither Elizabeth nor James had given it an opportunity to become established. Cartwright had to defer to the dictates of the state and his followers lived as far as they could in conformity with the Church of England and evaded as far as possible ceremonies that were abhorrent to the Puritan or Presbyterian principles. Furthermore, dispersion and isolation added to the great variety of concepts of church government which Presbyterianism in England shared. It was this amorphous, anti-prelatical form of Presbyterianism that the Scots tried to mould into an ideal system. And here the Scottish representatives were aware that they would have to make some concessions,

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even though past experience had shown them the difficulty of such a task. Prior to the debate on Presbytery, Henderson, the wisest and most diplomatic of the Scots published a pamphlet entitled "The Reformation of Church Government in Scotland cleared from some Mistakes and Prejudices". It was moderate, reasoned and conciliatory to the former Church of England men.

"We do upon every good reason judge the Church of England in the midst of her 'Ceremonies' to have been a true Church and the ministry thereof, notwithstanding the many blemishes and corruptions cleaving unto it, to have been a true ministry and shall never deny unto them that praise whether in debating controvers[ies] with Papists, or in practical divinity for private Christians which they do most justly deserve. Upon the other part we are neither so ignorant as to ascribe to the Church of Scotland such absolute purity and perfection as hath not need or cannot admit of further Reformation." 22

It is obvious that the Scots were learning to be more tactful and to appreciate the good in other communions.

A natural development of the question of church government was the matter of church discipline. The debate began with the proposition "Pastors and teachers have power to enquire and judge who are fit to be admitted to the sacraments or kept from them, as also who are to be excommunicated or absolved from that censure", 23 and here the Presbyterians found themselves opposed by the two other parties - the Independents and the Erastians. The opposition of the Independents was of a political rather than of a theological nature. They feared the use of excommunication as a weapon in Presbyterian hands and they were also anxious to win Parliamentary support. The Erastians admitted the power of excommunication but placed it in the hands of the civil authorities.

23 Ibid., p. 62.
point of view was put forward by the learned Selden who held forth at
great length but his arguments were more than ably answered by Gillespie
whose speech was not only enough to convince the Assembly but also
confound Selden himself.24

It was Gillespie who gave the word "Erastian" its modern meaning.
Erastus himself was chiefly concerned with the repudiation of excommuni-
cation as a disciplinary weapon of the Church and only secondarily with
the magistrate's possible part in such action. Those who opposed the
Presbyterian doctrine of excommunication at Westminster did so for vary-
ing reasons - the Independents for political ends, the Hebraists for
conscientious reasons - but both angled for Parliamentary support, and
got it to the extent that the Parliament did intrude on the Assembly's
right of free debate and on the Church's claim to free discipline. So
the question of excommunication raised the whole matter of State control.
The State held the Erastian view on the matter of excommunication; it
was but a step, then, to call those who supported the State's claim to
control all ordinances Erastian - and so the word got its new meaning.25

The debates in the Assembly on Excommunication were tempestuous.
The "Humble Advice" regarding suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's
Supper, and the Directory for Excommunication which the divines presented
to Parliament early in 1645 were rejected.26 The Commons claimed the

24 After Gillespie's speech the Erastian leader is reported to have
said: "That young man, by this single speech, has swept away the learn-
ing and labour of ten years of my life". The full story is given in

25 No one flung the epithet more viciously at his opponents than did
Gillespie and no one seems to have used the right of excommunication more
often either. He was a lover of this weapon of authority and was most
bitter against those who denied it.

26 Campbell, op. cit., p. 107.
right to prescribe which sins rendered suspension justifiable and asserted their further right to hear pleas against any such suspension. In reply the Assembly petitioned Parliament claiming jure divino, the Church's age-old right to suspend from the sacrament, and asserted that the State had no authority in this matter. Some minor concessions were granted but apparently the majority of the members of the Assembly had caught something of the spirit of Gillespie for they were not content with this compromise and pressed for fuller satisfaction. 27 As a result the Assembly was publicly rebuked by Parliament and its "advice" voted a breach of privilege. The right to control excommunication was never surrendered by the English civil authority; the list of censurable offences was enlarged but appeal was still allowed and provincial civil commissioners were appointed to try cases not in those categories.

At the same time as the question of excommunication was being discussed the Assembly was also debating Chapter XXX of the Confession: Of Church Censures. 28 The passing of this section of the Confession was a great triumph for the Scottish commissioners. Even the Independents had to vote against the Erastians on this point for not even for the sake of a political alliance with the State could they abandon their own principles of religious freedom. The importance of this matter to the Scots can be clearly seen in a speech 29 made before the Assembly by Johnston of Wairiston:

27 Neither Baillie, who was inclined to be timid, nor Henderson, who was always diplomatic, thought this course of action safe or wise.

28 "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate".

29 Douglas, op. cit., pp. 41-42.
"That is before you which concerns Christ and these kingdoms...... which will be the chiefest means to end or continue these troubles......I am convinced they have a higher rise, from and for the highest end, the setting up of the Crown of Christ in these islands......until King Jesus be set down on His throne, with His sceptre in His hand, I do not expect God’s peace......in these kingdoms......Christ lives and reigns alone in His Church, and will have all done therein according to His Word and will, and that He has given no supreme headship over His Church to any Pope, King or Parliament whatsoever......we hear much of the breach of privilege and of the Covenant in relation to the civil right. Let us remember......the Covenant begins with the advancement and ends with the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ......All laws contrary to the will of Christ are acknowledged to be void in His Kingdom......there is no authority to be balanced against His, nor posts to be set up against His, nor Korahs to be allowed against His Aarons......is it so small a thing to have the sword, but they must have the keys also?"

Assertions that Christ was the only universal bishop and head of the Church had been made in other confessions, 30 and the Scots were determined that Westminster should not depart from this principle. "We must not edge away an hem of Christ's robe royal", stated Johnston on another occasion.

A prolonged pamphlet "war" was carried on by the protagonists in the excommunication debate. The Erastians were represented mainly by Coleman, Selden, Prynne and Lightfoot while the Scots and the ministers of London wrote on behalf of the other members of the Assembly. Rutherford opened the conflict with his "The Divine Right of Church Government and Excommunication" in which he attempted to answer everything the Erastians had said or were going to say. 31 A bitter and vindictive paper

30 This position had been taken in the First Helvetic Confession (1536) and then reaffirmed in the French Confession (1559), the Scots Confession (1560) and the Belgic Confession (1561).

31 "The intellectual Erastianism of Hooker, the ecclesiastical Erastianism of Erastus, the political Erastianism of Prynne, were tenaciously and tediously connoted, confuted and condemned, along with the semi-Erastian principles of the Aberdeen Doctors whipped in for good measure." Campbell, op. cit., p. 108.
war followed. The chief work in this debate was Gillespie's "Aaron's Rod Blossoming" which apparently was the last word on the subject since none of the Erastians attempted to answer it. The London ministers had obviously been converted to the Scottish point of view on the subject for their written works assert dogmatically what they had been teaching and preaching for a number of years and much that English Presbyterianism had never dared to claim.

The Scots may have been mistaken in some of their supporting contentions, but they were absolutely right in their assertion of the spiritual freedom of the Church. According to modern conceptions, however, they appear in a much less favourable light when they came to consider the religious freedom of the individual, even though there is merit in their point of view.

Prior to the mid-seventeenth century toleration was regarded as a sign of weakness but by the time of the Westminster Assembly the climate of public opinion was beginning to change. As we have already mentioned, the Independents became the party of toleration within the Assembly though it is sometimes difficult to discern what was their ultimate ecclesiastical policy and goal. It is likely that they would have welcomed an established Independency similar to that in New England where the government had granted them wide powers of discipline and many local privileges without endowing them, but in order to secure toleration the Independents, in 1644, had to widen their claims in order to gain Army support.

32 "Often at Westminster their attitude seems purely and simply 'dog in the manger', and Nye, the opportunist, tied his party so tightly to Cromwell's chariot wheels that their policy became identical with the Army's". Campbell, op. cit., p. 114.
The Heads of the Proposals issued in August, 1647, implied the establishment of Presbyterianism but permitted freedom of worship for all who differed with this form of Church government. A few months later the Agreement of the People first claimed "absolute freedom on the matter of Religion and the ways of God's Worship" and then proceeded to concede that the State might set up "some public way of instructing the nation so it be not compulsive". As a result the Independency which the Scots had feared was all but accomplished; it was only a matter of a short time till it was fulfilled under Cromwell.

The aim of the Church of Scotland commissioners and their Presbyterian allies was "to tie Toleration round the neck of the Independents, stuff the two struggling monsters into one sack and sink them in the bottom of the sea." But the Independent monster refused to drown, rather, with the rising favour in which it was held by the Army it swam the more strongly. When Toleration became the dogma of the Army, Independency became safe. Rutherford saw it as the means of destroying religious life in England and as eventually threatening Scotland too. Calvin had defined conscience as "a sense of divine judgment" and Rutherford expounded this in such a way as to remove any connection with a doctrine of the Inner Light. For him conscience was a power of understanding by which a man was obliged to give judgment on himself, his state and conditions, his actions, inclinations, thoughts and words. Thus it could be disciplined and informed and was not an entirely free agent dictating a man's religious beliefs. It was subject to the proper

33 Campbell, op. cit., p. 114.
34 Inst. III. 19. 15.
inculcation of the Word of God and it was the duty of the Church and State to correct erring consciences.

For the Presbyterian the agent of correction was the Synod of the Church. The Synod interpreted the Word of God for its members - but at this point in his argument Rutherford was in a quandary on account of the traditional Protestant hesitancy to declare synods infallible. How could a synod composed of fallible men infallibly correct error in other men? Here Rutherford came near to a doctrine of synodical infallibility - and it was really no answer to assert, in answer to this charge, that when the synod commanded anything contrary to the Word of God, men need not obey; the question still remained: who is to judge what is contrary?

The magistrate had a duty to help the Church in the elimination of error. He did not compel a subject into the true faith, but he was a trustee of it and by rooting out false beliefs he created the healthy atmosphere in which true religion could flourish. When the argument proceeds along these lines, what was planned as a Confession of Faith is in danger of becoming more and more a means of searching out and removing the evils of heresy. But Rutherford does not suggest that the magistrate is to punish false religion as religion. The magistrate punishes in order to strengthen the civil order. Such views of the function of the civil magistrate are part and parcel of the whole ecclesiastico-political theory of the period. The magistrate was God's vicegerent and as such stood on a special level above the officers of the Church. To us today it strikes an unreal note since it is based on the assumption that the magistrate is a God-fearing man and has a due awareness of what

35 Westminster Confession XXIII. 3:
is involved in being the representative of God.

Again, Rutherford does not recognize the existence of religious minorities; they have no place in his scheme of things and so do not constitute a problem for him. And this was one of the few points on which Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians were agreed. To Rutherford the issue was clear: "Indulgence in non-fundamentals, not in facts, is a vain distinction.......false teachers in both cases may justly be put to death." 36

II RUTHERFORD'S "LEX REX"

Rutherford has always remained a paradox to his critics and he even referred to himself as a man of extremes. 37 Today he is known chiefly for the letters he wrote, most of them while in prison in Aberdeen, and it would be hard to find a greater contrast between those letters 38 and the other work for which he is most famous, "Lex Rex". 39 The book is a plea for the majesty of the people and a declaration that limitless sovereignty is the property of God alone. It is directed against the absolutism of the Stuarts who held that by a "free monarchy" is meant a king who is above the law and not bound by any laws of constitutional obligation.

36 Douglas, op. cit., p. 56.

37 Loane, op. cit., p. 85.

38 Buchan speaks of "the oriental lusciousness of Samuel Rutherford", a description that is surely true of his letters but not of his other works. Buchan, op. cit., p. 54.

39 The book first appeared in 1644 and produced a national sensation. It quickly became the handbook of the Scottish Covenanters and the Independents in England. Charles I confessed that it was never likely to get an answer.
There is a distinction between the man who is king and the royal office of the king, and this was a distinction which the later Covenanters were to observe carefully. The kingly office is from God, but the people are the true rulers. They can delegate authority to an individual (such as James or Charles) selecting whom they will. It follows, then, that if the people have this authority they have a right to modify it, limit it or even withdraw it if the conditions under which it was bestowed have been broken. The king has his own special privileges but the commonwealth is more important than the king. By his very office he is obliged to expend himself, and, if need be, sacrifice himself for the safety of his subjects.

Rutherford affirms that the people are to "suffer much before they resume their power". There is no question of people making martyrs of themselves on the slightest provocation as was to be the case in some of the later covenanters. The person who, on principle, consistently makes disobedience to Caesar an obligation to God, and backs it up with appropriate Scriptural texts, is doing a great disservice to Christianity.

Despite the opposition of the Stuarts, Knox, Buchanan and Melville all agreed that on the question of the obedience owed by the people to the civil authority the power of the king is restricted and that his authority has bounds within which it should be kept. Rutherford points out that the king is the trustee for the people whom God, by their own choice, has committed to him. He is to administer the law, not make, break or dispense with it, nor enforce his own private interpretation of it. Interpretation of the law is a matter for civil judges who are directly responsible to God (and not to the king) for their administ-
ration of the law. Monarchy, asserts Rutherford, is the worst of all possible forms of government, though he later qualifies this statement by saying: "A limited and mixed monarchy........seems to me the best government, when parliaments, with the king have the good of all the three. 40 This government hath glory, order, unity, from a monarch; from the government of the most and wisest, it hath safety of counsel, stability, strength; from the influence of the commons it hath liberty, privileges, promptitude of obedience." 41 The people can refuse their obedience to the king in matters that are unlawful. "When the king defendeth not true religion but presseth upon the people a false and idolatrous religion, in that they are not under the king, but are presumed to have no king and.......have the power in themselves." 42

In the same way that the people cannot yield their liberties to the king, so too they cannot give them up to Parliament. The power of Parliament, like the power of the king, is fiduciary. If it should abuse that power the people can annul its acts. Since the king's power is from the people it is for the people to say what the limits are of the power which they entrust to their rulers and to resume that power if need be. Interestingly enough, Rutherford does not say how this should be done and whether armed rebellion is justifiable to achieve it.

There are limits to this freedom of the people, however. The fact that the people as a collective entity should have their way does not mean that the individual person may do and think as he will. Here Rutherford is skating on thin ice. What constitutes a collective entity?

40 "All the three" i.e. monarchy, aristocracy and democracy.
42 Ibid., p. 53.
Do the people ever really speak with one voice? It is true that an attempt had been made to have everyone sign the National Covenant in 1638 and if that had been enforced it would have been possible to speak of a nominal unanimity but in fact that would not have been the case since, a number of them would have been coerced. Buchanan had dealt with this problem by saying that legislation should not be entrusted to the multitude but that selected men of all ranks should meet with the king in council after which their proposals should be referred to the whole people who, in a form of plebiscite, would confirm or deny their decisions. Rutherford concludes, rather unsatisfactorily, with a discussion of the superiority of a majority of quality over a merely numerical majority.

Much of what Rutherford had to say has become common place in modern times but it can easily be seen why the Stuart kings (and even the English Parliament) took such a dislike to it. In his book were statements that were to take on tremendous relevance, particularly during the next half-century in Scotland:

"The law is not the king's own, but is given him in trust...... the king may not dispose of men as men, as he pleaseth...... my life and religion, and so my soul, in some cases, are committed to the king, as to a public watchman, even as the flock to the feeder, the city to the watchmen, and he may betray it to the enemy.

Power is a birthright of the people borrowed from them; they may let it out for their good, and resume it when a man is drunk with it." 44

Rutherford's book was one of the ablest pleas in defence of a constitutional form of government and one of the few great works on political

43 Willson, op. cit., p. 37.
44 Douglas, op. cit., p. 55.
science that Scotland has produced. At the Restoration in 1661 the Government called in all copies of "Lex Rex" and Rutherford was cited to answer the charge of treason and only ill-health prevented his death on the scaffold. Nor was this the only way in which he was abused. His contempt for the more popular form of ecclesiastical government of the Independents earned him the anger of such men as John Milton who pilloried his name for ever in his poem "On the Forcers of Conscience." 45 No doubt his "Free Disputation" deserves condemnation, and while Milton's poem was written in the heat of the controversy of the Assembly, it should still serve as a warning to all theologians.

III THE THEOLOGY OF THE ASSEMBLY

By the time of the Westminster Assembly the theological situation in England and Scotland was closely involved with the political. Laud and the High Church party had adopted the Arminian theology and as a

45 Because you have thrown off your Prelate lord,
   And with stiff vows renounced his Liturgy,
   To seize the widowed whore Plurality
   From them whose sin ye envied, not abhored,
Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword
   To force our consciences that Christ set free,
   And ride us with a Classic Hierarchy,
   Taught ye by mere A.S. and Rutherford?
Men whose life, learning, faith and pure intent
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul
Must now be named and printed heretics
By shallow Edwards and Scotch What d'ye call.
   But we do hope to find out all your tricks;
   Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent,
   That so the Parliament
May, with their wholesome and preventive shears,
Clip your phylacteries, though baulk your ears,
   And succour our just fears,
When they shall read this clearly in your charge
   NEW PRESBYTER is but old PRIEST writ-large.
reaction the severer Puritans had taken up a supralapsarian position though there were still a number of moderates who held infralapsarian views. Laud's greatest opponents were Calvinists, and the deeper their Calvinism the greater their opposition. In all this complicated picture there were two bodies of men who held Arminian or semi-Arminian views as a result of their own independent studies and completely detached from the political situation. These were the Cambridge Platonists and the Aberdeen Doctors. At Cambridge men like More, Whichcote and Cudworth came to their more liberal theology through the study of ancient philosophy; in Aberdeen Forbes and his colleagues arrived at much the same conclusions through an unbiased study of biblical sources and less reference to ecclesiastical systems.

The first task the Westminster divines tackled was the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. Since Arminianism was the creed of the High Churchmen it was determined to bring the Articles more in line with the Lambeth Articles or the Irish Articles, drawn up by Ussher, which were more Calvinist in doctrine. With the arrival of the Scottish commissioners, however, this task was left in abeyance while the Confession of Faith was formulated. By and large the English looked on the Confession as a test of orthodoxy as much as a Confession of Faith; for the Scots it was also an instrument of ecclesiastical unity for the two nations. The attitude of the Assembly to the prevailing theological systems soon became clear—Arminianism was to be anathematized, Amyrldism ostracized and a convenient formula found

46 The Irish Articles were used as a basis for the subsequent Confession of Faith, cf. Campbell, op. cit., p. 138.

47 Amyrldism takes its name from Moses Amyraut, a pupil of John
to embrace the two standpoints of Calvinism.

Most previous reformed confessions began with the doctrine of God; the Westminster Confession's first chapter deals with Holy Scripture. By placing Scripture first in their schematic order the divines emphasized the authoritative source of their doctrine as opposed to the Roman or Anglican appeals to tradition. Parliament showed the same reverence for Scriptural authority when they ordered Scriptural "proofs" to be appended to every chapter of the Confession. The doctrine set forth in this chapter is the Reformed doctrine of the sufficiency, authority and infallibility of the Word of God. The canon is defined and its adequacy under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to determine all matters of faith and conduct is asserted.

The great question which has been continually asked is whether the Confession adopts a supralapsarian or an infralapsarian point of view. The predominant theology must be said to be supralapsarian though it is so written that an infralapsarian could subscribe it. The third chapter (of God's Eternal Decree) asserts absolute predestination from all eternity. Attempts were made to add the words "in the same decree" to the phrase "and others fore-ordained to everlasting death" but, as Rutherford pointed out, this was already implicit in the section. The relevant

Cameron, the Professor of Divinity at Saumur in the early part of the seventeenth century. Amyraut maintained that, along with the actual decrees of particular election and reprobation, there was a universal will of grace which was unapplied because of the sin and apostasy of fallen man. This will of grace remained in the divine idea. Christ's death was sufficient for all, but not applied or available to all, because so many were reprobate. The doctrine was really a speculative attempt to soften supralapsarianism and introduce a quality of mercy into it. It was condemned in the Swiss Formula Consensus of 1675 but had many supporters in England including Davenant and Ward the English theologians who had attended the Synod of Dort.

48 Leith, op. cit., p. 62.
49 Westminster Confession, 1.6.
part of the chapter then reads:

"God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

(2) Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

(3) By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto eternal life; and others fore-ordained to everlasting death."

In the same debate the Amyraldian view was turned down; attempts were made to have a qualifying clause appended to the phrase "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ...........but the elect only", but even the phrase used at Dort, "sufficiently for all", was ruled out and Christ was held to have died for the elect only. They also rejected the doctrine of praeterition, that God passed by the non-elect and adamantly insisted on "fore-ordained to everlasting death".

In their consideration of God's dealing with men the Assembly adopted a federal theology. This had not appeared systematically in any previous Confession but Bullinger had made use of the idea and it had been taught in England by Peter Martyr at Oxford, Martin Bucer at Cambridge and John à Lasco in London and by the time of the Assembly there was a growing literature on the subject including the writings of William Perkins. This covenant theology is set forth in Chapter VII. In many ways the whole idea of "covenant" was one that was alive for the divines. They knew of the National Covenant between men of one faith to free their nation; they were sworn to the Solemn League and Covenant.

50 Westminster Confession, III.6.
between neighbouring nations and so it was not unnatural that they should state the relationship between God and man in a similar way. In more ways than as a reaction to Episcopacy or Arminianism the standards of the Assembly were influenced by the politics of the time.

The main body of the Confession (Chapters X to XVIII) deal with the evangelical doctrines of justification, adoption, sanctification, saving faith, good works and the assurance of salvation and on these matters there was little disagreement. The remaining chapters deal with the Church, the State and the Sacraments. On this latter question there was again little discussion. The doctrine of the Lord’s Supper in the Reformed churches asserts clearly the spiritual presence of Jesus Christ in the sacrament and this is the teaching of the Westminster Confession. At this time there was no difference of any importance between the Anglican and the Presbyterian position, it was only in later years that the great sacramental gulf came to be fixed between the two communions.

It was the formulation of the doctrine of Church and State, as we have seen, that brought the Assembly into bitter dispute with the Parliament. The Protestant distinction between the visible and the invisible Church is clearly stated and the headship of Christ over His Church is unambiguously declared. When the Confession was eventually approved by Parliament as “Articles of the Christian Religion” lip service was paid to this doctrine by retaining Chapter XXV in which it was stated, but Chapters XXX (Of Church Censures), XXI (Of Synods and Councils), the fourth paragraph of Chapter XX which related Christian liberty to the power of the civil magistrate, and parts of Chapter XXIV dealing with marriage and divorce, were all omitted. 51 Parliament may have

51 Leith, op. cit., p. 62.
shared the basic theological convictions of the Confession but it is clear there was no consensus of opinion as to the nature of the Church and the relationship of Church and State or even society in general.

The Westminster Confession of Faith may have been the work of an English Assembly advised by Scottish commissioners, and a fair summary of the theological consensus among British Protestants, but it never played a significant role in English Protestantism. The Confession was tied to the fate of the Form of Presbyterian Church Government and the Directory for Public Worship and much of the Assembly's work in this direction was simply unacceptable to the Episcopalians and the Independents, not to speak of the Parliament. There was greater unanimity about the Confession, but in the end its real influence was restricted to the Church of Scotland and the dissenting churches in England and the New World.

Why did the Westminster Assembly fail to shape the future of the Christian community in England? Many reasons could be given but certainly one of the most important was the difference between the post-Reformation Christian experience in England and Scotland:

"The Scottish commissioners came to Westminster speaking what seemed the same language but......with meaning drawn from a very different national experience......Unlike the English, Scottish reformers had worked out their ideas in the course of a long struggle in an unstable society with a regime at once more arbitrary and less secure. They had contended for nearly a hundred years not simply for freedom to preach but for control of the church itself and through the church for freedom to impose discipline and unity upon a whole nation. English Puritans, though there was no telling how many or with what reservations, might agree in principle that the church was to be acknowledged as an independent kingdom of the spirit in which sovereignty had been vested by Christ in his people and to which civil rulers like other men were subject. Scottish Presbyterians, however, had actually worked out a system of government and discipline embodying this principle, and recent Scottish history was,
filled with the ups and downs of their endeavour to put the system into effect. 52

Religious pluralism was becoming a fact of life in England and the developing political situation permitted different denominations to acquire sufficient power to protect themselves in some degree. Out of this situation was to develop the modern concepts of denominationalism and tolerance. Furthermore, although Parliament had put down the bishops in Scotland it was unwilling to erect a new independent church organization that would be capable of defying Parliament itself. Erastianism was still very much alive in England. "Neither national experience nor the developing political events, neither the rise of Cromwell nor the later restoration of Charles II favoured the Presbyterians or the work of the Westminster Assembly." 53

52 Haller: Liberty and Reformation, pp. 103-104.
53 Leith, op. cit., p. 64.
CONCLUSION

Theology is in part determined by its historical context. By the mid-sixteenth century the critical issues of the Protestant faith had been fought for and won and so Protestant theology faced the tasks of consolidation, clarification and elaboration. Such tasks arise out of the nature of theology itself; during the initial religious experience words may be used without careful definition but if a movement is to survive it must formulate precisely what it believes and what it is saying and how the various parts of the total experience fit together.

There were also external forces which contributed to this new task that faced the Protestant churches after 1560. The Canons of the Council of Trent provided Roman Catholicism with theological definitions that were, for the most part precise and exact and as a result Protestant theology was forced to give greater care and attention to the technical aspects of its own doctrines. By the time of Calvin's death in 1564 biblical exegesis was beginning to give way to a restored Aristotelianism for Protestantism was beginning to see the weapons of the Counter Reformation. "Sound learning, bonae litterae, could no longer enjoy the freedom and enthusiasm of the thirties of the sixteenth century: the polemic period of Protestant scholasticism now appearing showed less interest in both the classical humanism and the biblical humanism of the earlier period."

It was Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, who, without

intending it, began shifting the balance in the Reformer's work. Calvin was not a doctrinaire Presbyterian and he did not disapprove of episcopacy; under Beza disciplined Presbyterianism was urged upon other churches as a polity claiming divine sanction. He further urged a political ideology that tended to republicanism or at least a limited monarchy, and while Calvin insisted on obedience to the civil magistrate it was Beza who introduced the principle of resistance to tyrannous princes. Beza hardened the earlier method of scriptural exegesis until he had made Scripture a corpus of revelation that was almost propositional in form with every part equal to the other parts in inspiration, thereby encouraging a literalism in the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. He taught supralapsarianism, the view that God decreed from before Creation everything relating to man's future, including his fall and total depravity, and the limited nature of Christ's Atonement. These were points on which Calvin always retained a certain imprecision, refusing to become too systematic, too logical or too precise in discussing God's purposes.

When Calvin's theological principles crossed the English Channel they found a ready home in both England and Scotland and Calvinism quickly became the "official" theology of the churches in both realms. Like other continental ideas, however, they suffered modification. In England both Whitgift and Cartwright claimed that Calvin would have

2 It was unfortunate that English refugees in Geneva wrote and printed pamphlets attacking government by queens and implying the need for armed rebellion. The result of this was that Elizabeth disliked Geneva and everyone and everything connected with it. Calvin had held that the subject must not rebel against his prince but seek exile or martyrdom; it was a bitter irony that after 1560 his theological work was distrusted by the English Crown and that he was regarded as a republican and an instigator of rebellion.
agreed with their point of view in the Admonition Controversy, but Cartwright's position is interesting: "We receive M. Calvin, and weigh of him, as of the noblest instrument that the Lord hath stirred up for the purging of His Churches, and of the restoring of the plain and sincere interpretation of the Scriptures, which hath been since the Apostles' time. And yet we do not so read his works, that we believe anything to be true because he saith it, but so far as we can esteem that which he saith doth agree with the canonical scriptures". Independently of one another Cartwright and Melville were fashioning their doctrines of the two kingdoms which was a departure from the Calvinist position, Travers was declaring Presbyterianism to be the only scriptural form of Church government, Perkins was adopting the Bezan position, all movements to the right of Calvin's own position and which were to have their end in the controversial writings of Toplady, or in Jonathan Edward's "The Freedom of the Will", or the Five Points of the Synod of Dort - the ultimate expression of the extreme form of scholastic Calvinism, which broke the unity of Calvin's theology and replaced his biblical dynamism by a series of formulae.

This changing theology is reflected in the Confessions of the seventeenth century. The Canons of Dort, the Helvetic Consensus Formula and the Westminster Confession are objective, abstract, logical in contrast to the historical, experiential, fragmentary character of the Scots Confession of 1560 or the First Helvetic Confession of 1536. The seventeenth century Confessions are more concerned with the authority of faith than with the fact of faith, with its right definition than with

3 Duffield, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
its proclamation. This development has been called Protestant scholasticism, but it should be noted that it is always qualified by the Reformed doctrines of Holy Scripture and justification by faith.

Scholasticism is difficult to define. Generally speaking it is that approach which asserts religious truth by means of deductive reasoning from given assumptions and in this way produces a logically coherent and defensible system of belief. It is based on an Aristotelian philosophy and so relates to medieval scholasticism. It also has a reference to the employment of reason in religious matters so that reason assumes at least an equal standing with faith in theology; in this way some of the authority of revelation is abandoned. Scholasticism also contends that the scriptural record contains a unified, rationally comprehensive account which can be translated into a definitive statement by which one's orthodoxy may be gauged. On the basis of this we can say that with the Westminster Confession we have reached a modified scholasticism in Reformed theology. The Confession only partially qualifies as a system deduced from one doctrine or principle (there are at least four major themes in the Confession⁴). The Westminster divines had a high regard for reason and intended their theology to be reasonable, but they never intended reason to have an equal place with Scripture. Further, as theologians they believed that the world and human experience were rational and the meaning of life could be stated in a comprehensive and precise confession.⁵ "The authors of the Confession had no doubt

⁴ These themes are the Holy Scripture; the lordship and sovereignty of God; the covenant and the Christian life.

⁵ What better example of this could there be than the famous answer to the first question of the Shorter Catechism, What is man's chief end?: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.
that theology was a practical, not a theoretical science, and that the end of life was not the vision of God but a life conformed to His will. Only in a modified sense, then, can the Westminster Confession be called scholastic.

This desire for exact definition, however, meant the abandonment of the experiential or historical method of writing theology. The Scots Confession of 1560 used Biblical history as the framework within which to describe Christian doctrine — and this method has its advantages. It relates easily to life and stimulates the human imagination. Over against that it has the disadvantages of lacking precision and conciseness. The Westminster Assembly preferred to go the road of an exact theology requiring abstract words and logical formulations. The difference in approach is clearly seen in a comparison of the treatment of the doctrine of election in Calvin and the Westminster Confession. Calvin used as the framework for the "Institutes" the Apostles' Creed and deliberately placed the question of election within the context of the doctrine of salvation. It was not the logical position, but it was the position that Calvin believed enabled one best to understand the doctrine as a testimony of what God had done in the life of the Christian. The Assembly gave election its logical place — between the doctrines of God and creation. Such meticulous care for precision has within it the possibility of tempting men to think that they have life, and God, under control, and that they know much more than they do. During the Assembly, Thomas Goodwin exclaimed, "Christ did not die for propositions but for persons".

6 Leith, op. cit., p. 69.
7 Ibid., p. 72.
The methodology of the Westminster Confession is open to a number of criticisms. In the first place, the Christian faith cannot be adequately described in propositions; such an assumption cannot take the incarnation seriously. God's definitive revelation came in a person and this fact surely means that all propositional theology at best only approximates the truth. Secondly, this methodology assumes that human reason, either as it exists in man or as it is redeemed by Christ, can take the infallible material of the Bible and abstract it into a series of propositions which can be held together in a logical fashion. A third assumption is that truth is more adequately expressed in dogmatic statements rather than in the tension of opposing points of view. If the first assumption calls in question the doctrine of the incarnation, the second and third equally call in question the doctrines of the creatureliness and the sinfulness of man. It must be remembered that the Westminster Confession is only one way in which Reformed theology may be written and it is an open question as to whether this method or the experiential method is the best way in which a man may confess his faith.

These reservations, however, should not blind us to the worth of the document. The Westminster Confession is English-speaking Protestantism's compliment to Calvin and its formulation represented the height of the Augustinian tradition in England. Thereafter the tradition waned. An Amyraldian theology prevailed in Baxter and the members of the persecuted nonconformist churches. Later English Presbyterianism became almost synonymous with Unitarianism but in Scotland after the revolution of 1690 the Confession became the doctrinal standard of the Church and the test of orthodoxy. To modern ears its teaching may sound stern and
foreboding but underlying it all is the Reformed dogma of the sovereignty of God, and that is a principle which the Church can abandon only at the peril of its life.
APPENDIX A

Travers' Ecclesiastical Structure

The differences in the ecclesiastical structure envisaged by Travers in the "Explicatio" as over against the Book of Discipline might be represented diagramatically in the following way (cf. Knox: Walter Travers, pp. 33, 105):

(A) EXPLICATIO

(1) Bishops

Doctors Pastors Elders Distributors

Presbytery

(B) BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

(1) Bishops (2) Elders (3) Deacons

Doctors Pastors

Presbytery

The later arrangement i.e. the outline in the Book of Discipline was a change in Travers' thinking and brought him into agreement with the teaching of Calvin (Institutes IV. 3. 8) and Cartwright.
APPENDIX B

THE KING'S CONFESSION, 1580

We all and every one of us underwritten, protest, that, after long and due examination of our own consciences in matters of true and false religion we are now thoroughly resolved in the truth by the Word and Spirit of God; and, therefore, we believe with our hearts, confess with our mouths, subscribe with our hands, and constantly affirm, before God and the whole world, that this only is the true Christian faith and religion, pleasing God, and bringing salvation to man, which is now by the mercy of God, revealed to the world by the preaching of the blessed evangel; and is received, believed, and defended by many and sundry notable kirks and realms, but chiefly by the Kirk of Scotland, the King's majesty, and three estates of this realm, as God's eternal truth, and only ground of our salvation; as more particularly is expressed in the Confession of our Faith, established and publicly confirmed by sundry acts of Parliament, and now of a long time hath been openly professed by the King's majesty, and whole body of this realm both in burgh and land. To the which Confession and Form of religion we willingly agree in our consciences in all points as unto God's undoubted truth and verity, grounded only upon His written Word. And therefore we abhor and detest all contrary religion and doctrine; but chiefly all kinds of Papistry in general and particular heads, even as they are now condemned and confuted by the Word of God and Kirk of Scotland. But, in special we detest and refuse the usurped authority of that Roman Antichrist upon the scriptures of God, upon the kirk, the civil magistrate, and consciences of men; all his tyrannous laws made upon indifferent things against our Christian liberty; his erroneous doctrine against the sufficiency of the written Word, the perfection of the law, the offices of Christ, and this blessed evangel; his corrupted doctrine concerning original sin, our natural inability and rebellion to God's law, our justification by faith only, our imperfect sanctification and obedience to the law; the nature, number and use of the holy sacraments; his five bastard sacraments, with all his rites, ceremonies and false doctrine, added to the ministration of the true sacraments without the Word of God; his cruel judgment against infants departing without the sacraments; his absolute necessity of baptism; his blasphemous opinion of transubstantiation or real presence of Christ's body in the elements and receiving the same by the wicked, or bodies of men; his dispensations with oaths, perjuries, and degrees of marriage forbidden in the Word; his cruelty against the innocent divorced; his devilish mass; his blasphemous priesthood; his profane sacrifices for the sins of the dead and the quick; his canonization of men; calling upon angels and saints departed; worshipping of imagery, relics, and crosses; dedicating of kirks, altars, days; vows to creatures; his purgatory, prayers for the dead; praying or speaking in a strange language; his processions, and blasphemous litany, and multitude of advocates or mediators; his manifold orders, auricular confession; his desperate and uncertain repentance; his general and doubtsome faith; his satisfactions of men for their sins; his justification by works; his opus operatum, works of supererogation, merits, pardons, peregrinations, and stations; his holy water, baptising of
bells, conjuring of spirits, crossing, saying, anointing, conjuring, hallowing of God's good creatures, with the superstitious opinion joined therewith; his worldly monarchy, and wicked hierarchy; his three solemn vows, with all his shellmongers of sundry sorts; his erroneous and bloody decrees made at Trent, with all the subscribers and approvers of that bloody bond, conjured against the kirk of God. And finally, we detest all his vain allegories, rites, signs, and traditions brought into the kirk without or against the Word of God, and doctrine of this true reformed kirk; to the which we join ourselves willingly in doctrine, faith, religion, discipline, and use of the holy sacraments, as lively members of the same in Christ our Head: promising and swearing, by the great name of the Lord our God, that we shall continue in the obedience of the doctrine and discipline of this kirk, and shall defend the same, according to our vocation and power, all the days of our lives; under the pains contained in the law, and danger both of body and soul in the day of God's fearful judgment.

And seeing that many are stirred up by Satan, and that Roman Antichrist, to promise, swear, subscribe, and for a time use the holy sacraments in the kirk deceitfully, against their own conscience, minding hereby, first, under the external cloak of religion, to corrupt and subvert secretly God's true religion within the kirk, and afterward, when time may serve, to become open enemies and persecutors of the same, under vain hope of the Pope's dispensation, devised against the Word of God, to his greater confusion, and their double condemnation in the day of the Lord Jesus: We, therefore, willing to take away all suspicion of hypocrisy, and of such double-dealing with God and His kirk, protest, and call the Searcher of all hearts for witness, that our minds and hearts do fully agree with this our Confession, promise, oath, and subscription; so that we are not moved for any worldly respect, but are persuaded only in our conscience through the knowledge and love of God's true religion imprinted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as we shall answer to Him in the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed.

And because we perceive, that the quietness and stability of our religion and kirk doth depend upon the safety and good behaviour of the King's Majesty, as upon a comfortable instrument of God's mercy, granted to this country, for the maintaining of His kirk, and ministration of justice among us, we protest and promise solemnly with our hearts, under the same oath handwriting, and pains, that we shall defend his person and authority with our geare, bodies, and lives, in the defence of Christ, His evangel, liberty of our country, ministration of justice, and punishment of iniquity, against all enemies within this realm or without, as we desire our God to be a strong and merciful Defender to us in the day of our death, and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory eternally. Amen.
APPENDIX C

THE NATIONAL COVENANT, 1638

The Confession of Faith, subscribed at first by the King's Majesty and his household in the yeere of God 1580; thereafter by persons of all ranks, in the year 1581, by ordinance of the Lords of the Secret Councell, and Acts of the Generall Assembly; subscribed againe by all sorts of persons in the yeere 1590 by a new ordinance of Councell, at the desire of the General Assembly, with a generall band for maintenance of the true religion and the King's person; and now subscribed in the yeere 1638 by us noblemen, barons, gentlemen, burgesses, ministers, and commons, under subscribing, together with our resolution and promises, for the causes after specified, to maintaine the said true religion, and the King's Majestie, according to the Confession foresaid and Acts of Parliament. (Here is repeated the King's Confession, see Appendix B.)

In obedience to the commandment of God, conform to the practice of the godly in former times, and according to the laudable example of our worthy and religious progenitors, and of many yet living amongst us, which was warranted also by act of Council, commanding a general band to be made and subscribed by his Majesty's subjects of all ranks; for two causes: one was, For defending the true religion, as it was then reformed, and is expressed in the Confession of Faith above written, and a former large Confession established by sundry acts of lawful General Assemblies and of Parliaments, unto which it hath relation, set down in publick Catechisms; and which hath been for many years, with a blessing from Heaven, preached and professed in this Kirk and kingdom, as God's undoubted truth, grounded only upon His written word. The other cause was, For maintaining the King's Majesty, his person and estate; the true worship of God and the King's authority being so straitly joined, as that they had the same friends and common enemies, and did stand and fall together. And finally, being convinced in our minds, and confessing with our mouths, that the present and succeeding generations in this land are bound to keep the foresaid national oath and subscriptions inviolable.

We Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burgesses, Ministers, and Commons under-subscribing, considering divers times before, and especially at this time, the danger of the true reformed religion, of the King's honour, and of the public peace of the kingdom, by the manifold innovations and evils generally contained, and particularly mentioned in our late supplications, complaints, and protestations; do hereby profess, and before God, His angels, and the world, solemnly declare, That with our whole heart we agree, and resolve all the days of our life constantly to adhere unto and to defend the foresaid true religion, and (forbearing the practice of all novations already introduced in the matters of the worship of God, or approbation of the corruptions of the publick government of the Kirk, or civil places and power of kirkmen, till they be tried and allowed in free Assemblies and in Parliaments) to labour, by all means lawful, to recover the purity and liberty of the Gospel, as it was established and professed before the foresaid novations. And because, after due examination, we plainly perceive, and undoubtedly
believe, that the innovations and evils contained in our supplications, complaints, and protestations, have no warrant of the word of God, are contrary to the articles of the foresaid Confession, to the intention and meaning of the blessed reformers of religion in this land, to the above-written Acts of Parliament; and do sensibly tend to the re-establishing of the Popish religion and tyranny, and to the subversion and ruin of the true reformed religion, and of our liberties, laws, and estates; we also declare, That the foresaid Confessions are to be interpreted, and ought to be understood of the foresaid novations and evils, no less than if every one of them had been expressed in the foresaid Confessions; and that we are obliged to detest and abhor them, amongst other particular heads of Papistry abjured therein. And therefore, from the knowledge and conscience of our duty to God, to our King and country, without any worldly respect or inducement, so far as human infirmity will suffer, wishing a further measure of the grace of God for this effect: we promise and swear, by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD, to continue in the profession and obedience of the foresaid religion; and that we shall defend the same, and resist all these contrary errors and corruptions, according to our vocation, and to the uttermost of that power that God hath put in our hands, all the days of our life.

And in like manner, with the same heart, we declare before God and men, That we have no intention nor desire to attempt any thing that may turn to the dishonour of God, or to the diminution of the King's greatness and authority; but, on the contrary, we promise and swear, That we shall to the uttermost of our power, with our means and lives, stand to the defence of our dread Sovereign the King's Majesty, his person and authority, in the defence and preservation of the foresaid true religion, liberties, and laws of the kingdom; as also to the mutual defence and assistance every one of us of another, in the same cause of maintaining the true religion, and his Majesty's authority, with our best counsel, our bodies, means, and whole power, against all sorts of persons whatsoever; so that whatsoever shall be done to the least of us for that cause, shall be taken as done to us all in general, and to every one of us in particular. And that we shall neither directly nor indirectly suffer ourselves to be divided or withdrawn, by whatsoever suggestion, combination, allurement, or terror, from this blessed and loyal conjunction; nor shall cast in any let or impediment that may stay or hinder any such resolution as by common consent shall be found to conduce for so good ends; but, on the contrary, shall by all lawful means labour to further and promote the same: and if any such dangerous and divisive motion be made to us by word or writ, we and every one of us shall either suppress it, or, if need be, shall incontinent make the same known that it may be timeously obviated. Neither do we fear the foul aspersions of rebellion, combination, or what else our adversaries, from their craft and malice, would put upon us; seeing what we do is so well warranted, and ariseth from an unfeigned desire to maintain the true worship of God, the majesty of our King, and the peace of the kingdom, for the common happiness of ourselves and our posterity.

And because we cannot look for a blessing from God upon our proceedings, except with our profession and subscription, we join such a life and conversation as beseeometh Christians who have renewed their
covenant with God: we therefore faithfully promise for ourselves, our
followers, and all others under us, both in publick, and in our partic-
ular families, and personal carriage, to endeavour to keep ourselves
within the bounds of Christian liberty, and to be good examples to
others of all godliness, soberness, and righteousness, and of every duty
we owe to God and man.

And, that this our union and conjunction may be observed without
violation, we call the LIVING GOD, THE SEARCHER OF OUR HEARTS, to wit-
ness, who knoweth this to be our sincere desire and unfeigned resolution,
as we shall answer to JESUS CHRIST in the great day, and under the pain
of God's everlasting wrath, and of infamy and loss of all honour and
respect in this world: most humbly beseeching the LORD to strengthen us
by His HOLY SPIRIT for this end, and to bless our desires and proceed-
ings with a happy success; that religion and righteousness may flourish
in the land, to the glory of GOD, the honour of our King, and peace and
comfort of us all. In witness whereof, we have subscribed with our hands
all the premises.

The article of this Covenant, which was at the first subscription
referred to the determination of the General Assembly, being now deter-
mined; and thereby the five articles of Perth, the government of the
Kirk by bishops, and the civil places and power of kirkmen, upon the
reasons and grounds contained in the Acts of the General Assembly, de-
clared to be unlawful within this Kirk, we subscribe according to the
determination aforesaid.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


VITA AUCTORIS

1936
Born, Belfast, N. Ireland.

1953
Graduated from Belfast High School.

1957-1962
Attended the Queen's University of Belfast.

1961
Entered Presbyterian College, Belfast.

1962
Graduated Bachelor of Arts from the Queen's University of Belfast with Honours in Psychology.

1964
Graduated from Presbyterian College, Belfast; Getty Prizeman (top student in graduating class).

Ordained as minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

1967
Emigrated to Canada.

1967-1970
Minister of Flemingdon Park Presbyterian Church, Toronto.

1967-1969
Part-time study at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto.

1969
Graduated Bachelor of Divinity from Emmanuel College, University of Toronto.

1970 - Present
Minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church, London, Ontario.

1972
Enrolled at University of Windsor as part-time student for Master of Arts degree.